

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar Wednesday, Jan. 18

Senior Menu: Cabbage hot dish, carrots, pears, muffin.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, tri tators.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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

Thursday, Jan. 19

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potatoes, mixed vegetables, banana, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

Basketball Double Header at Milbank: C boys at 4 p.m. followed by C girls in elementary gym; JV girls at 4 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity.

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

Friday, Jan. 20

Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, rice pilaf, pea and cheese salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, peas.

Wrestling hosts Deuel at 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 21

Wrestling at Arlington, 10 a.m.

Girls Basketball at Great Plains Lutheran: C game at 11 a.m. followed by JV and Varsity.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

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

CLOSED: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Emergency plea for help

If someone is going to Milbank on Thursday and have room and the ability to help Jeslyn haul in equipment, please let Paul know at 605-397-7460. Paul is not able to go to Milbank.

GDILIVE.COM

Double Header at Milbank Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023

C Games at the Elementary Gym
with **C boys at 4 p.m.** Sponsored by Darcie & Eric Moody
followed by **C girls.** Sponsored by Russ & Dixie Clark

In the Main Gym
JV Girls at 4 p.m. Sponsored by Kent & Darcy Muller
Followed by JV Boys.
Sponsored by Memory of Jay Imrie from the Imrie Family

followed by 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

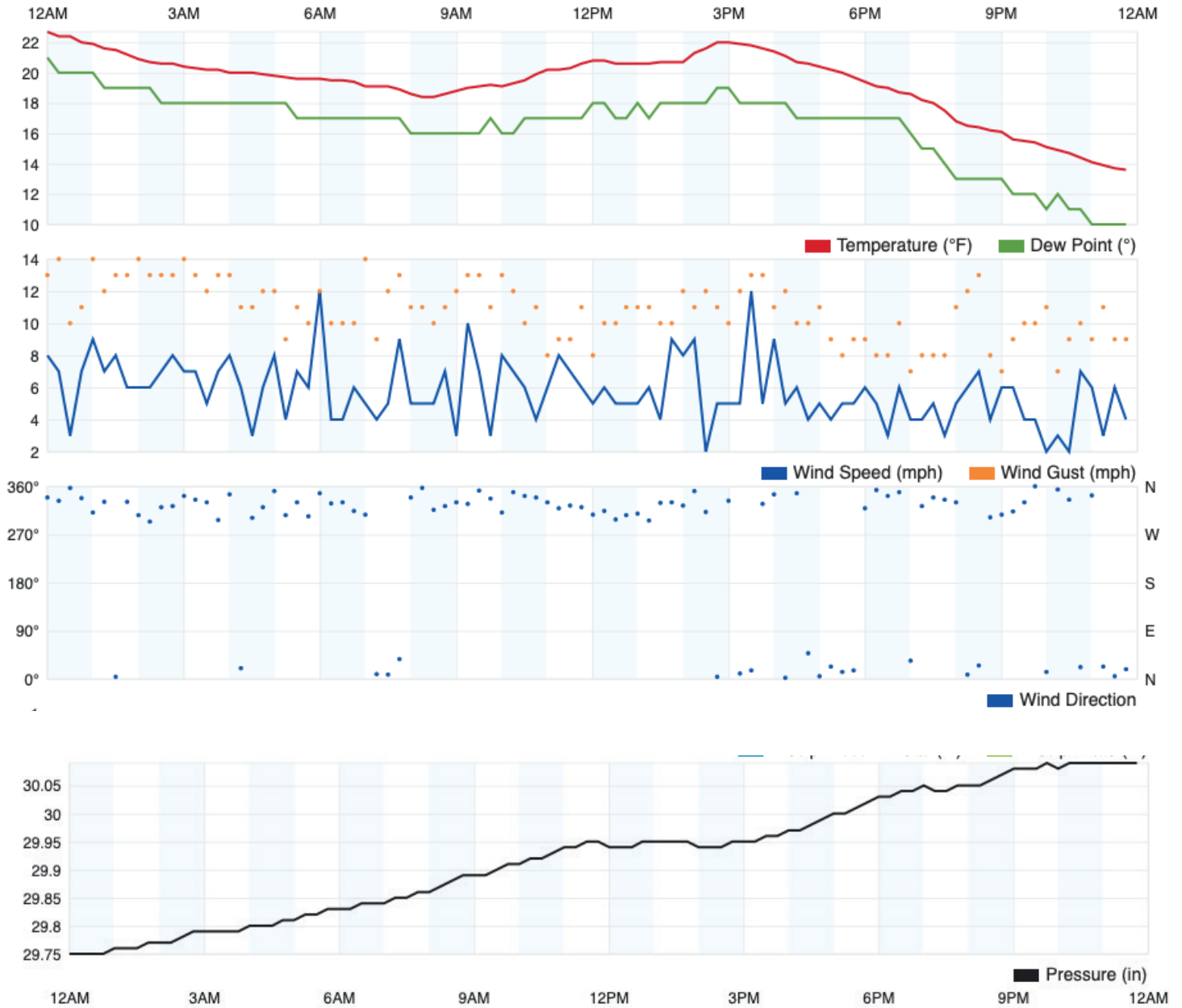


Anyone wanting to sponsor a JV game, Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460

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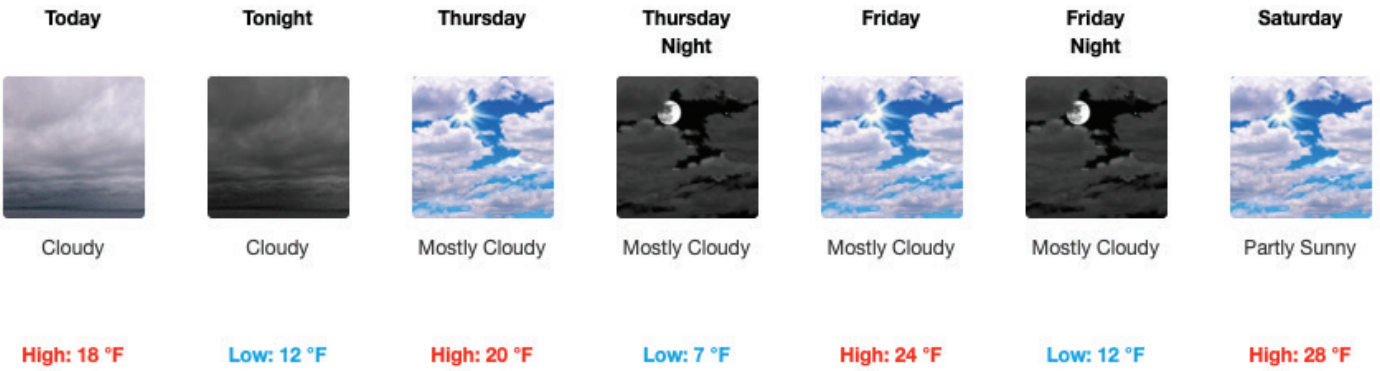
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Snow over southwestern and south central South Dakota will expand to eastern South Dakota and southern Minnesota this afternoon and tonight. Expect the snow to slowly end west to east overnight into Thursday morning. Slippery roads are expected. Check the latest forecast and road conditions if you have travel plans to southern South Dakota or Nebraska through Thursday morning.

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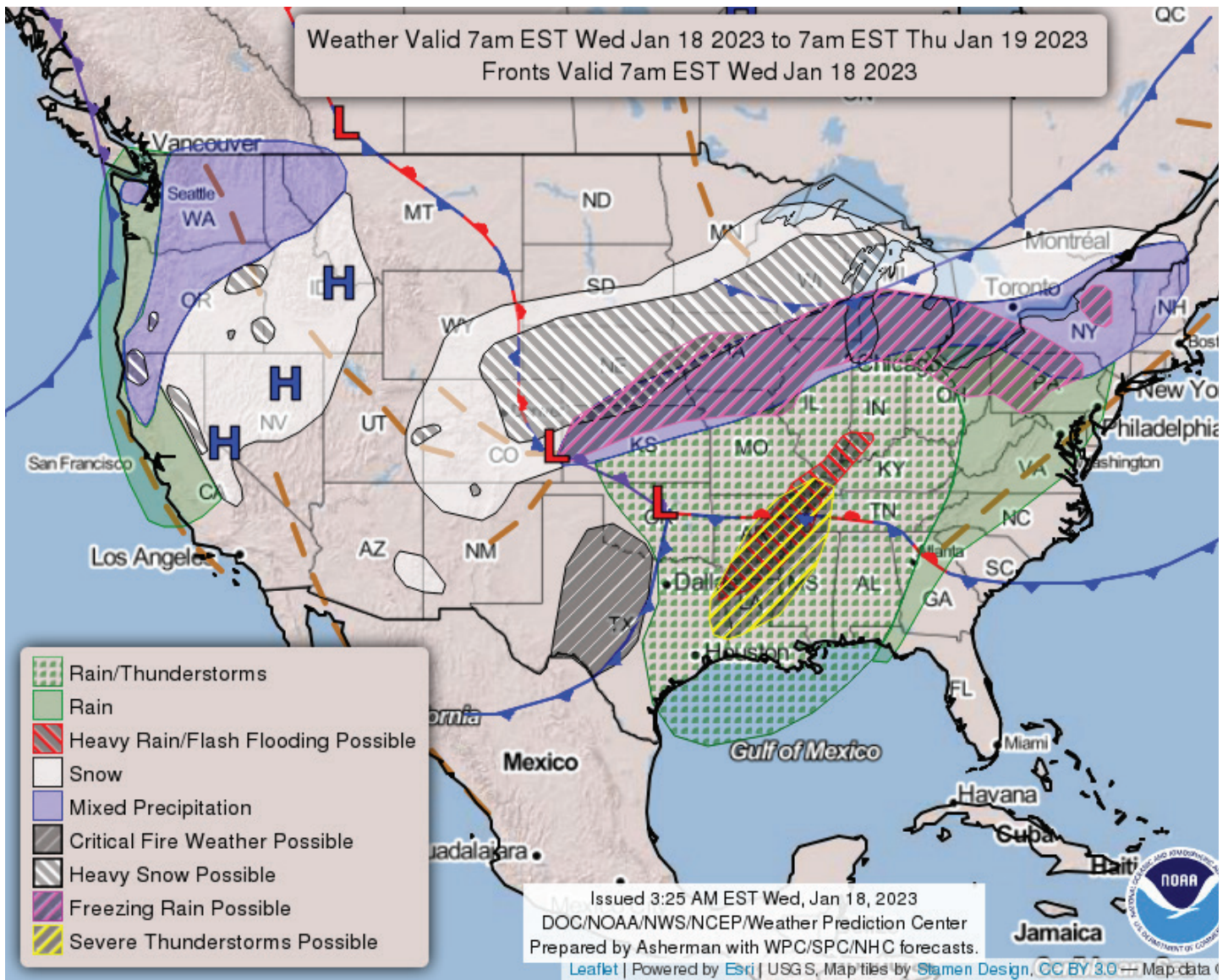
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 23 °F at 12:00 AM
Low Temp: 14 °F at 11:40 PM
Wind: 14 mph at 12:14 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 16 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 51 in 1944
 Record Low: -34 in 1970
 Average High: 23°F
 Average Low: 1°F
 Average Precip in Jan.: 0.35
 Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
 Average Precip to date: 0.35
 Precip Year to Date: 0.00
 Sunset Tonight: 5:20:51 PM
 Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:04:02 AM



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Today in Weather History

January 18, 1979:

An area of low pressure moving across the region brought widespread snow of 5 to 10 inches to much of Minnesota from the 18th through the 20th. Travel was difficult, if not impossible, in many areas where there were near blizzard conditions. Schools and businesses closed, along with many flights canceled.

January 18, 1999:

One to 4 inches of snowfall combined with winds of 30 to 45 miles an hour brought blizzard conditions to part of northeast South Dakota. Highway 12 and Interstate 29 were most affected by the low visibilities. There was a seven-car pileup on Highway 12 near Andover with minor injuries. As a result, traffic was shut off in the westbound lanes for a few hours. Over 200 people were stranded overnight at a restaurant near Summit. There was also a rollover north of Summit, which resulted in minor injuries. One traveler said the visibility was frequently near zero.

January 18, 2014:

A strong Alberta Clipper low-pressure system moved over the Northern Plains Friday night and Saturday morning. Anywhere from a trace to just near 3 inches of fresh snowfall accompanied this low-pressure system. Over this area, strong northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph developed by late Friday night with gusts of 45 to 55 mph. A few areas even experienced gusts to 58 mph or higher again. This system packed such a wallop that a couple of instances of thundersnow occurred, as evidenced by the cloud to ground lightning strikes showing up in southwestern Day County and northwestern Clark County early Saturday morning.

Numerous reports of visibility reduced to one-quarter mile or less across northeast South Dakota, specifically on or just to the east of the Glacial Lakes region, were received.

1943: Idaho's coldest night on record occurred as the low temperature dropped to 60 degrees below zero at Island Park Dam.

1950: Oregon continued in the grips of one of its worst winter months ever. A significant winter storm brought a thick glaze of ice to Columbia River Gorge, stopping automobile traffic in its tracks. Hundreds of motorists were stranded and had to be rescued by train. Even that wasn't easy with the coating of ice. The storm caused widespread power outages.

1971: A warm Santa Ana condition brought a 95 degree reading to Los Angeles, the highest January temperature on record. It was 95 degrees in Palm Springs, the highest temperature on record for January as well.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

APPLES OF GOLD

Words wound and leave scars. Words are often used by design to discredit or destroy the hopes and dreams of another. Words are often spoken with disgust and disapproval intending to hurt or harm a person's best intentions or desires. Words can be cruel and hateful, spiteful and repulsive. They can be disastrous to a person's reputation and future goals.

But words can also be blessings and bring hope and encouragement. "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." What a thought-provoking scene. Imagine if you will, fruit carved from gold by a craftsman and then placed in a brightly polished bowl made from silver - a sight that would excite the senses and bring feelings of amazement.

The phrase "A word aptly spoken" suggests saying the right thing at the right time in the right place. It may be sharing a verse of Scripture with a loved one as they are passing through a difficult experience. It may be sharing words of comfort and hope, encouragement and support or wiping tears that are flowing from the eyes of one who is experiencing the loss of a loved one and is unable to deal with the grim realities of grief. One thing is certain: Not all words fit all occasions. Not all words are good for all occasions. There are times to speak and times to be silent. There are times to talk and even more times to listen. It is the caring heart with the love of God flowing through it to others in their time of need that becomes a "word aptly spoken."

Prayer: Lord, use our mouths to speak words of kindness and comfort to those who are in pain or may be suffering. May we bring them help, hope, and healing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Proverbs 25:11



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)
- 06/16/2023 – SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 – Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 – GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 – Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 – GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 – Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 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)
- 12/02/2023 – Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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paypal.me/paperpaul





WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.17.23

2 12 18 24 39 18

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 30
DRAW: Mins 48 Secs

GAME DETAILS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.16.23

7 20 21 27 52 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$34,220,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 30 Mins
DRAW: 48 Secs

GAME DETAILS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.17.23

3 4 25 35 48 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 47 Secs

GAME DETAILS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.14.23

2 10 17 27 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 30 Mins
DRAW: 47 Secs

GAME DETAILS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.16.23

37 40 46 54 59 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 29 Mins 48
DRAW: Secs

GAME DETAILS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.16.23

4 14 33 39 61 3

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$439,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 29 Mins 48
DRAW: Secs

GAME DETAILS

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News from the  Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Christian 77, Faulkton 38

Aberdeen Roncalli 42, Tiospa Zina Tribal 36

Bowman County, N.D. 76, Harding County 63

Brandon Valley 65, Marshall, Minn. 36

Canistota 45, Freeman Academy/Marion 32

Centerville 55, Freeman 39

Corsica/Stickney 60, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 37

Dell Rapids St. Mary 73, Castlewood 70, 2OT

Deuel 56, Flandreau 43

Elk Point-Jefferson 60, Vermillion 49

Ellendale, N.D. 56, Leola/Frederick 41

Estelline/Hendricks 61, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 27

Ethan 70, Menno 27

Hamlin 57, DeSmet 55

Hemingford, Neb. 70, Edgemont 21

Herreid/Selby Area 61, Potter County 58

Hill City 50, Belle Fourche 44

Howard 58, Hanson 47

Huron 64, Brookings 51

Ipswich 59, North Central Co-Op 21

Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op 41, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 36

James Valley Christian 65, Highmore-Harrold 61

Jones County 44, Colome 41

Lennox 92, Chamberlain 44

Lower Brule 114, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 46

Miller 63, Crow Creek 54

Mitchell 64, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 44

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 77, Redfield 58

Northwestern 56, Warner 37

O'Neill, Neb. 84, Wagner 46

Platte-Geddes 74, Burke 45

Rapid City Stevens 50, Sturgis Brown 31

Scotland 57, Irene-Wakonda 55

Sioux Falls Jefferson 60, Yankton 48

Sioux Valley 85, Chester 40

St. Thomas More 72, Lead-Deadwood 33

Sully Buttes 69, Timber Lake 48

Tea Area 45, Watertown 44

Tri-Valley 56, Deubrook 49

Tripp-Delmont/Armour 62, Bon Homme 46

Viborg-Hurley 59, Avon 28

Wakpala 76, McIntosh 18

Waubay/Summit 53, Milbank 46

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Waverly-South Shore 43, Great Plains Lutheran 42
Wessington Springs 59, Sunshine Bible Academy 16
Winner 63, Lyman 36
Wolsey-Wessington 55, Hitchcock-Tulare 36
Panhandle Tournament=
Edgemont 70, Hemingford, Neb. 21

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli 53, Tiospa Zina Tribal 34
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 67, Corsica/Stickney 47
Arlington 56, Colman-Egan 44
Belle Fourche 49, Hill City 26
Burke 49, Platte-Geddes 39
Canistota 35, Freeman Academy/Marion 30
Centerville 56, Freeman 43
Custer 82, Wall 78
Dell Rapids St. Mary 52, Castlewood 50, OT
Ethan 72, Menno 17
Faulkton 54, Aberdeen Christian 22
Flandreau 61, Deuel 22
Florence/Henry 58, Webster 16
Great Plains Lutheran 49, Waverly-South Shore 12
Hamlin 64, DeSmet 35
Harrisburg 40, Sioux Falls Washington 39
Hitchcock-Tulare 50, Sunshine Bible Academy 20
Howard 58, Hanson 55
Huron 50, Brookings 40
Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op 51, Highmore-Harrold 46
Jones County 51, Colome 17
Kadoka Area 53, Newell 48
Lennox 59, Parker 27
Leola/Frederick 36, Ellendale, N.D. 30
Mitchell 54, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 37
Mott-Regent, N.D. 54, Bison 20
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 50, Redfield 36
Pierre 61, Douglas 19
Rapid City Stevens 69, Sturgis Brown 26
Scotland 43, Irene-Wakonda 27
Sioux Falls Jefferson 65, Yankton 45
Sioux Valley 84, Chester 65
Vermillion 47, Elk Point-Jefferson 46
Wagner 75, O'Neill, Neb. 27
Wakpala 51, McIntosh 36
Watertown 55, Tea Area 36
Wessington Springs 47, James Valley Christian 37
Wolsey-Wessington 58, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 43

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

South Dakota GOP lawmakers push trans youth health care ban

By AMANCAI BIRABEN and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A group of South Dakota Republican lawmakers introduced a bill Tuesday to outlaw gender-affirming health care for transgender youth, pushing the state to join at least a dozen others considering anti-transgender legislation this year.

The South Dakota bill, unveiled at a state Capitol news conference, aims to keep children younger than 18 from accessing puberty-blocking drugs, hormone therapy or surgeries that enable them to present as a gender different from the sex on their birth certificate. It would also punish doctors who provide the care by revoking their medical license and exposing them to civil litigation.

South Dakota Republicans have perennially considered bills aimed at limiting the health care, school facilities and sports teams that transgender youth can access. A law banning trans girls and college-age women from participating in sports that match their gender went into effect after the Legislature passed it last year.

Though other proposals aimed at trans youth have found mixed success in the Republican-controlled Statehouse, critics said that even bringing the proposals sends a harmful message to trans children.

"Gender-affirming care is a critical part for helping transgender adolescents succeed in school, establish healthy relationships with their friends and family and really, truly live authentically to who they are," Democratic Rep. Erin Healy said.

But Republican Rep. Jon Hansen, one of the lawmakers pushing the bill, argued that puberty was a "natural cure" for gender dysphoria, which is the distress felt when someone's gender expression does not match their gender identity.

"This is a mental health problem that needs to be addressed," said Republican Rep. Bethany Soye, who is the bill's primary sponsor.

Samantha Chapman, the advocacy manager for the ACLU of South Dakota, said in a statement that the lawmakers proposing the bill were spreading "lies and misinformation" about trans people.

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health said last year that teens experiencing gender dysphoria can start taking hormones at age 14 and can have certain surgeries at ages 15 or 17. The group acknowledged potential risks but said it was unethical to withhold early treatments, which can improve psychological well-being and reduce suicide risk.

However, conservative state lawmakers across the country have targeted trans health care. Last year, Arkansas and Alabama passed similar bans. But both were blocked by federal courts.

"Every year, South Dakota lawmakers zero in on transgender youth," Chapman said. "And every year the transgender community is hurt while meaningful problems go unaddressed."

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Texas man pleads guilty to role in \$1.6M romance scam plot

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — A Texas man has pleaded guilty to his role in a romance scam in which women from across the nation were cheated out of a total of about \$1.6 million by someone often pretending to be a U.S. Army general.

Fola Alabi, who is also known as Folayemi Alabi, 52, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Rhode Island last week to conspiracy and money laundering, federal prosecutors said in a statement Monday.

According to prosecutors, someone often posing as a general stationed overseas befriended women online, then gradually gained their trust by feigning romantic or personal interest.

The women, often in their 70s and 80s and widowed or divorced, were persuaded to send cash or checks to addresses and companies controlled by Alabi, who lived in Richmond, Texas, near Houston.

The money was then desposited into bank accounts he also controlled, prosecutors said, before being quickly withdrawn or transferred.

Federal agents who searched Alabi's cellphone found photographs and videos of packages containing cash and checks he had received from some victims, prosecutors said.

The victims were from Rhode Island, Tennessee, North Carolina, California, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Arizona, Texas, Idaho and South Dakota, authorities said.

An Arizona woman lost \$334,000, according to an affidavit filed in the case. She "felt shame, embarrassment, and guilt over being scammed" and did not have enough money for food or to pay bills as a result, according to the affidavit.

A Rhode Island woman sent a check for \$60,000 and was going to send an additional \$240,000, but her bank determined that she might be a victim of fraud, put a hold on her account and contacted local police, authorities said.

Sentencing is scheduled for April 25.

Hampered by bad hip, Rafael Nadal loses at Australian Open

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Rafael Nadal bowed his head during changeovers and rested his elbows on his knees, the very picture of resignation.

What already was a poor start to 2023, following a year marred by all manner of health issues, reached a low point at the Australian Open on Wednesday.

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The defending champion and No. 1 seed at Melbourne Park, Nadal injured his left hip and lost to Mackenzie McDonald 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 in the second round, abruptly ending his bid for a record-extending 23rd Grand Slam trophy.

"It's a tough moment. It's a tough day," said Nadal, a 36-year-old Spaniard. "I can't say that I am not destroyed mentally at this moment, because I would be lying."

He pulled up awkwardly at the end of a point late in the second set against the 65th-ranked McDonald. Nadal was visited by a trainer on the sideline, then left the court for a medical timeout. Up in the stands, his wife wiped away tears. Nadal returned to play, but was clearly compromised and not his usual indefatigable self, saying afterward that he could not hit his backhand properly and could not run much, either.

But Nadal added that, as the reigning champion of the tournament, he did not want to leave the court via a mid-match retirement.

He said the hip had been bothering him for a couple of days, but it was never as bad as it became on Wednesday. Nadal was not sure exactly what the nature of the injury was, saying that he will have medical tests to determine if it has to do with a muscle, joint or cartilage.

"It's never over until it's over' type thing. He didn't even want to roll over and quit. He kept fighting until basically the end, even though he maybe didn't have all his game," said McDonald, a 27-year-old who won NCAA championships in singles and doubles for UCLA in 2016.

"I was in the locker room," McDonald said about the aftermath of the match, "and I was like, 'Hey, that's actually really big for me, because I haven't beaten someone of that caliber.'"

This is Nadal's earliest exit at any Grand Slam tournament since bowing out in the first round in Melbourne in 2016 against No. 45 Fernando Verdasco. That also made Verdasco the lowest-ranked player to defeat Nadal in Australia — until, of course, McDonald on Wednesday.

McDonald has never been past the fourth round at a major tournament. In his lone previous matchup against Nadal, at the 2020 French Open, McDonald won a total of just four games in a lopsided loss.

"He kicked my butt," McDonald recalled Wednesday.

This result overshadowed everything else going on in Melbourne, of course, on a day that persistent rain pushed back the start of play on all but the three courts with retractable roofs until after 5 p.m. local time.

That meant some players — most notably, No. 1 Iga Swiatek, No. 3 Jessica Pegula and No. 6 Maria Sakkari — won matches that put them in the third round before more than a dozen others even had contested a single point in the first round.

At night, 2022 French Open runner-up Coco Gauff got past 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu 6-3, 7-6 (4) in a second-round meeting between two of the sports young stars.

"I know a lot of people were looking forward to that matchup," said Gauff, an 18-year-old American. "I'm glad we got the prime spot. I hope we delivered."

Seeded men who won included No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas, No. 6 Felix Auger-Aliassime, No. 7 Daniil Medvedev — the runner-up to Nadal last year and to Novak Djokovic in 2021 — No. 15 Jannik Sinner and No. 16 Frances Tiafoe.

"I told him, 'You're going to be in a position to win today. You can win today,'" Tiafoe said about fellow American McDonald. "Sort of seeing how he feels, I'm happy for Mackie. 'GOAT wins' don't come easy. Something to tell his grandkids one day, and you have to be happy for that guy."

A year ago, Nadal won the Australian Open for the second time to earn his 21st major championship, then raised his total to 22 — the most for a man — at Roland Garros.

He is currently ranked No. 2 but was the top seed at Melbourne Park because No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz is sitting out the Australian Open with a bad leg.

Nadal's body has betrayed him quite a bit recently.

He needed pain-killing injections for his left foot on the way to winning the French Open last June, pulled out of Wimbledon last July before the semifinals because of a torn abdominal muscle and also dealt with a problem with rib cartilage in 2022.

Nadal's exit drains the tournament of yet more star power. In addition to his absence and Alcaraz's, 2022

Wimbledon runner-up Nick Kyrgios pulled out because his left knee needs arthroscopic surgery, four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka is off the tour while she is pregnant, two-time major champ Simona Halep is serving a provisional doping ban and Venus Williams is hurt.

That is all on top of this: The 2023 edition of the Australian Open is the first Grand Slam tournament since Serena Williams and Roger Federer announced their retirements.

Nadal arrived in Melbourne with an 0-2 record this season, making him 1-6 dating to September, when he lost to Tiafoe in the fourth round of the U.S. Open.

Even during a first-round victory Monday, a four-setter against a cramping Jack Draper, Nadal never quite seemed to be at his chase-every-ball, put-every-high-spin-shot-on-target best. He looked, somehow, his age.

The same was the case from the outset against McDonald.

"I'm really happy with how I started that match. I thought I was playing really well, serving great, returning well, too," McDonald said. "So I was really taking it to him."

That is true. From the get-go, McDonald was on, Nadal was off.

The very first game served as something of a harbinger: McDonald broke for a 1-0 lead thanks a trio of unforced errors by Nadal — two off his feared lefty forehand side.

Out of sorts, Nadal got into a back-and-forth with chair umpire Marijana Veljovic during breaks in action about whether she was starting the between-points serve clock too quickly for his liking.

Soon, McDonald was up a set. Then he went up a break right away in the second.

After one point in that set, Nadal showed real signs of trouble. He squatted behind the baseline and placed his racket down on the court. Then he went over and leaned on a sign, prompting Veljovic to ask whether Nadal was OK.

Nadal watched a couple of serves off McDonald's racket fly past him, then was checked on by the trainer. While the match would proceed, it essentially was over right then and there.

Court to hear appeal of ex-officer in murder of George Floyd

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — An attorney for Derek Chauvin is planning to ask an appeals court Wednesday to throw out the former Minneapolis police officer's convictions in the murder of George Floyd, arguing that numerous legal and procedural errors deprived him of a fair trial.

Floyd died on May 25, 2020, after Chauvin, who is white, pinned the Black man to the ground with his knee on his neck for 9 1/2 minutes. A bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe." Floyd's death touched off protests around the world and forced a painful national reckoning with police brutality and racism.

Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill sentenced Chauvin to 22 1/2 years after jurors found him guilty of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. Chauvin later pleaded guilty to a federal civil rights charge and was sentenced to 21 years in federal prison, which is he is now serving in Arizona concurrent with his state sentence.

While Chauvin waived his right to appeal under his federal plea deal, he continued to pursue his appeal of his murder convictions in state court. Even if he wins his appeal, his federal sentence will keep him in prison longer than his state sentence likely would because he would qualify for parole earlier in the state system. But a successful appeal could set a precedent for future cases involving police officers.

Chauvin's attorney for the appeal is William Mohrman, who often pursues conservative causes including challenges to President Joe Biden's election victory and to COVID-19 vaccine mandates.

Mohrman argued in his brief to the Minnesota Court of Appeals that the pretrial publicity was more extensive than any other trial in Minnesota history, and that the judge should have moved the trial elsewhere and sequestered the jury for the duration. Mohrman wrote that the publicity, combined with the riots, the city's \$27 million settlement with Floyd's family announced during jury selection, the unrest over a police killing in a Minneapolis suburb during jury selection, and the unprecedented courthouse security were just some of the factors prejudicing Chauvin's chance of a fair trial.

He also argued that Cahill improperly excluded evidence that could have been favorable to Chauvin, and accused prosecutors of misconduct.

Prosecutors said in their brief that Chauvin had a fair trial and received a just sentence.

The prosecutors — including state Assistant Attorney General Matthew Frank and Neal Katyal, who was acting U.S. solicitor general during the Obama administration — argued that Chauvin's rights were not prejudiced.

They said pretrial publicity had blanketed the state making a change of venue for the trial pointless, and that Cahill took extensive steps to ensure the selection of impartial jurors. They also said he took sufficient steps to shield the jurors from outside influences so there was no need to sequester them before deliberations.

Other disputes in the appeal include whether it was legally permissible to convict Chauvin of third-degree murder, and whether Cahill was justified in exceeding the 12 1/2 years recommended under the state's sentencing guidelines.

Three other officers who were present during Floyd's murder — Tou Thao, J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane — were convicted of federal civil rights charges last February and are serving their sentences in out-of-state federal prisons.

Lane and Kueng accepted plea deals on state charges of aiding and abetting manslaughter and are serving concurrent sentences. But Thao declined to plead guilty. Attorneys for both sides agreed to let Cahill decide on Thao's guilt based on stipulated evidence. That verdict is pending, as is his federal appeal.

Treasury: US, China officials agree to climate finance work

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

ZURICH (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen met Wednesday with her Chinese counterpart and pledged an effort to manage differences and "prevent competition from becoming anything ever near conflict" as the two nations try to thaw relations.

Yellen's first face-to-face meeting with Vice Premier Liu He in Zurich is the highest-ranking contact between the two countries since their presidents agreed last November to look for areas of potential cooperation.

Liu, for his part, said he was ready to work together to seek common ground between China and the U.S.

"No matter how circumstances change, we should always maintain dialogue and exchanges," he said.

A U.S. Treasury readout of their meeting says the two agreed that the U.S. and China would cooperate more on climate finance issues and would both work to support "developing countries in their clean energy transitions." The readout also indicates that Yellen plans to travel to China and welcomes her counterparts to the U.S. in the near future.

The meeting comes as the U.S. and Chinese economies grapple with differing, but intertwined challenges on trade, technology and more.

Yellen, in opening remarks in front of reporters, told Liu: "While we have areas of disagreement, and we will convey them directly, we should not allow misunderstandings, particularly those stemming from a lack of communication, to unnecessarily worsen our bilateral economic and financial relationship."

She said the two countries "have a responsibility to manage our differences and prevent competition from becoming anything even near conflict."

Both economies have their challenges.

The Chinese economy is reopening after a COVID-19 resurgence killed tens of thousands of people and shuttered countless businesses. The U.S. is slowly recovering from 40-year-high inflation and is on track to hit its statutory debt ceiling, setting up an expected political showdown between congressional Democrats and Republicans. The debt issue is of keen interest to Asia, as China is the second-largest holder of U.S. debt.

There is also the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which hinders global economic growth — and has prompted the U.S. and its allies to agree on an oil price cap on Russia in retaliation, putting China in a difficult spot as a friend and economic ally of Russia.

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And high interest rates globally have increased pressure on debt-burdened nations that owe great sums to China.

"A wrong policy move or a reversal in the positive data and we could see the global economy head into a recession in 2023," said Josh Lipsky, senior director of the Atlantic Council's GeoEconomics Center. "Both countries have a shared interest in avoiding that scenario."

The World Bank reported last week that the global economy will come " perilously close " to a recession this year, led by weaker growth in all the world's top economies — including the U.S. and China. Low-income countries are expected to suffer from any economic downturns of superpowers, the report said.

"High on the list is debt restructuring," Lipsky said of Wednesday's talks. Several low-income countries are at risk of debt default in 2023 and many of them owe large sums to China.

"Leaders have been trying for two years to get some agreement and avoid a wave of defaults but there's been little success and one reason is China's hesitancy. I expect Yellen to press Liu He on this in the meeting," Lipsky said.

Liu laid out an optimistic vision for the world's second-largest economy in an address Tuesday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"If we work hard enough, we are confident that in 2023, China's growth will most likely return to its normal trend. The Chinese economy will see a significant improvement," he said.

After her stop in Switzerland, Yellen will travel to Zambia, Senegal and South Africa this week in what will be the first in a string of visits by Biden administration officials to sub-Saharan Africa during the year.

Zambia is renegotiating its nearly \$6 billion debt with China, its biggest creditor. During a closed-door meeting at the Africa Leaders Summit in Washington in December, Yellen and Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema discussed "the need to address debt sustainability and the imperative to conclude a debt treatment for Zambia," according to Yellen.

The Zurich talks are a follow-up to the November meeting between President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia. The two world leaders agreed to empower key senior officials to work on areas of potential cooperation, including tackling climate change and maintaining global financial, health and food stability. Beijing had cut off such contacts with the U.S. in protest of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan in August.

"We're going to compete vigorously. But I'm not looking for conflict," Biden said at the time.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will be traveling to China in early February.

Among economic sticking points, the Biden administration blocked the sale of advanced computer chips to China and is considering a ban on investment in some Chinese tech companies, possibly undermining a key economic goal that Xi set for his country. Statements by the Democratic president that the U.S. would defend Taiwan against a Chinese invasion also have increased tensions.

And while the U.S. Congress is divided on many issues, members of the House agreed last week to further scrutinize Chinese investments.

New House Speaker Kevin McCarthy of California has identified the Communist Party of China as one of two "long-term challenges" for the House, along with the national debt.

"There is bipartisan consensus that the era of trusting Communist China is over," McCarthy said from the House floor last week when the House voted 365 to 65 — with 146 Democrats joining Republicans — to establish the House Select Committee on China.

Last year, the U.S. Commerce Department added dozens of Chinese high-tech companies, including makers of aviation equipment, chemicals and computer chips, to an export controls blacklist, citing concerns over national security, U.S. interests and human rights. That move prompted the Chinese to file a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization.

Yellen has been critical of China's trade practices and its relationship with Russia, as the two countries have deepened their economic ties since the start of the war in Ukraine. On a July call with Liu, Yellen talked "frankly" about the impact of the Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the global economy and "unfair, non-market" economic practices, according to a U.S. recap of the call.

At Davos, UN chief warns the world is in a 'sorry state'

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — The world is in a “sorry state” because of myriad “interlinked” challenges including climate change and Russia’s war in Ukraine that are “piling up like cars in a chain reaction crash,” the U.N. chief said at the World Economic Forum’s meeting Wednesday.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivered his gloomy message on the second day of the elite gathering of world leaders and corporate executives in the Swiss ski resort of Davos. Sessions took a grim turn when news broke of a helicopter crash in Ukraine that killed 16 people, including Ukraine’s interior minister and other officials.

Forum President Borge Brende requested 15 seconds of silence and Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska dabbed teary eyes, calling it “another very sad day,” then telling attendees that “we can also change this negative situation for the better.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was scheduled to address the conclave by video link as the Ukrainian delegation that includes his wife pushes for more aid, including weapons, from international allies to fight Russia. Speaking shortly before Zelenskyy is German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who is facing pressure to send tanks to help Ukraine and is the only leader to attend Davos from the Group of 7 biggest economies.

Guterres said the “gravest levels of geopolitical division and mistrust in generations” are undermining efforts to tackle global problems, which also include widening inequality, a cost-of-living crisis sparked by soaring inflation and an energy crunch, lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, supply-chain disruptions and more.

He singled out climate change as an “existential challenge,” and said a global commitment to limit the Earth’s temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius “is nearly going up in smoke.”

Guterres, who has been one of the most outspoken world figures on climate change, referenced a recent study that found scientists at Exxon Mobil made remarkably accurate predictions about the effects of climate change as far back as the 1970s, even as the company publicly doubted that warming was real.

“We learned last week that certain fossil fuel producers were fully aware in the 1970s that their core product was baking our planet,” he said in his speech. “Some in Big Oil peddled the big lie.”

Critics have questioned the impact of the four-day meeting where politicians, CEOs and other leaders discuss the world’s problems — and make deals on the sidelines — but where concrete action is harder to measure. Environmentalists, for example, slam the carbon-spewing private jets that ferry in bigwigs to an event that prioritizes the battle against climate change.

On the second day, government officials, corporate titans, academics and activists were attending dozens of panel sessions on topics covering the metaverse, environmental greenwashing and artificial intelligence.

Ukraine has taken center stage as the anniversary of the war nears, with Zelenska pressing attendees to do more to help her country at a time when Russia’s invasion is leaving children dying and the world struggling with food insecurity.

The crash added more tragedy after a Russian missile strike hit an apartment building over the weekend in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro, killing dozens of people in one of the deadliest single attacks in months.

But Ukraine is gaining additional international support: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Tuesday that the Netherlands plans to “join” the U.S. and Germany’s efforts to train and arm Ukraine with advanced Patriot defense systems.

The German government has faced mounting pressure to make another significant step forward in military aid to Ukraine by agreeing to deliver Leopard 2 battle tanks. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin is scheduled to visit Berlin this week and then host a meeting of allies at Ramstein Air Base in western Germany.

Guterres was not optimistic that the conflict, being waged less than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Davos, could end soon.

“There will be an end of this war. There is the end of everything. But I do not see the end of the war

in the immediate future," he said. Deep historical differences between Russia and Ukraine make it more difficult to find a solution based on international law and that respects territorial integrity, he added.

"For the moment, I don't think that we have a chance to promote or to mediate a serious negotiation to achieve peace in the short term," Guterres said.

AP journalists Masha Macpherson and David Keyton in Davos and Kelvin Chan in London contributed.

Follow AP's coverage of the World Economic Forum meeting at <https://apnews.com/hub/world-economic-forum>.

Ukraine interior minister, others killed in helicopter crash

By MALAK HARB Associated Press

BROVARY, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's interior minister died Wednesday in a helicopter crash near the capital that killed at least another 14 people, including other officials and three children, authorities said.

Interior Minister Denys Monastyrskiy, who oversaw Ukraine's police and emergency services, is the most senior official to die since Russia invaded nearly 11 months ago. His death, along with two others from his ministry, was the second calamity in four days to clobber Ukraine, after a Russian missile strike on an apartment building killed dozens of civilians.

There was no immediate word on whether the crash, which was near a kindergarten, was an accident or related to the war. No fighting has been reported recently in the Kyiv area.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the crash was "a terrible tragedy" on a "black morning."

"The pain is unspeakable," he wrote on Telegram.

British Home Secretary Suella Braverman called Monastyrskiy "a leading light in supporting the Ukrainian people during Putin's illegal invasion." She said she was "struck by his determination, optimism and patriotism."

Monastyrskiy's deputy Yevhen Yenin and State Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Yurii Lubkovych were also among those killed, according to the chief of Ukraine's National Police. Senior officials routinely travel by helicopter during the conflict.

Nine of those killed were aboard the chopper when it crashed in Brovary, an eastern suburb of the Ukrainian capital, Ihor Klymenko said. The others who died were apparently on the ground.

Kyiv Regional Governor Oleksii Kuleba said 18 people overall were killed, including three children, and that 25 were injured. Ukraine's Emergency Service, however, put the death toll at 15. It was not immediately possible to confirm if that was old information or a revised figure.

At the scene of the crash, at least four bodies on the ground were covered by reflective sheets as officials cleared helicopter debris from a kindergarten playground. Wreckage also sat on top of a charred vehicle and a building.

"It is too early to talk about the reasons," for the crash, the spokesperson for Ukraine's Air Forces, Yurii Ihnat, told a television channel. He said an investigation could take some time.

The helicopter was a Super Puma supplied by France, he added.

The Security Service of Ukraine is conducting an investigation, prosecutor general Andriy Kostin said. "For now, we are considering all possible versions of the helicopter crash accident," he said on Telegram.

The crash comes at a particularly dark period in the war for Ukraine, just days after the Russian strike on the apartment building in southeastern Ukraine killed 45 people, including six children — the deadliest attack on civilians since the spring.

"Another very sad day today — new losses," said Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, dabbing teary eyes and pinching her nose as she responded to the news while at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The forum held 15 seconds of silence after opening the session to honor the Ukrainian officials killed.

"Haven't had time to recover from one tragedy, there is already another one," said the deputy head of

the Ukrainian presidential office Kyrylo Tymoshenko.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

Police in Georgia arrest suspect in Mall of America shooting

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (AP) — A suspect wanted in connection with a fatal shooting at the Mall of America in December was arrested in Georgia on Tuesday, police said.

Bloomington, Minnesota, Police Chief Booker Hodges said during a news conference Tuesday that the 17-year-old suspect was taken into custody in Decatur, Georgia, by federal and state law enforcement officials. The suspect faces charges of second-degree murder and second-degree assault.

The Associated Press typically does not name juvenile criminal defendants.

Johntae Hudson, 19, was killed in a Dec. 23 shooting at the Mall of America, the nation's largest shopping center located in Bloomington.

Hudson was shot eight times and died during an altercation inside the mall's Nordstrom store. Witnesses, mall security guards and first responders tried to save him. Customers scrambled for safety and the nation's largest shopping center went into lockdown on one of the final days of the holiday shopping season.

The suspect arrested Tuesday in Decatur, an Atlanta suburb, was one of four suspects charged by Minnesota prosecutors in December. They include two other 17-year-olds and 18-year-old Taeshawn Adams Wright. Wright faces counts of second-degree murder and second-degree assault. The two 17-year-olds have been charged with second-degree riot while armed with a dangerous weapon.

Hodges said police on Tuesday also arrested the teenage suspect's mother in Golden Valley, Minnesota. She was charged with aiding and abetting the suspect for allegedly driving him to Georgia following the shooting.

The suspect remains in custody in Georgia pending extradition to Minnesota. The U.S. Marshals Service, Southeast Regional Fugitive Task Force, the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office were involved in the arrest Tuesday, WAGA-TV reported.

"This is another example of guns being placed in the hands of immature young people, resulting in deadly consequences in what was once safe public places," U.S. Marshal Thomas Brown said in a statement, WAGA-TV reported.

Feds to investigate nursing home abuse of antipsychotics

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government says it will begin a targeted crackdown on nursing homes' abuse of antipsychotic drugs and misdiagnoses of schizophrenia in patients.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is launching investigations this month into select nursing homes, aimed at verifying whether patients have been properly diagnosed with the psychiatric disorder.

Evidence has mounted over decades that some facilities wrongly diagnose residents with schizophrenia or administer antipsychotic drugs to sedate them, despite dangerous side effects that could include death, according to the agency.

"No nursing home resident should be improperly diagnosed with schizophrenia or given an inappropriate antipsychotic," Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement Wednesday. "The steps we are taking today will help prevent these errors and give families peace of mind."

Some facilities may be dodging increased scrutiny around gratuitous use of antipsychotic medications by coding residents as having schizophrenia, even when they do not show signs of the extremely rare disorder, a government report last year found. Less than 1% of the population is believed to have schizophrenia, which is marked by delusions, hallucinations and disordered thinking.

In 2012, the federal government began tracking when nursing homes use antipsychotics on residents — doing so can impact the facility's quality rating in a public database — but only for those who have not

been diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Antipsychotics for those nursing home residents has dropped to under 20% in recent years, according to federal data.

A November report from the HHS Office of the Inspector General, however, revealed that the number of residents reported as having schizophrenia without a corresponding diagnosis skyrocketed between 2015 and 2019, with 99 nursing homes in the country reporting that 20% or more of their residents have the disorder.

"The number of unsupported schizophrenia diagnoses increased and in 2019 was concentrated in relatively few nursing homes," the report concluded.

CMS will start targeted audits to ask nursing homes for documentation of the diagnoses in the coming days, focusing on nursing homes with existing residents who have been recorded as having schizophrenia.

The rating scores for nursing homes that have a pattern of inaccurately coding residents as having schizophrenia will be negatively impacted, CMS said in a statement released Wednesday, stopping short of threatening to levy fines against facilities.

The agency does not have plans to immediately intervene in the patients' care directly or notify relatives of residents who have been wrongly coded or given antipsychotics, according to senior HHS officials who insisted on anonymity to brief The Associated Press on the matter on Tuesday.

CMS will monitor the facilities to make sure the issues are corrected, officials said.

Deaf student's lawsuit at center of Supreme Court case

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Wednesday will hear a case that could make it more difficult for students with disabilities to resolve problems quickly when they're not getting needed assistance in public schools.

The question for the justices involves a federal law that guarantees disabled students an education specific to their needs.

Lawyers for Miguel Luna Perez, a deaf student who attended public school in Sturgis, Michigan, said that for more than a decade the school system failed to provide him with a qualified sign language interpreter and misled his parents into believing he was on track to earn his high school diploma. Just before graduation, however, his family was told he qualified only for a "certificate of completion," not a diploma.

His family responded by pursuing claims under two laws, the broad Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination against disabled people, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The IDEA guarantees children with disabilities a free public education that is tailored to their specific needs.

Perez's family and the school district ultimately settled the IDEA claims. The school district agreed to pay for extra schooling and sign language instruction for Perez and his family, among other things. The family then went to federal court and, under the ADA, sought monetary damages, which aren't available under the IDEA.

Lower courts, however, said that to sue under the ADA Perez should not have agreed to a settlement.

Former federal education officials are among those who told the court that those lower court decisions are wrong. The officials say upholding them would hurt children with disabilities by forcing them to choose between immediately getting issues resolved but forfeiting other claims and delaying to try to get fuller relief.

While the IDEA encourages settlements, upholding the lower court decision would force students and their families to "forgo speedy relief and waste time, money and administrative resources" to preserve their other claims, they said. The Biden administration is also urging the court to side with Perez.

A national school board association and an association of school superintendents, however, are among those who believe lower courts were right. They say ruling otherwise would weaken the IDEA's collaborative process to resolve issues and lead to more lengthy and expensive court proceedings.

The case is Perez v. Sturgis Public Schools, 21-887.

UK nurses stage new walkout as strike wave intensifies

LONDON (AP) — Thousands of nurses in Britain walked out Wednesday in a new protest over pay, with no end in sight to a wave of strikes that has piled pressure on the U.K.'s overburdened public health system.

Two 12-hour strikes on Wednesday and Thursday affect about a quarter of hospitals and clinics in England. Emergency care and cancer treatment will continue, but thousands of appointments and procedures are likely to be postponed.

Nurses, ambulance crews, train drivers, airport baggage handlers, border staff, driving instructors, bus drivers and postal workers have all walked off their jobs in recent months to demand higher pay amid a cost-of-living crisis.

Inflation in the U.K. hit a 41-year high of 11.1% in October, driven by sharply rising energy and food costs, before easing slightly to 10.5% in December.

The nurses' union has been seeking a pay raise of 5% above inflation, though it has said it will accept a lower offer. The Conservative government argues that double-digit public sector pay increases will drive inflation even higher.

"Unaffordable pay hikes will mean cutting patient care and stoking the inflation that would make us all poorer," Health Secretary Steve Barclay wrote in the Independent newspaper.

The government also has angered unions by introducing a bill that will make it harder for key workers to strike by setting "minimum safety levels" for firefighters, ambulance services and railways that must be maintained during a walkout.

The Royal College of Nurses union has announced two more strike days next month, when disruption across the economy looks set to intensify. Feb. 1 is shaping up to be the most disruptive day yet, with walkouts by teachers, train drivers, civil servants and university staff. Ambulance staff are due to announce more strike dates later Wednesday.

Pat Cullen, head of the Royal College of Nursing, said the union had "extended an olive branch, in fact the whole tree, to government" and urged health officials to "get round a table and let's stop the strikes so we don't have to continue this into February."

"I would say to the prime minister this morning: If you want to continue to have strikes, then the voice of nursing will continue to speak up on behalf of their patients and that's exactly what you will get," she told ITV.

Nobel winner Maria Ressa, news outlet cleared of tax evasion

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa and her online news company were cleared Wednesday of tax evasion charges she said were among a slew of legal cases used by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to try to muzzle critical reporting.

The Court of Tax Appeals ruled that prosecutors failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that Ressa and Rappler Holdings Corp. evaded tax payments in four instances after raising capital through partnerships with two foreign investors. "The acquittal of the accused is based on the findings of the court ... that respondents did not commit the crime charge," the court said in its decision.

Rappler welcomed the ruling as a "triumph of facts over politics."

"We thank the court for this just decision and for recognizing that the fraudulent, false, and flimsy charges made by the Bureau of Internal Revenue do not have any basis in fact," Rappler said in a statement. "An adverse decision would have had far-reaching repercussions on both the press and the capital markets."

"Today, facts win, truth wins, justice wins," Ressa said after the verdict was announced, fighting back tears. "This acquittal, even if took a long time, is not just for Rappler. It is for every Filipino who has ever been unjustly accused."

Human Rights Watch said the tax charges under Duterte's rule were "bogus and politically motivated" and the acquittal of Ressa and Rappler "is a victory for press freedom in the Philippines."

Ressa won the Nobel Peace Prize with Russian journalist Dmitry Muratov in 2021 for fighting for the survival of their news organizations, defying government efforts to shut them. They were honored for "their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace."

The tax charges against Ressa and Rappler stemmed from a separate charge by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Manila's corporate watchdog, in 2018 that the news website violated a constitutional provision prohibiting foreign ownership and control of Philippine media companies by receiving funds from foreign investors Omidyar Network and North Base Media through financial papers called Philippine Depositary Receipts.

The commission ordered the closure of Rappler on the basis of the allegation, which Rappler denied and has appealed, saying it is a news company totally owned and controlled by Filipinos.

The tax court ruled that the Philippine Depositary Receipts issued by Rappler were non-taxable, removing the basis of the tax evasion charges filed by Justice Department prosecutors under Duterte.

"No gain or income was realized by accused in the subject transactions," the court said.

There was no immediate reaction from the government and Duterte.

Ressa and Rappler face three more legal cases — a separate tax case filed by prosecutors in another court, her Supreme Court appeal of an online libel conviction, and Rappler's appeal of the closure order issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Ressa faces up to six years in prison if she loses the appeal of the libel conviction, which was filed by a businessman who said a Rappler news report falsely linked him to a murder, drug dealing, human trafficking and other crimes.

Rappler, founded in 2012, was one of several Philippine and international news agencies that reported critically on Duterte's brutal crackdown on illegal drugs that left thousands of mostly petty drug suspects dead and his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, including prolonged police-enforced lockdowns, that deepened poverty, caused one of the country's worst recessions and sparked corruption allegations in government medical purchases.

The massive drug killings are being investigated by the International Criminal Court as a possible crime against humanity.

Duterte ended his often-turbulent six-year term last year and was succeeded by Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of a dictator who was overthrown in an army-backed "people power" uprising in 1986 following an era marked by widespread human rights violations and plunder.

Quake shakes east Indonesia, south Philippines; no tsunami

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A magnitude 7.0 earthquake shook eastern Indonesia and southern Philippines on Wednesday, with no damage immediately reported and no tsunami warning issued.

Some residents tried to escape from houses in the Indonesian town of Tobelo in North Maluku province.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake occurred 48 kilometers (30 miles) deep under the sea, centered 154 kilometers (94 miles) northwest of Tobelo.

Resident Pius Ohoiwutun said some people ran from houses when the quake shook. "I felt a little swaying as the lamps also swayed," Ohoiwutun said.

The undersea quake was also felt in several provinces and cities across the southern Philippines, but there was no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

No tsunami warning was issued by Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency.

Both archipelago nations lie on the "Ring of Fire," the arc of seismic faults around the Pacific Basin where most of the world's earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur.

A magnitude 6.1 quake also shook eastern Indonesia earlier Wednesday morning. No damage was reported.

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake on Nov. 21 killed at least 331 people in Indonesia's West Java province. It was the deadliest quake in Indonesia since 2018.

In 2004, an extremely powerful Indian Ocean quake set off a tsunami that killed more than 230,000

people in a dozen countries, most of them in Indonesia's Aceh province.

Lunar New Year rush starts in China after virus rules lifted

BEIJING (AP) — Hairdresser Wang Lidan is making an emotional Lunar New Year journey from Beijing to her hometown in northeastern China — her first in three years after the government lifted its strict “zero-COVID” policy that kept millions of people at home and sparked protests.

The relaxation of restrictions let loose a wave of pent-up travel desire, particularly around China's most important time for family gatherings. Referred to in China as the Spring Festival, it may be the only time of the year when urban workers return to their hometowns.

The Chinese government expects over 2.1 billion journeys to be made during a 40-day travel period around New Year's Day, which falls on Sunday.

“The restrictions are lifted, which made me relaxed. So I think it's time to go home,” Wang said before heading into Beijing Train Station for a trip to Heilongjiang province.

In December, China abruptly dropped near-daily coronavirus testing and QR code monitoring of residents after public frustration boiled over into protests in Shanghai and other cities. This month, it dropped most remaining restrictions, including the demand that travelers from overseas must go into lengthy and expensive quarantine.

Many local governments had also imposed their own quarantine on travelers from outside the area, and it was those that Wang said had deterred her from leaving Beijing.

“If there was an outbreak in Beijing, I would have to be quarantined in my hometown. And when I came back to Beijing, I would be quarantined again,” she said.

“I would miss the Spring Festival and delay my return to work if I was quarantined twice. So inconvenient!”

Hu Jinyuan, from the eastern province of Shandong, had managed to return home each year despite the hassles. He says he plans to continue with regular COVID-19 testing and other safety measures as infections surged and patients flooded hospitals following the lifting of restrictions.

“I do nucleic acid tests every now and then. When I arrive in my hometown, I will surely do a test as a way of self-protection. Otherwise I won't know if I'm infected. If I'm infected, I will just isolate myself at home,” Hu said.

Wang Jingli said he decided to work through the holidays since his company would triple his overtime pay. With the COVID-19 restrictions canceled, his children and wife will visit him in Beijing from their hometown in Henan province.

“With the reopening, everyone is very happy about the Spring Festival because we can reunite with our families. But because of my work, I would spend my Spring Festival here in Beijing.”

While Lunar New Year has also become a popular time to travel overseas, airlines are still only gradually restarting international flights and government departments are just beginning to issue or renew travel documents.

Many countries have imposed testing requirements on travelers from China that the Foreign Ministry has protested, and worries remain about the spread of the virus in China since containment measures were lifted.

Fugitive's arrest like a 'quake,' but Mafia very resilient

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Matteo Messina Denaro's long record as a killer — turncoat mobsters said he'd boast of enough murders to fill a cemetery — greatly burnished his credentials among his peers as a major boss in the Sicilian Mafia.

After 30 years eluding capture while still running much of the Mafia's affairs, he was arrested Monday at a Palermo clinic, where the convicted mobster was receiving chemotherapy. But while he was hustled off early Tuesday to a maximum-security prison on the Italian mainland, his capture is hardly expect to

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bring the demise of the Cosa Nostra, thanks to the syndicate's more than century-old roots and rules.

"What will happen in detail, we can't know," Palermo Prosecutor General Lia Sava, said on Rai state radio about the future of the Mafia.

"But one thing is sure. Cosa Nostra is made up of rules. It has supported itself on these rules for 150 years, so certainly it will put into motion those rules to repair the damage, and thus create the new leadership structure needed after the arrest," Sava said.

While Messina Denaro wielded great influence in the Mafia, for decades Cosa Nostra has lacked a supreme capo, investigators say.

The practically mythical figure of a "boss of bosses" ended in 1993, with the arrest in a Palermo hideout of Salvatore "Totò" Riina, who had been Italy's top fugitive for 23 years.

According to trial testimony that led to his conviction for many murders, including the 1992 bombings that killed Italy's top two anti-Mafia magistrates, Riina was in charge of Cosa Nostra's "commission" that ran illicit businesses and devised a strategy of deadly retaliation against the state for its crackdown on the mob.

"After Riina there was never an absolute boss," said Rome Chief Prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi, who took up his post last year after serving as Palermo chief prosecutor, helping coordinate the hunt for Messina Denaro.

Even if the "capo di capi" figure still existed, Messina Denaro wouldn't have qualified because he came from Castelvetrano on Sicily's western edge, not from Palermo or its surrounding countryside, Lo Voi noted, citing Cosa Nostra's rules.

Still, Messina Denaro, the son of a crime boss, "was one of the most important bosses and (he) had ties with other criminal organizations in Italy and abroad," Lo Voi told The Associated Press.

"That's why his arrest surely represents an earthquake at this moment for Cosa Nostra," Lo Voi said.

Also boosting Messina Denaro's prestige was his fierce record as a murderous clan boss, holding sway over a large swath of western Sicily, Lo Voi said.

A military plane ferried Messina Denaro Tuesday to a maximum security prison in L'Aquila, in the central Apennine mountains, where strict rules for top organized crime bosses who won't cooperate with authorities include sharply limited visitor privileges.

Italy's national anti-Mafia prosecutor, Giovanni Melillo, said that finally putting Messina Denaro behind bars won't change the strategy Cosa Nostra has followed for more than a decade.

That strategy is "no longer one of violence" against the state, Melillo said on state TV Monday night, referring to the 1992 bombings that killed Palermo prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, and the 1993 bomb attacks against Rome churches, the Uffizi Galleries in Florence and an art gallery in Milan, part of the Mafia's bid to try to get the state to drop its crackdown on Cosa Nostra.

Instead Cosa Nostra is lying low, opting to "co-penetrate the social and economic fabric" of Italy, Melillo said.

A small army of turncoats helped Italian authorities put scores of Cosa Nostra members behind bars in the last few decades, and as a consequence, gave boost to the 'ndrangheta crime syndicate in Italy's southern "toe," allowing it to eclipse the Sicilian mob in influence to become one of the world's biggest cocaine brokers.

In the 1980s, an FBI undercover operation working with Italian investigators, including Falcone, broke up a multi-million heroin ring and cocaine distribution operation involving Sicilian Mafia figures and the Gambino crime family in New York.

But Cosa Nostra lately "has gone back in a big way to drug trafficking," including cocaine, synthetic illegal drugs and heroin, Lo Voi said. With enough drug trade to go around, there's no real rivalry between Cosa Nostra and the 'ndrangheta, he added.

With drug trafficking, "the earnings are enormous and the activity is less dangerous than extortion," Lo Voi said.

Pressuring local businesses to pay crime clans monthly protection money, known as "pizzo," has long

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been a mainstay of Cosa Nostra's activity.

But some 15 years ago, grass-roots groups of young people in Palermo rebelled against their elders' longtime surrender to the practice. Forming an organization called "Addiopizzo," or "Farewell Pizzo," they encouraged businesses to report extortionists to authorities instead of paying them.

Control of local territory is crucial for the Mafia's existence.

Lo Voi said during the COVID-19 pandemic, neighborhood mobsters supplied residents with groceries when breadwinners lost jobs.

That complex relationship — a combination of benefit, fear and even complicity — is suspected of helping Messina Denaro elude the law for 30 years, most of that time in Sicily.

Since his capture, police have been searching his most recent hideout — a home on a dead-end alley in Campobello di Mazara, near Trapani. The owner is Andrea Bonafede, the name the fugitive used on an identity card to receive his cancer treatment.

The real Bonafede is under investigation, including at least one of the doctors who had been involved in the fugitive's treatment at the clinic beginning in late 2020, Italian news reports said.

Fellow cancer patients told La Repubblica daily that the man who wore designer scarves and hand-painted shirts freely chatted with them while receiving chemotherapy and sometimes gave them bottles of olive oil.

Six years ago, Italian authorities confiscated 13 million euros worth of olive groves and bottling facilities linked to Messina Denaro in the countryside near Trapani.

Shouts of "Bravi!" rose in the street outside the clinic when two Carabinieri officers brought him out of the clinic.

But others wondered about why it took decades to capture him.

"I had expected for a long time that it would happen, but it is absurd that it took 30 years," Salvatore Borsellino, brother of the slain prosecutor, told AP in a video interview from Palermo.

It's clear "that he enjoyed cover" on the local level, Borsellino said. "But there must have been institutional complicity" as well.

Qantas plane lands safely after mayday call over Pacific

SYDNEY (AP) — A Qantas flight traveling from New Zealand to Sydney landed safely on a single engine after it issued a mayday call over the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday.

Qantas Flight 144 with 145 passengers aboard landed at Sydney Airport from Auckland, New Zealand, after a 3.5-hour flight between the neighboring nations' most populous cities.

The Boeing 737-838 "experienced an issue" with one of its two engines about an hour from Sydney, a Qantas statement said.

The mayday, which is issued when a flight is in grave and imminent danger and needs immediate assistance, was downgraded to a PAN-PAN -- possible assistance needed — before the flight landed.

Qantas said the pilot shut down the engine, but did not specify the problem.

"While inflight engine shutdowns are rare, and would naturally be concerning for passengers, our pilots are trained to manage them safely and aircraft are designed to fly for an extended period on one engine," Qantas said.

Passengers told reporters in Sydney that they were told when they left the plane that an engine had failed.

They described their experience of the engine malfunction as a "slight shudder" and "bumpy-like turbulence." Some reported hearing a bang.

Sydney Airport said emergency crews were put on standby as a precaution, including firefighters, ambulances and police.

Neil Hanford, chairman of Strategic Aviation Solutions, a Sydney-based industry consultancy, said 737s can fly quickly and land safely on a single engine.

Saved from death at sea, Syrian refugees face deportation

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

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TRIPOLI, Lebanon (AP) — On New Year's Eve, a small boat carrying more than 230 would-be migrants, most of them Syrians, broke down and began to sink after setting sail from the northern coast of Lebanon.

Since the collapse of Lebanon's economy in 2019, an increasing number of people — mostly Syrian and Palestinian refugees but also Lebanese citizens — have tried to leave the country and reach Europe by sea. The attempts often turn deadly.

This time, rescue crews from Lebanon's navy and U.N. peacekeepers deployed along the border with Israel, were able to save all but two of the passengers, a Syrian woman and a child who drowned. For many of the survivors, however, the relief was fleeting.

After bringing them back to shore, to the port of Tripoli, where they recovered overnight, the Lebanese army loaded nearly 200 rescued Syrians into trucks and dropped them on the Syrian side of an unofficial border crossing in Wadi Khaled, a remote area of northeastern Lebanon, some of the survivors and human rights monitors said.

It remained unclear who had ordered the deportation but the incident marked an apparent escalation in the Lebanese army's deportations of Syrians at a time of heightened anti-refugee rhetoric in the small, crisis-ridden nation. Officials with the army and General Security — the agency normally responsible for managing immigration issues — did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Once on the other side of the border, the boat survivors were intercepted by men wearing Syrian army uniforms who herded them into large plastic greenhouses. They were held captive there until family members paid to have them released and brought back to Lebanon by smugglers.

"It was a matter of buying and selling, buying and selling people," said Yassin al-Yassin, 32, a Syrian refugee living in Lebanon since 2012.

Al-Yassin said he paid \$600 — to be split between the Syrian army and the smugglers — to have his brother brought back to Lebanon. Syrian officials did not respond to requests for comment on the allegations.

One of the boat survivors, Mahmoud al-Dayoub, a 43-year-old refugee from the Syrian area of Homs, said he overheard their captors negotiating the price of each detainee.

"I don't know if it was the Syrian army or the smugglers," said Dayoub, who has also been registered as a refugee in Lebanon since 2012,

"There were 30 people surrounding us with guns and we didn't know what was going on," he said. "All I cared about was not being taken to Syria, because if I'm taken to Syria, I might not come back."

Dayoub said he managed to slip away and flee back across the border — his family never paid a ransom for him.

Human rights monitors say the case of the boat survivors is a troubling new twist in Lebanon's ongoing push for Syrian refugees to go home.

Lebanon hosts some 815,000 registered Syrian refugees and potentially hundreds of thousands more who are unregistered, the highest population of refugees per capita in the world. But since the country's economic meltdown erupted three years ago, Lebanese officials have increasingly called for a mass return of the Syrians.

Lebanon's General Security agency has tried to coax the refugees into going home voluntarily, with anemic results. In some cases, the agency has deported people back to Syria, citing a 2019 regulation allowing unauthorized refugees who entered Lebanon after April of that year to be deported.

Reports by human rights organizations have cited cases of returning refugees being forcibly detained and tortured, allegations Lebanese authorities deny. Until recently, deportations mostly involved small numbers of people and were carried out under formal procedures, giving the U.N. and human rights groups a chance to intervene and, in some cases, halt them.

What happened to the boat survivors, "is a violation of human rights and of the Lebanese laws and international treaties," said Mohammed Sablouh, a Lebanese human rights lawyer.

Lisa Abou Khaled, a spokesperson for the U.N. refugee agency in Lebanon, said the UNHCR was "following up with the relevant authorities" on the case. "All individuals who are rescued at sea and who may have a fear of (returning) to their country of origin should have the opportunity to seek protection," she said.

The Lebanese army regularly returns people caught crossing illegally from Syria.

Jimmy Jabbour, a member of Parliament representing the northern Akkar district, which includes Wadi Khaled, said that when army patrols intercept would-be migrants who crossed into Lebanon through smuggler routes, they often round them up and dump them in the no man's land across the border — instead of initiating formal deportation proceedings.

Afterward, the deportees simply pay smugglers to bring them in again, Jabbour said, adding that he had complained to the army about the practice.

"It's not the army's job to create work opportunities for the smugglers," he said. "The job of the army is to hand them over to General Security ... and General Security is supposed to hand them over to the Syrian authorities."

In contrast to the newly entered migrants, the New Year's Eve boat survivors included refugees who had been living in Lebanon for more than a decade and were registered with the United Nations.

One of them, a Syrian woman from Idlib who spoke on condition of anonymity fearing retaliation, said she spent two nights detained at the border before her relatives paid \$300 for her to be released back into Lebanon.

"I can't return (to Syria). I would rather die and throw myself in the sea," she said.

Jasmin Lilian Diab, director of the Institute for Migration Studies at the Lebanese American University, said many refugees take to the sea to avoid deportation.

Diab said her institute found a spike in migrant boats leaving Lebanon in late 2022. Some told her team of researchers that they left because of the increasingly aggressive anti-refugee rhetoric. They feared "deportations were going to happen and that they were going to be sent back to Syria," Diab said.

"So they felt like it was their only chance to get out of here."

Associated Press writers Kareem Chehayeb and Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

Shooter stood over California mom holding baby, killed both

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A shooter stood over a 16-year-old mother clutching her 10-month-old baby and pumped bullets into their heads in a brazen attack in a central California farming community that left six dead at a home linked to drugs and guns, a sheriff said Tuesday.

Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux said the teenager was fleeing the violence early Monday when the killers caught up to her outside the home in Goshen, a central California community of about 3,000 residents in the agricultural San Joaquin Valley, and shot the young mother and her child "assassination-style."

The other four victims ranged from 19 to 72 years old, including a grandmother who was shot as she slept. Their autopsies are expected to be completed later in the week.

Authorities said they were searching for two suspects and offered a \$10,000 reward for information leading to their arrests.

"None of this was by accident," Boudreaux said during a news conference Tuesday. "It was deliberate, intentional and horrific."

Boudreaux walked back his earlier comments to reporters that the attack was likely a cartel hit, saying that investigators are also looking into whether it was gang violence.

"I am not eliminating that possibility," the sheriff said. "These people were clearly shot in the head and they were also shot in places where the shooter would know that a quick death would occur ... This is also similar to high-ranking gang affiliation and the style of executions that they commit."

Law enforcement is familiar with the home, the sheriff said, citing gang activity there that "has routinely occurred in the past" without giving any specifics. He added that not everyone who was shot was a drug dealer or gang member — and said that among the victims believed to be innocent are the teen, her grandmother, and of course, the baby.

The sheriff's department on Tuesday identified the victims as: Rosa Parraz, 72; Eladio Parraz, Jr., 52;

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Jennifer Analla, 49; Marcos Parraz, 19; Alissa Parraz, 16; and Nycholas Parraz, 10 months.

Boudreaux said "there was no reason" for the shooters to kill the young mother and her child.

"I know for a fact this 10-month-old baby was relying on the comfort of his mother. There was no reason for them to shoot that baby, but they did," he said.

Samuel Pina said Alissa was his granddaughter and the baby, Nycholas, was his great-grandson.

"I can't wrap my head around what kind of monster would do this," he told The Associated Press on Monday.

Pina said Parraz and her baby were living with her father's side of the family in Goshen, and that her dad's uncle, her dad's cousin, her grandmother and her great-grandmother were also killed.

He said the family is in shock.

"It comes in big waves," he said.

Authorities received a call at 3:38 a.m. Monday about multiple shots being fired — so many that it initially seemed like an active shooter situation — at the residence in the town of Goshen, some 170 miles (273.59 kilometers) south of downtown Los Angeles.

It was later determined the person who made the call was someone hiding at the property. Deputies arrived seven minutes later and found two bodies outside the home in the street, and a third body at the doorstep, Boudreaux said.

Deputies found more victims inside the home, including the grandmother. Down the street they discovered the teen mom and her baby. A forensics investigation revealed she had tried to run away before the shooter caught up with her and stood over her and fired multiple rounds into her skull, Boudreaux said.

"It is very clear that this family was a target," he said.

Three people survived and will be interviewed by authorities. They include a man who hid in the home as the killings happened.

"He was in such a state of fear that all he could do was hold the door, hoping he was not the next victim," Boudreaux said.

On Jan. 3, a search warrant at the home led to the arrest of Eladio Parraz Jr., a convicted felon who was killed in the shooting Monday — though Boudreaux said Parraz Jr. was not the "initial intended target" and declined to elaborate. Parraz Jr., 52, had an extensive criminal record including driving recklessly to evade arrest, and possessing firearms and drugs, according to prison records.

The search warrant stemmed from a parole compliance check during which investigators found shell casings on the ground, the sheriff said. The occupants refused to let officials inside the home, Boudreaux said.

They returned with a search warrant and arrested Parraz Jr. after discovering ammunition, a rifle, a shotgun and methamphetamine in the home, court records show. He was released on bail four days later.

Rural California is no stranger to drug-related violence. In 2020, seven people were fatally shot in a small, rural Riverside County town where the property had been used for an illegal marijuana growing operation — a common practice in that area.

The following year, a man accidentally shot himself while working at his family's illegal marijuana grow in Butte County's Forbestown. His father and two brothers were accused of moving his body to prevent investigators from discovering the grow site.

Associated Press writer Martha Mendoza in Santa Cruz contributed to this report. Researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York and Video Producer Javier Arciga in San Diego contributed to this report.

Polar bear kills woman, boy in remote Alaska village

WALES, Alaska (AP) — A polar bear has attacked and killed two people in a remote village in western Alaska, according to state troopers.

Alaska State Troopers said they received the report of the attack at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday in Wales, on the western tip of the Seward Peninsula, KTUU reported.

"Initial reports indicate that a polar bear had entered the community and had chased multiple residents,"

troopers wrote. "The bear fatally attacked an adult female and juvenile male."

The bear was shot and killed by a local resident as it attacked the pair, troopers said.

The names of the the two people killed were not released. Troopers said they were working to notify family members.

Troopers and the state Department of Fish and Game are planning to travel to Wales once weather allows for it, the dispatch said.

Wales is a small, predominantly Inupiaq town of about 150 people, just over 100 miles (161 kilometers) northwest of Nome.

Fatal polar bear attacks have been rare in Alaska's recent history. In 1990, a polar bear killed a man farther north of Wales in the village of Point Lay. Biologists later said the animal showed signs of starvation, the Anchorage Daily News reported.

Alaska scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey in 2019 found changes in sea ice habitat had coincided with evidence that polar bears' use of land was increasing and that the chances of a polar bear encounter had increased.

Utah man who killed family faced 2020 abuse investigation

By SAM METZ Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A Utah man who police say fatally shot his wife, her mother and their five kids before turning the gun on himself had been investigated two years prior for child abuse, but local police and prosecutors decided not to criminally charge him, new records released Tuesday show.

Police records obtained by The Associated Press shed light on warning signs and a previous police investigation into a violent pattern of behavior Michael Haight exhibited toward his family.

Authorities said they were aware of previous problems in the home but didn't elaborate during a news conference following the Jan. 4 killings in the small town of Enoch, citing an ongoing investigation.

In a 2020 interview with authorities, Macie Haight, the family's eldest daughter, detailed multiple assaults, including one where she was choked by her father and "very afraid that he was going to keep her from breathing and kill her."

The child abuse investigation followed an Aug. 27, 2020, police call from a non-family member reporting potential child abuse. Macie, then 14, told investigators that her father's violence started in 2017 and had included choking and shaking, including a recent incident where he grabbed her by the shoulders and banged her into a wooden piece along the back of the couch.

Two years later, police found eight bodies at the family's home, including Macie's. The murder-suicide rocked Enoch, an 8,000-person, southern Utah town on the outskirts of Cedar City where neighbors and members of the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints described the Hights as a loving family.

An obituary published in the St. George Spectrum last week described Michael Haight in glowing terms as an Eagle Scout, businessman and father who "made it a point to spend quality time with each and every one of his children." The obituary made no mention of the killings and was taken offline after backlash.

Police believe Haight, 42, carried out the shootings two weeks after his wife had filed for divorce and just days after her relatives say he took guns from the house that could have been used to stop him.

Two years before, in his interview with investigators, Haight denied assaulting his daughter and said the report was a misunderstanding. He said Macie was "mouthy" and admitted to getting angry, attributing some struggles to his father's death and brother's divorce.

The investigator's notes also shed light on Haight's treatment of his wife, Tausha Haight. Macie told investigators that her father would often belittle her mother, a charge he denied. In his interview, however, Michael Haight said he had taken his wife's iPad and cellphone to surveil her text messages to check if she had spoken negatively about his family.

Tausha Haight told authorities she didn't want criminal charges filed against her husband and hoped the incident would be "a wake-up call" for him.

Though an investigator told Michael Haight that his behavior was "close to assaultive," Enoch Police and

the Iron County Attorney decided not to file criminal charges against him.

Enoch Police didn't respond Tuesday to a request for comment about why charges were not filed. The Iron County Attorney's office said in a statement Tuesday that their office had been called in 2020 and determined there was insufficient evidence to pursue charges against Haight.

"Although specifics are not articulated, this conclusion was likely based on an inability to prove each element of the offense(s) beyond reasonable doubt and/or statute of limitations barriers," the statement said.

It added that prosecutors were not sent interview transcripts or police reports from the Enoch Police to review.

Matt Munson, the attorney representing Michael Haight's family, was not immediately available to comment.

Police found the Haight family's bodies after conducting a welfare check based on a call from a friend who said Tausha Haight had missed an appointment earlier in the week.

Officials said last week that law enforcement is continuing to investigate the Haight family deaths. The murder-suicide drew national attention and words of condolence from Utah officials and President Joe Biden. It underscored how family mass killings have become a disturbingly common tragedy across the United States, occurring on average every 3.5 weeks for the last two decades.

Ex-Fox execs go on trial in soccer TV rights bribery case

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two former Fox executives went on trial Tuesday, accused of bribing South American soccer officials for TV rights to one of the continent's biggest annual tournaments and using information gathered in the process to help the network's winning World Cup broadcast bid. It's the latest case to go to court in the sprawling FIFA corruption scandal.

Hernan Lopez and Carlos Martinez are charged with paying bribes and kickbacks to South American Football Confederation officials to broadcast the Copa Libertadores, an annual club tournament akin to the Champions League in Europe, through a partnership with Torneos y Competencias, an Argentine production and marketing company.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Victor Zapana told jurors in an opening statement that the alleged bribes — totaling millions of dollars — fueled a system of secret, no-bid, below-market contracts and "allowed disloyal soccer executives to live a life of luxury, to buy Chanel, to buy Hermes," referencing two popular luxury brands.

"Everyone won except for the game of soccer," Zapana said at the trial in Brooklyn federal court, which is expected to last at least a month.

Prosecutors allege the payoffs enabled Lopez and Martinez to further Fox's other soccer interests, including gaining confidential information from a high-ranking FIFA and confederation official about bidding for U.S. broadcast rights to the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

The bribes, Zapana said, helped "expand Fox's reach."

Lopez, a native of Argentina, is the former chief executive of Fox International Channels. He left the company in 2016 to start the podcasting company Wondery. Martinez, a native of Mexico, is the former president of Fox International's Latin America affiliate.

Fox has denied any involvement in bribery. The company sold the entity involved in the South American soccer broadcasts in 2019 as part of a larger restructuring in which it offloaded its movie studio, cable networks and international assets.

Another sports media and marketing company, Full Play Group SA, is on trial with Lopez and Martinez, but the bribery allegations against that firm involve different TV rights. Full Play, incorporated in Uruguay and owned by the father-son duo Hugo and Mariano Jinkis, is accused of paying bribes for the rights to the Copa America, a quadrennial national team competition, as well as World Cup qualifying matches and one-off matches, known as friendlies.

Lopez and Martinez's lawyers contend the former executives are being framed and retaliated against by their one-time business partner on the Copa Libertadores deals. Alejandro Burzaco, the former head of

Torneos, agreed to cooperate and testify as a star prosecution witness at multiple soccer corruption trials after his own bribery arrest. He is expected to testify Wednesday.

Lopez's lawyer, John Gleeson, argued in his opening statement that it was Burzaco who was secretly bribing officials at the South American confederation, known as CONMEBOL, without Lopez and Martinez's knowledge. Gleeson said Burzaco was now falsely accusing them to enhance his worth to prosecutors and stay out of jail.

Lopez and Martinez started working with Burzaco in 2011, when Fox International Channels took over the South American sports network that had been partnering with Torneos on the Copa Libertadores broadcasts. Gleeson said Burzaco shut the executives out of negotiations with CONMEBOL and refused to provide them with copies of contracts.

Gleeson said Lopez was unaware of Burzaco's conduct — allegedly bribing CONMEBOL officials and snagging some TV rights for himself, instead of the Fox partnership — until 2014, when Burzaco's Uruguayan rival gave him a copy of a renewal contract and an audio recording of the negotiations.

Lopez immediately alerted Fox's internal audit and legal departments, which dispatched a team of accountants and investigators to Argentina, Gleeson said. Burzaco was arrested nine months later.

Gleeson described Burzaco as a "walking, talking criminal enterprise" and a "professional criminal and con man." He implored jurors to decide "if you believe a single word he says" and said that his testifying against Lopez and Martinez was a "chance to get back at his enemy, whom he blames for his demise."

"You're going to witness his attempt at payback," Gleeson said.

Burzaco has pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy and other charges. He testified in 2017 that all three South Americans on the FIFA executive committee took million-dollar bribes to support Qatar's bid for the recently completed 2022 World Cup.

So far, more than two dozen people have pleaded guilty and two people have been convicted at trial in cases stemming from a U.S.-led investigation into tens of millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks at soccer's highest levels. Four corporate entities also pleaded guilty and four companies have entered into deferred prosecution or non-prosecution agreements.

Follow Michael Sisak on Twitter at twitter.com/mikesisak. Send confidential tips by visiting <https://www.ap.org/tips/>.

Drug trial starts for Mexico's former top security official

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The man who was once Mexico's top security official and in charge of fighting the drug cartels went on trial Tuesday on charges he accepted millions of dollars in bribes in exchange for helping the powerful Sinaloa Cartel move drugs and its members avoid capture.

Genaro García Luna was best known as the mumbling, tough-looking former security secretary under ex-President Felipe Calderón, who spearheaded the bloody war on cartels between 2006 and 2012.

Prosecutors say García Luna was so brazen he accepted tens of millions of dollars, often stuffed in briefcases. The evidence against him includes pay stubs, though whether they are from official jobs, private sector consultancy, cartel payments or other bribes is unclear.

They say he continued to live off his ill-gotten proceeds even after he moved to the United States, where he was arrested in 2019, though the defense says he was a legitimate businessman. Jury selection was scheduled to continue Wednesday in the trial scheduled to unfold over the next eight weeks.

In the end, the case could reveal the inner workings of how Mexican cartels have been able to operate so openly for so long: by bribing Mexican police and military right up to the top ranks.

"For decades, Mexico's political elite, of all parties, has sought by any means to have security ministers, generals, police commanders, interior secretaries and high-ranking officials tried and imprisoned in Mexico. ... All that to avoid them giving information on the ties between the drug cartels and politicians," said Mexican security analyst David Saucedo. "García Luna's trial in the United States breaks with that pattern."

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has welcomed the trial, which is expected to cast light on corruption in the administration of Calderón, whom the president accuses of robbing him of the presidency in 2006.

But López Obrador himself fought tooth and nail to avoid a U.S. trial of former Defense Secretary Gen. Salvador Cienfuegos on similar charges in 2020, at one point threatening to kick agents from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration out of Mexico unless the general was returned, which he was.

The trial begins just days after U.S. President Joe Biden met with López Obrador in Mexico City. The two governments pledged continued cooperation against the drug cartels, especially against the scourge of the synthetic opioid fentanyl, which contributed to more than 107,000 drug overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2021. López Obrador scrapped the civilian federal police force that García Luna once led and put the military in charge of much of the country's security.

"It's not the same to put a civilian PAN official on trial, as it is to put a defense secretary on trial, when your whole national security policy rests on the armed forces," said Ana Vanessa Cárdenas, an international security analyst at the Anahuac University, referring to Calderón's conservative National Action Party.

García Luna has pleaded not guilty to drug trafficking charges and a continuing criminal enterprise. He could face decades in prison if convicted.

What he will face in a Brooklyn courtroom is a parade of government witnesses, including high-level cartel members of a kind not seen in Brooklyn since Sinaloa boss Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán was convicted there in 2019 and sentenced to life in prison. Some accusations against García Luna surfaced at the Guzmán trial.

"While holding public office, (García Luna) used his official positions to assist the Sinaloa Cartel ... in exchange for multimillion-dollar bribes," U.S. Attorney Breon Peace wrote in a court filing last week. "At trial, the government expects that numerous witnesses, including several former high-ranking members of the Sinaloa Cartel, will testify about bribes paid to the defendant in exchange for protection."

In exchange for the bribes, García provided the Sinaloa Cartel with "safe passage for its drug shipments, sensitive law enforcement information about investigations into the cartel, and information about rival drug cartels," Peace wrote. "These payments allowed the cartel at times to receive warnings in advance of law enforcement efforts to apprehend cartel members and to allow cartel members to be released if arrested."

Before convicting Guzmán in 2019, jurors in his New York trial heard former cartel member Jesús Zambada testify that he personally made at least \$6 million in hidden payments to García Luna, on behalf of his older brother, cartel boss Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada.

The cartel is now believed to be run by Zambada and at least three of Guzmán's sons, one of whom was arrested earlier this month on an extradition request from the United States.

García Luna isn't the first top Mexican official arrested for involvement with drug traffickers. Gen. Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo was made Mexico's drug czar by President Ernesto Zedillo in 1996. He was arrested the following year after it was discovered he was living in a luxury apartment owned by the leader of the Juarez cartel, Amado Carrillo Fuentes.

Passenger's video captures last moments before Nepal crash

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Airplane passenger Sonu Jaiswal's 90-second smartphone video began with the aircraft approaching the runway by flying over buildings and green fields over Pokhara, a Nepalese city in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Everything looked normal as Jaiswal's livestream on Facebook shifted from the picturesque views seen from the plane's window to fellow passengers who were laughing. Finally, Jaiswal, wearing a yellow sweater, turned the camera to himself and smiled.

Then it happened.

The plane suddenly appeared to veer toward its left as Jaiswal's smartphone briefly captured the cries of passengers. Within seconds the footage turned shaky and recorded the screeching sound of an engine. Toward the end of the video, huge flames and smoke took over the frame.

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The Yeti Airlines flight from Kathmandu that plummeted into a gorge Sunday, killing all 72 on board, was co-piloted by Anju Khatiwada, who had pursued years of pilot training in the United States after her husband died in a 2006 plane crash while flying for the same airline. Her colleagues described her as a skilled pilot who was very motivated.

The deaths of Khatiwada, 44, and Jaiswal, 25, are part of a deadly pattern in Nepal, a country that has seen a series of air crashes over the years, in part due to difficult terrain, bad weather and aging fleets.

On Tuesday, authorities began returning some identified bodies to family members and said they were sending the ATR 72-500 aircraft's data recorder to France for analysis to determine what caused the crash.

In India's Ghazipur city, nearly 430 kilometers (270 miles) south of the crash site in Nepal, Jaiswal's family was distraught and still waiting to identify his body. His father, Rajendra Prasad Jaiswal, had boarded a car to Kathmandu on Monday evening and was expected to reach Nepal's capital late Tuesday.

"It's a tough wait," said Jaiswal's brother, Deepak Jaiswal.

The news of Jaiswal's plane crashing in Pokhara reached his home barely minutes after the accident as news channels began broadcasting images of the aircraft's mangled wreckage, still burning and billowing thick gray smoke, Deepak said.

Still, the family was not willing to trust the news, holding out hope for his survival.

By Sunday evening, however, it had become clear. Deepak, who confirmed the authenticity of Jaiswal's livestream to The Associated Press, was among the first in his family to watch the video that had since gone viral on the internet.

"We couldn't believe the news until we saw the video," he said. "It was painful."

Jaiswal, a father of three children, worked at a local liquor store in Alawalpur Afga village in Uttar Pradesh state's Ghazipur district. Deepak said his brother had gone to Kathmandu to visit Pashupatinath temple — a Hindu shrine dedicated to the god Shiva — and pray for a son, before setting off to Pokhara for sightseeing along with three other friends.

"He was not just my brother," Deepak said. "I have lost a friend in him."

The tragedy was felt deeply in Nepal, where 53 passengers were locals.

Hundreds of relatives and friends of the victims consoled each other Tuesday at a hospital. Families of some victims whose bodies have been identified prepared funerals for their loved ones.

Co-pilot Khatiwada's colleagues, however, were still in disbelief.

"She was a very good pilot and very experienced," Yeti Airlines spokesperson Pemba Sherpa said of Khatiwada.

Khatiwada began flying for Yeti Airlines in 2010 — four years after her husband, Dipak Pokhrel, died in a crash. He was flying a DHC-6 Twin Otter 300 plane for the same airline when it crashed in Nepal's Jumla district and burst into flames, killing all nine people on board. Khatiwada later remarried.

Sherpa said Khatiwada was a "skilled pilot" with a "friendly nature" and had risen to the rank of captain after flying thousands of hours since joining the airline.

"We have lost our best," Sherpa said.

Associated Press journalist Piyush Nagpal contributed to this report.

This version has corrected the year Khatiwada started flying for the airline to 2010, not 2020.

After 2 virtual years, Sundance returns to the mountains

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Randall Park made a pact with himself some years ago that he wouldn't attend the Sundance Film Festival if he didn't have a project there. But the "Fresh Off the Boat" star never imagined that his first time would be as a director and not as an actor.

His adaptation of "Shortcomings," Adrian Tomine's graphic novel about three young-ish Asian Americans finding themselves in the Bay Area, is among the films debuting in competition at the festival, which begins Thursday night in Park City, Utah.

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"Sundance is the pinnacle to me," Park said in a recent interview. "I still can't believe we're going."

Park is just one of hundreds of filmmakers putting finishing touches on passion projects and making the sojourn to Park City this week, looking to make a splash at the first in-person edition of the storied independent film festival in two years.

Festivalgoers will see some unexpected turns from stars, like Jonathan Majors as an amateur bodybuilder in "Magazine Dreams," Emilia Clarke as a futuristic parent in "Pod Generation," Daisy Ridley as a cubicle worker in "Sometimes I Think About Dying" and Anne Hathaway as a glamorous counselor working at a youth prison in 1960s Massachusetts in "Eileen."

"Bridgerton" star Phoebe Dynevor also breaks out of her corset leading the contemporary adult thriller "Fair Play" as an ambitious woman working at a high stakes hedge fund with a boyfriend played by Alden Ehrenreich. Sundance will be her first film festival ever and she's especially excited that it's with one of the best scripts she's ever read.

"It's quite a polarizing one," Dynevor said. "I can't wait to see how everyone responds to it."

The slate of over 100 films premiering around the clock (from 8am to midnight) over 10 days are as diverse as ever. There are three films about Iranian women ("The Persian Version," "Joonam" and "Shayda"), stories about transgender sex workers ("The Stroll," "KOKOMO CITY"), indigenous people ("Twice Colonized," "Bad Press"), women's rights and sexuality ("The Disappearance of Shere Hite") and the war in Ukraine ("20 Days in Mariupol," a joint project between The Associated Press and PBS "Frontline.")

And, as always, there are intimate portraits of famous faces, like Michael J. Fox, Little Richard, Stephen Curry, Judy Blume, the Indigo Girls and Brooke Shields.

Lana Wilson ("Miss Americana") directed the much-anticipated Shields documentary "Pretty Baby," in which Shields reflects on her experiences from child model to teen superstar and beyond, including her complex relationship with her mother, Andre Agassi and the time Tom Cruise publicly criticized her for taking antidepressants.

"I kept coming back to this idea of agency and of her slowly gaining agency first over her mind, then over her career and then over her identity," Wilson said.

If the past two years have proved anything, it's that Sundance doesn't need its picturesque mountainside location to thrive. After all, it was at a virtual edition that the festival hosted the premiere of "CODA," which would become the first Sundance movie to win best picture at the Oscars. "Summer of Soul," another virtual Sundance premiere, also won best documentary last year, and both are getting encore, in-person screenings this year.

But even so, the independent film community — from the newcomers to the veterans — has felt the lack of the real thing. There is, after all, a certain magic about seeing a new film from an unknown in the dead of winter at 7,000 feet elevation wondering, as the lights go down in a cinema overflowing with puffy coats if you might just be among the first to witness the debut of the next Ryan Coogler or Kelly Reichardt.

Erik Feig, the founder and CEO of Picturestart, joked that he's been going to the festival for "a billion years." It's where he saw "Thirteen" and hired Catherine Hardwicke to direct "Twilight," and, years later, "Whiplash," beginning a relationship with Damien Chazelle that would lead to "La La Land." Sundance also is where he saw "Napoleon Dynamite" and "Little Miss Sunshine" for the first time, too, and others that "feel iconic and have been part of the cultural zeitgeist forever. That moment of discovery was at Sundance."

This year, his company is coming armed with a new comedy that could very well enter that canon of Sundance discoveries: "Theater Camp," a heartfelt satire of the musical theater world set at a crumbling upstate New York summer camp (AdirondACTS). The film is a collaboration of longtime friends Molly Gordon, Nick Lieberman, Ben Platt and Noah Galvin.

"I felt so inspired by so many collectives of people that had come up together like Christopher Guest, The Groundlings, The Lonely Island, who made stuff with their friends," Gordon, who co-directed and stars, said. "We thought, let's make something about a world that we know really well and a world that we love. And because we love it, we can make a lot of fun of it."

Some films offer moody genre escapes, like William Oldroyd's adaptation of author Ottessa Moshfegh's

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award-winning "Eileen" starring Thomasin McKenzie and Hathaway.

"It plays into the fantasy that I had as a young woman, like, can I run away and be a different person," Moshfegh said. "I still kind of have that, especially in cinema because we watch movies in order to run away and be different people."

Others promise to open minds about the lives of marginalized communities. Vuk Lungulov-Klotz, who is a transgender filmmaker of Chilean and Serbian descent, is hoping to push trans masculine narratives forward with his film "Mutt," about a trans man who encounters three significant people he hasn't seen in some time one hectic day in New York City.

"It's really exciting to see people want to see stories about trans masculine people and also understand that they can see themselves reflected in us and that we're not very different," Lungulov-Klotz said.

Veteran indie filmmakers will be there with fresh offerings too like Ira Sachs ("Passages") and Sebastián Silva ("Rotting in the Sun"). "Once" director John Carney has a new musical with Eve Hewson and Joseph Gordon-Levitt ("Flora and Son"), Nicole Holofcener reunites with Julia Louis-Dreyfus in "You Hurt My Feelings" and Susanna Fogel adapts the viral New Yorker story "Cat Person" with Emilia Jones and Nicholas Braun.

With COVID-19 outbreaks still happening, some events and gatherings are requiring tests and proof of vaccination. People like Luis Miranda Jr., coming with a documentary he helped produce, "Going Varsity in Mariachi," is planning to mask up while celebrating the movie.

"We're bringing real mariachis to Utah and will have a party with real mariachi music," Miranda said excitedly.

The festival is embracing a different kind of hybrid approach after the success of previous years. Starting on Jan. 24, five days in, many of the films will be available to watch online for people who bought that now sold-out package.

Some films already have distributors in place but many do not and onlookers are interested to see how those acquisitions play out. After several years of deep pocketed streaming services making big plays, the market may have stabilized. Streamers are more cautious and traditional studios have learned how to compete.

Producer Tommy Oliver, the CEO and founder of Confluent Films, has four movies at the festival up for sale: "Fancy Dance," "Young. Wild. Free," "To Live and Die and Live" and "Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project." He knows as well as any that Sundance isn't just a place for celebration and discovery, but for connections too.

His advice for any first timers is simple: "Talk to everyone. Talk to the people who haven't made stuff yet. Talk to the people who are hustling," he said. "And be patient, because you're going to look up in five, 10 years and they'll have made 'Fruitvale Station,' they'll have made 'Beale Street.'"

The Sundance Film Festival runs from Jan. 19 through the 29.

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ldbahr.

US won't seek death penalty for alleged Texas Walmart gunman

By JAKE BLEIBERG and MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

Federal prosecutors will not seek the death penalty for a man accused of fatally shooting nearly two dozen people in a racist attack at a West Texas Walmart in 2019.

The U.S. Department of Justice disclosed the decision not to pursue capital punishment against Patrick Crusius in a one-sentence notice filed Tuesday with the federal court in El Paso.

Crusius, 24, is accused of targeting Mexicans during the Aug. 3 massacre that killed 23 people and left dozens wounded. The Dallas-area native is charged with federal hate crimes and firearms violations, as well as capital murder in state court. He has pleaded not guilty.

Federal prosecutors did not explain in their court filing the reason for their decision, though Crusius still could face the death penalty if convicted in state court.

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The prosecutors' decision could be a defining moment for the Justice Department, which has sent mixed signals on policies regarding the federal death penalty that President Joe Biden pledged to abolish during his presidential campaign. Biden is the first president to openly oppose the death penalty and his election raised the hopes of abolition advocates, who have since been frustrated by a lack of clarity on how the administration might end federal executions or whether that's the objective.

The decision comes weeks after Jaime Esparza, the former district attorney in El Paso, took over as U.S. attorney for West Texas. Esparza said when he was district attorney that he would pursue the death penalty in Crusius' case. A spokesman for Esparza's office referred questions to the Justice Department in Washington, D.C., where another spokesman declined to comment.

Crusius surrendered to police after the attack, saying, "I'm the shooter," and that he was targeting Mexicans, according to an arrest warrant. Prosecutors have said he published a screed online shortly before the shooting that said it was "in response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas."

Lawyers for Crusius did not immediately respond to requests for comment. His case is set for trial in federal court in January 2024.

Although the federal and state cases have progressed along parallel tracks, it is now unclear when Crusius might face trial on state charges.

The district attorney who had been leading the state case, Yvonne Rosales, resigned in November over accusations of incompetence involving hundreds of cases in El Paso and slowing down the case against Crusius. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott last month appointed a new district attorney to "restore confidence" in the local criminal justice system.

Federal prosecutors are still pursuing the death penalty in the case against Sayfullo Saipov, who is accused of using a truck in 2017 to mow down pedestrians and cyclists on a bike path in New York City. Saipov's federal capital trial began last week.

The decision to seek death in Saipov's case came under President Donald Trump, who during his last six months in office oversaw a historic spree of 13 federal executions. Attorney General Merrick Garland announced a moratorium on carrying out federal executions in 2021, but he allowed U.S. prosecutors to continue to seek the death penalty against Saipov while the department reviews Trump era death penalty procedures.

Tarm reported from Chicago. Associated Press writer Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston contributed.

Jury selected for Elon Musk trial about Tesla buyout tweets

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A nine-person jury was seated Tuesday to hear a trial that will determine whether Tesla CEO Elon Musk cheated investors by asserting in 2018 tweets that he had lined up financing to take the electric automaker private.

The five-hour process set the stage for opening statements to begin Wednesday in the case, which is expected to include testimony from Musk to explain his thinking while engaged in one of his favorite activities — tweeting on the Twitter service that he now owns.

In the Tesla case, Musk's tweets fueled a rally in the company's stock price that abruptly ended a week later after it became apparent that he did not have the funding for a buyout after all. Investors then sued him, saying that Tesla shares would not have swung so widely in value if he had not dangled the prospect of buying the company for \$420 per share.

Musk's tweet also attracted the attention of securities regulators, who concluded that it was improper and that he was lying. In a settlement, they forced him to pay \$40 million and required him to step down as Tesla chairman.

He has since contended that he entered the settlement under duress and maintains that he believed he had locked up financial backing for the buyout during meetings with representatives from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.

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Even while he has been making major changes at Twitter, Musk continues to serve as CEO at Tesla and derives most of his wealth and fame from the company.

The trial hinges on an Aug. 7, 2018, tweet in which Musk claimed he had lined up financing to pay for a \$72 billion buyout of Tesla, which he then amplified with a follow-up statement that made a deal seem imminent.

But the buyout never materialized, and now Musk will have to explain his actions under oath in a federal court in San Francisco. The class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of investors who owned Tesla stock for a 10-day period in August 2018.

The trial's outcome may turn on the jury's interpretation of Musk's motive for the tweets, which U.S. District Judge Edward Chen has already decided were false.

The judge dealt Musk another setback on Friday, when he rejected Musk's bid to transfer the trial to a federal court in Texas, where Tesla moved its headquarters in 2021. Musk had argued that negative coverage of his Twitter purchase had poisoned the jury pool in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The challenge of finding jurors without strong feelings about Musk became evident during Tuesday's painstaking selection process.

At one point, the judge flagged some prospective jurors who had expressed extreme misgivings or enthusiasm about Musk in pretrial questionnaires. Seven jurors were questioned individually, away from the rest of the jury pool, to reduce the chances of influencing the opinions of others in the courtroom.

Chen and lawyers for both the shareholders and Musk ended up grilling seven of those jurors, who variously described Musk as "arrogant," "narcissistic," "unpredictable," "a little off his rocker," "a mercenary" and "a genius."

Musk's leadership of Twitter — where he has gutted the staff and alienated users and advertisers — has proven unpopular among Tesla's current stockholders, who are worried that he has been devoting less time to automaker at a time of intensifying competition.

Those concerns contributed to a 65% percent decline in Tesla's stock last year that wiped out more than \$700 billion in shareholder wealth — far more than the \$14 billion swing in fortune that occurred between the company's high and low stock prices from Aug. 7 to Aug. 17, 2018, the period covered in the lawsuit.

Tesla's stock has split twice since then, making that \$420 price worth \$28 on adjusted basis now. The shares closed last week at \$122.40, down from the company's November 2021 split-adjusted peak of \$414.50.

After Musk dropped the idea of a Tesla buyout, the company overcame a production problem, resulting in a rapid upturn in car sales that caused its stock to soar and made Musk the world's richest person until he bought Twitter. Musk dropped from the top spot on the wealth list after a stock market backlash to his handling of Twitter.

The trial is likely to provide insights into Musk's management style, given that the witness list includes some of Tesla's current and former top executives and board members, including luminaries such as Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison and James Murdoch, the son of media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

The drama may shed light on Musk's relationship with his brother, Kimbal, who is also on the list of potential witnesses. The trial is expected to last until early February.

White House defends its delayed, limited document disclosure

By COLLEEN LONG and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House brushed aside criticism Tuesday of its fragmented disclosures about the discovery of classified documents and official records at President Joe Biden's home and former office, saying it may withhold information to protect the Justice Department's investigation.

Ian Sams, a spokesperson for the White House counsel's office, told reporters that the White House was releasing information as it deemed it "appropriate." Responding to criticism of the piecemeal disclosures, Sams said the White House was trying to be mindful of the "risk" in sharing information "that's not complete."

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"We're endeavoring to be as transparent and informative to you all in the media, to the public as we can consistent with respecting the integrity of an ongoing Justice Department investigation," he said.

The discovery of the documents in Biden's possession complicates a federal probe into former President Donald Trump, who the Justice Department says took hundreds of records marked classified with him upon leaving the White House in early 2021 and resisted months of requests to return them to the government.

While the two cases are different — Biden for example, willingly turned over the documents once found — it still has become a political headache for a president who promised a clean break from the operations of the Trump administration.

On Saturday, the White House disclosed that Biden attorneys found classified documents and official records on four separate occasions — on Nov. 2 at the offices of the Penn Biden Center in Washington, on Dec. 20 in the garage of the president's Wilmington, Delaware home, and on Nov. 11 and 12 in the president's home library.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre had said before the additional discovery that Americans could assume the investigation had completed. On Tuesday, she referred questions to the Justice Department or White House counsel's office on whether more documents existed and whether they would be disclosed if discovered.

"The president and his team rightfully took action," she said of the turning over the documents after they were discovered.

After the initial disclosure, the president said he was "briefed about this discovery and surprised to learn that there are any government records that were taken there to that office."

He said that he takes the handling of classified documents very seriously. Biden has not commented publicly on the further existence of documents. Jean-Pierre said that president was focused on his job.

"He wants to make sure that he's continuing to deliver for the American people," she said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland last week appointed Robert Hur, a former Maryland U.S. attorney, to serve as special counsel to oversee the Justice Department's inquiry into the documents.

Separately, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was managing director of the Penn Biden Center for two years, echoed Biden by saying he was surprised government records were located at the institute's office.

"I had no knowledge of it at the time," he told reporters on Tuesday. "The White House, of course, has indicated that the administration is cooperating fully with the review that the Justice Department has undertaken, and I, of course, would cooperate fully with that review myself."

Among the questions still unanswered by the White House or Biden's private attorneys: Exactly how many documents were found; whether there may be other documents out there, what was contained in them and why the public wasn't notified until months after they were discovered.

Sams referred those questions to the Justice Department, insisting that neither the White House nor Biden's personal attorneys are aware of the contents.

—
AP writer Matthew Lee contributed.

Fugitive's arrest like a 'quake,' but Mafia very resilient

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Matteo Messina Denaro's long record as a killer — turncoat mobsters said he'd boast of enough murders to fill a cemetery — greatly burnished his credentials among his peers as a major boss in the Sicilian Mafia.

After 30 years eluding capture while still running much of the Mafia's affairs, he was arrested Monday at a Palermo clinic, where the convicted mobster was receiving chemotherapy. But while he was hustled off early Tuesday to a maximum-security prison on the Italian mainland, his capture is hardly expect to bring the demise of the Cosa Nostra, thanks to the syndicate's more than century-old roots and rules.

"What will happen in detail, we can't know," Palermo Prosecutor General Lia Sava, said on Rai state radio

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about the future of the Mafia.

"But one thing is sure. Cosa Nostra is made up of rules. It has supported itself on these rules for 150 years, so certainly it will put into motion those rules to repair the damage, and thus create the new leadership structure needed after the arrest," Sava said.

While Messina Denaro wielded great influence in the Mafia, for decades Cosa Nostra has lacked a supreme capo, investigators say.

The practically mythical figure of a "boss of bosses" ended in 1993, with the arrest in a Palermo hideout of Salvatore "Toto" Riina, who had been Italy's top fugitive for 23 years.

According to trial testimony that led to his conviction for many murders, including the 1992 bombings that killed Italy's top two anti-Mafia magistrates, Riina was in charge of Cosa Nostra's "commission" that ran illicit businesses and devised a strategy of deadly retaliation against the state for its crackdown on the mob.

"After Riina there was never an absolute boss," said Rome Chief Prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi, who took up his post last year after serving as Palermo chief prosecutor, helping coordinate the hunt for Messina Denaro.

Even if the "capo di capi" figure still existed, Messina Denaro wouldn't have qualified because he came from Castelvetro on Sicily's western edge, not from Palermo or its surrounding countryside, Lo Voi noted, citing Cosa Nostra's rules.

Still, Messina Denaro, the son of a crime boss, "was one of the most important bosses and (he) had ties with other criminal organizations in Italy and abroad," Lo Voi told The Associated Press.

"That's why his arrest surely represents an earthquake at this moment for Cosa Nostra," Lo Voi said.

Also boosting Messina Denaro's prestige was his fierce record as a murderous clan boss, holding sway over a large swath of western Sicily, Lo Voi said.

A military plane ferried Messina Denaro Tuesday to a maximum security prison in L'Aquila, in the central Apennine mountains, where strict rules for top organized crime bosses who won't cooperate with authorities include sharply limited visitor privileges.

Italy's national anti-Mafia prosecutor, Giovanni Melillo, said that finally putting Messina Denaro behind bars won't change the strategy Cosa Nostra has followed for more than a decade.

That strategy is "no longer one of violence" against the state, Melillo said on state TV Monday night, referring to the 1992 bombings that killed Palermo prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, and the 1993 bomb attacks against Rome churches, the Uffizi Galleries in Florence and an art gallery in Milan, part of the Mafia's bid to try to get the state to drop its crackdown on Cosa Nostra.

Instead Cosa Nostra is lying low, opting to "co-penetrate the social and economic fabric" of Italy, Melillo said.

A small army of turncoats helped Italian authorities put scores of Cosa Nostra members behind bars in the last few decades, and as a consequence, gave boost to the 'ndrangheta crime syndicate in Italy's southern "toe," allowing it to eclipse the Sicilian mob in influence to become one of the world's biggest cocaine brokers.

In the 1980s, an FBI undercover operation working with Italian investigators, including Falcone, broke up a multi-million heroin ring and cocaine distribution operation involving Sicilian Mafia figures and the Gambino crime family in New York.

But Cosa Nostra lately "has gone back in a big way to drug trafficking," including cocaine, synthetic illegal drugs and heroin, Lo Voi said. With enough drug trade to go around, there's no real rivalry between Cosa Nostra and the 'ndrangheta, he added.

With drug trafficking, "the earnings are enormous and the activity is less dangerous than extortion," Lo Voi said.

Pressuring local businesses to pay crime clans monthly protection money, known as "pizzo," has long been a mainstay of Cosa Nostra's activity.

But some 15 years ago, grass-roots groups of young people in Palermo rebelled against their elders'

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longtime surrender to the practice. Forming an organization called "Addiopizzo," or "Farewell Pizzo," they encouraged businesses to report extortionists to authorities instead of paying them.

Control of local territory is crucial for the Mafia's existence.

Lo Voi said during the COVID-19 pandemic, neighborhood mobsters supplied residents with groceries when breadwinners lost jobs.

That complex relationship — a combination of benefit, fear and even complicity — is suspected of helping Messina Denaro elude the law for 30 years, most of that time in Sicily.

Since his capture, police have been searching his most recent hideout — a home on a dead-end alley in Campobello di Mazara, near Trapani. The owner is Andrea Bonafede, the name the fugitive used on an identity card to receive his cancer treatment.

The real Bonafede is under investigation, including at least one of the doctors who had been involved in the fugitive's treatment at the clinic beginning in late 2020, Italian news reports said.

Fellow cancer patients told La Repubblica daily that the man who wore designer scarves and hand-painted shirts freely chatted with them while receiving chemotherapy and sometimes gave them bottles of olive oil.

Six years ago, Italian authorities confiscated 13 million euros worth of olive groves and bottling facilities linked to Messina Denaro in the countryside near Trapani.

Shouts of "Bravi!" rose in the street outside the clinic when two Carabinieri officers brought him out of the clinic.

But others wondered about why it took decades to capture him.

"I had expected for a long time that it would happen, but it is absurd that it took 30 years," Salvatore Borsellino, brother of the slain prosecutor, told AP in a video interview from Palermo.

It's clear "that he enjoyed cover" on the local level, Borsellino said. "But there must have been institutional complicity" as well.

Andrea Rosa contributed.

Police arrest failed candidate in shootings at Democrats

By RIO YAMAT and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — A 39-year-old felon who overwhelmingly lost a bid for the New Mexico statehouse as a Republican paid for four men to shoot at Democratic lawmakers' homes in recent months, including one house where a 10-year-old girl was asleep, police said.

The case against Solomon Peña, who had posted photos of himself online with Donald Trump campaign material, is one of dozens across the United States where people have threatened, and in some cases attempted to carry out, violence against members of Congress, school board members and other election officials. In Kansas, a trial began this week for a man who prosecutors say threatened to kill a congressman.

Officials accuse Peña of paying \$500 to four men to shoot at the homes of Democratic lawmakers. He went along for the final drive-by, his gun jamming as bullets ripped into the bedroom of the girl, police said.

The criminal complaint against the self-proclaimed "MAGA king" describes how anger over his landslide defeat in November led to attacks at the homes of four Democratic lawmakers in New Mexico's largest city. A SWAT team arrested him Monday afternoon, police said.

Peña spent nine years behind bars after his arrest in April 2007 for stealing electronics and other goods from several retail stores as part of what authorities described as a burglary crew. He was released from prison in March 2016, and had his voting rights restored after completing five years probation in April 2021, corrections officials said.

Peña ran unsuccessfully in November against incumbent state Rep. Miguel P. Garcia, the longtime Democrat representing House District 14 in the South Valley. Peña got 26% of the vote.

Peña, whose criminal past came up during the campaign, repeatedly made baseless claims that the election was "rigged" against him.

"I dissent. I am the MAGA king," he posted the day after the election.

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On Nov. 15, he posted an image of himself in a "Make America Great Again" hoodie, saying "Trump just announced for 2024. I stand with him. I never conceded my HD 14 race. Now researching my options."

Peña has an initial court appearance Wednesday on charges including multiple counts of shooting at a home and shooting from a motor vehicle, aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, conspiracy and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

No one was wounded in the drive-by shootings. The New Mexico Republican Party said that: "If Peña is found guilty, he must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

Peña's candidacy was challenged in state district court, with his opponent saying he wasn't eligible to seek office because he had not been pardoned by the governor, nor did he request to be pardoned.

The court sided with Peña, finding that a state law that prohibits a felon from holding public office was unconstitutional. An appeal is pending.

Police said Peña had previously shown up uninvited at the homes of two elected officials with what he claimed were documents proving that he had won his race. There was no evidence of widespread voter fraud, or any irregularity involving enough votes to change a result, in New Mexico in 2020 or 2022.

The criminal complaint says that Peña hired a father and son with criminal histories of their own as well as two brothers whom authorities have yet to identify. In one of their text messages, Peña complained that officials certifying the election in November "sold us out to the highest bidder."

The shootings began Dec. 4, when eight rounds were fired at the home of Bernalillo County Commissioner Adriann Barboa. Days later, state Rep. Javier Martinez's home was targeted. On Dec. 11, more than a dozen rounds were fired at the home of Bernalillo County Commissioner Debbie O'Malley, police said.

The final related shooting, targeting state Sen. Linda Lopez's home, unfolded in the midnight hour of Jan. 3. Police said more than a dozen shots were fired, including three that Lopez said passed through the bedroom of her sleeping 10-year-old daughter.

The witness said one of the men told the shooters to aim above the homes' windows to avoid striking anyone inside. Peña wanted them to shoot lower.

Peña's insistence that the men be more aggressive made the other participants uneasy "since they knew that doing so would likely end in death or injury," said the witness, who faces criminal charges and has asked for leniency. Authorities said no such promises have been made.

The witness said Peña was there at the Lopez shooting "to ensure better target acquisition."

The witness said Peña's gun jammed and did not fire correctly but one of the other men fired multiple rounds from a Glock pistol into the Lopez home.

An appointed public defender for Peña did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

The shooting spree was "scary, not just from my personal perspective, but the fact that our democratic processes that we believed so much in -- and that our country was founded on -- would be targeted in that way," Martinez, the Democratic lawmaker, said at a news conference on his first day as the top-ranked House leader.

"It's long overdue that we lower the temperature. These are the things that can happen when the rhetoric gets out of hand," Martínez said.

Lawmakers in the Democratic-run state have had to tread carefully over the years not to infringe on the right to bear arms, and it was only recently that firearms were banned from the state capitol. In Albuquerque, authorities have been struggling to address escalating gun violence and consecutive years of record homicides.

Detectives identified Peña as their key suspect using a combination of cellphone and vehicle records, witness interviews and bullet casings collected near the lawmakers' homes.

Technology that can detect the sound of gunfire led an officer to Lopez's neighborhood shortly after the shots were fired.

The officer found bullet casings matching a handgun found later that morning in a Nissan Maxima registered to Peña. Around 1:30 a.m., about an hour after the shooting at Lopez's home, police stopped the Nissan about 4 miles (6 kilometers) from the lawmaker's neighborhood.

The driver, identified as Jose Trujillo, was arrested on an outstanding warrant, leading to the discovery of more than 800 fentanyl pills and two firearms in the car.

Authorities said Tuesday the investigation was ongoing and more arrests were expected.

Yamat reported from Las Vegas, Nevada.

EXPLAINER: How ominous is the debt limit problem?

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — On the brink of hitting the nation's legal borrowing limit on Thursday, the government is resorting to "extraordinary measures" to avoid a default.

Sounds ominous, right?

But -- take a breath -- the phrase technically refers to a bunch of accounting workarounds. Yes, accounting.

Because the debt cap limits the issuance of government bonds — a way the U.S. borrows money — these workarounds shift money among accounts and should keep the government open through at least June, according to a letter last week by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

In theory, President Joe Biden and Congress are supposed to use that additional time to work out an agreement to raise the nation's legal \$31.38 trillion debt ceiling. These talks often grow heated and go down to the wire, with major economic damage in the balance. But there have been roughly 80 deals to raise or suspend the borrowing cap since the 1960s.

What could be worrisome is not the existence of extraordinary measures, but what happens if they are exhausted this summer without a deal in place. Economists have warned that could lead to a global financial crisis.

So far, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Biden are playing what could be a dangerous game of chicken with the world's largest economy in the middle.

Some questions and answers on the situation:

WHAT ARE "EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES"?

Yellen's Friday letter listed two measures that will begin this month in order to prevent the government from defaulting.

First, the government will temporarily suspend payments to the retirement, disability and health benefit funds for federal employees. Second, it will suspend the reinvestment of maturing government bonds in the retirement savings accounts of government workers.

By suspending the payments, the government can reduce the amount of outstanding debt. That enables the Treasury Department to keep financing government operations, according to Yellen's letter.

WHAT ALLOWS TREASURY TO USE THESE MEASURES?

No dispute there. Congress has given Treasury the authority to do so.

Because these are retirement accounts, no one is harmed by the government equivalent of an IOU. The funds are made whole after a debt ceiling increase or suspension becomes law. It's not necessarily the measures that can harm the economy but rather the doubts among consumers and businesses about whether lawmakers will increase the borrowing cap.

HOW BIG ARE THESE RETIREMENT FUNDS?

There were \$986 billion in net assets of the civil service and federal employees retirement funds at the end of fiscal 2021, according to a report by the Office of Personnel Management. The required government contributions to the funds are large enough to rely on these extraordinary measures for roughly five months.

HOW COMMON IS THIS?

"Treasury Secretaries in every Administration over recent decades have used these extraordinary measures when necessary," Yellen wrote in her letter.

The measures were first deployed in 1985 and have been used at least 16 times since then, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog.

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WHY DO WE HAVE A DEBT LIMIT?

Before World War I, Congress needed to approve each bond issuance. The debt limit was created as a workaround to finance the war effort without needing a constant series of votes.

Since then, a tool created to make it easier for the government to function has become a source of dysfunction, stoking partisan warfare and creating economic risk as the debt has increased in size over the past 20 years.

HOW RISKY IS THE BRINKMANSHIP THIS TIME?

It looks alarming -- and it's not clear how Biden, McCarthy and the Democratic Senate will find common ground. A default could cause millions of job losses, a deep recession that would reverberate globally and, ironically, higher interest rates that would make it harder to manage the federal debt.

McCarthy said Tuesday that talks should begin immediately on the potential spending cuts that Republicans are seeking in exchange for raising the debt limit, even though the Biden administration has equated that demand to holding the U.S. economy hostage.

"Who wants to put the nation in some type of threat at the last minute of the debt ceiling?" McCarthy said. "Nobody wants to do that. That's why we're asking, 'Let's change our behavior now. Let's sit down.'"

The Biden administration wants the borrowing cap increased without any preconditions. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Tuesday ruled out holding talks with McCarthy.

DO DEBT LIMIT SHOWDOWNS HELP REDUCE GOVERNMENT DEBT?

Not so much.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that annual budget deficits will grow from roughly \$1 trillion to more than \$2 trillion over the next 10 years.

The imbalance over the coming years increasingly reflects government expenses for programs such as Medicare and Social Security that are outstripping tax revenue. That suggests the government would need severe cuts to spending, major tax hikes or some combination of those options.

In 2011 when Barack Obama was president and Biden was vice president, there was a bipartisan deal to raise the debt limit by \$900 billion in return for \$917 billion worth of automatic spending cuts over 10 years.

But the debt reduction never fully materialized.

After Donald Trump became president in 2017, Republican lawmakers fueled further debt increases by passing deficit-financed tax cuts. Debt accelerated even more with the start of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, which caused massive government borrowing in order to pull the U.S. out of a deep recession.

The CBO last year estimated that the U.S. debt would exceed \$40 trillion in 2032.

AP writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Bucs: Gage in hospital with neck injury, to have more tests

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Buccaneers wide receiver Russell Gage has movement in all of his extremities after suffering a neck injury and concussion in Tampa Bay's wild-card playoff game against Dallas, the team announced Tuesday.

The Buccaneers said in a statement that Gage remained hospitalized overnight and would undergo more testing a day after being taken off the field by stretcher in a sobering scene that came just two weeks after Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed and needed to be resuscitated during a prime-time game.

"I appreciate all of the texts, calls, thoughts and prayers you all have expressed towards my family and I," Gage wrote on Twitter. "I just wanted to let you all know that I'm doing great and in great spirits! Thank you!"

Gage was injured in the fourth quarter Monday night when he stumbled on a route, went to the ground, couldn't make the catch and took a hard shot to the neck from Donovan Wilson. He appeared to try to get up but couldn't and slammed his hand into the ground in frustration.

Players from both teams took a knee and prayed while medical personnel attended to Gage. Tom Brady,

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who threw the pass to Gage, stood near the medical staff before the game resumed.

"Definitely hope he's doing well. He was moving so that's a good sign," teammate Lavonte David said after the game.

On Jan. 2, Hamlin went into cardiac arrest after making a tackle. Teammates were in tears while he was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Cincinnati. Hamlin has made a remarkable recovery and watched from home as the Bills beat the Dolphins in an AFC wild-card game.

The immediate uncertainty surrounding Gage's injury sparked an outpouring of support on social media. Former NFL quarterback Robert Griffin III, an ESPN analyst, posted on Twitter: "Prayers up for Russell Gage."

Follow Rob Maaddi on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/robmaaddi>

AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Renner says he's home from hospital after snow plow accident

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actor Jeremy Renner says he is out of the hospital after being treated for serious injuries from a snow plow accident.

In response to a Twitter post Monday about his Paramount+ TV series "Mayor of Kingstown," Renner tweeted, "Outside my brain fog in recovery, I was very excited to watch episode 201 with my family at home."

Renner was run over by his own 7-ton Pistenbully snow groomer in Nevada while trying to use it to free a relative's vehicle on a private road near Lake Tahoe on New Year's Day, authorities said.

The accident left him in critical condition with major chest trauma and other injuries, according to a Renner representative.

Authorities are still investigating but have said there were no signs that Renner was impaired and no indication of any foul play.

The 52-year-old two-time Oscar nominee plays Hawkeye in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and has a recurring role in the "Mission Impossible" franchise.

Today in History: JAN 18, Captain Cook reaches Hawaii

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 18, the 18th day of 2023. There are 347 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Jan. 18, 2020, ahead of opening statements in the first Senate impeachment trial of President Donald Trump, House prosecutors wrote that Trump had "used his official powers to pressure a foreign government to interfere in a United States election for his personal political gain," while Trump's legal team denounced what it called a "brazen and unlawful attempt to overturn the results of the 2016 election."

On this date:

In 1778, English navigator Captain James Cook reached the present-day Hawaiian Islands, which he named the "Sandwich Islands."

In 1911, the first landing of an aircraft on a ship took place as pilot Eugene B. Ely brought his Curtiss biplane in for a safe landing on the deck of the armored cruiser USS Pennsylvania in San Francisco Harbor.

In 1913, entertainer Danny Kaye was born David Daniel Kaminsky in New York City.

In 1943, during World War II, Jewish insurgents in the Warsaw Ghetto launched their initial armed resistance against Nazi troops, who eventually succeeded in crushing the rebellion.

In 1975, the situation comedy "The Jeffersons," a spin-off from "All in the Family," premiered on CBS-TV.

In 1990, a jury in Los Angeles acquitted former preschool operators Raymond Buckey and his mother, Peggy McMartin Buckey, of 52 child molestation charges.

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In 1991, financially strapped Eastern Airlines shut down after more than six decades in business.

In 1993, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was observed in all 50 states for the first time.

In 2005, the world's largest commercial jet, the Airbus A380 "superjumbo" capable of flying up to 800 passengers, was unveiled in Toulouse, France.

In 2012, President Barack Obama rejected the Keystone XL project, a Canadian company's plan to build a 1,700-mile pipeline to carry oil across six U.S. states to Texas refineries.

In 2019, Jason Van Dyke, the white Chicago police officer who gunned down Black teenager Laquan McDonald in 2014, was sentenced to nearly seven years in prison.

Ten years ago: Former Democratic New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin was indicted on charges that he'd used his office for personal gain, accepting payoffs, free trips and gratuities from contractors while the city was struggling to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. (Nagin was later convicted and released from prison in 2020.)

Five years ago: At the end of a visit to Chile that was meant to heal the wounds of a sex abuse scandal, Pope Francis accused victims of Chile's most notorious pedophile of slandering another bishop; Francis said he would need to see proof that Bishop Juan Barros was complicit in covering up the sex crimes of the Rev. Fernando Karadima. Texas executed by lethal injection Anthony Allen Shore, who became known as Houston's "Tourniquet Killer" because of the murder technique used on four female victims.

One year ago: AT&T and Verizon said they would delay launching new wireless service near key airports after the nation's largest airlines said the 5G service would interfere with aircraft technology and cause widespread flight disruptions. (Some flights to and from the U.S. would still be canceled despite the scaled-back rollout.) The White House launched a website allowing Americans to request free at-home COVID-19 tests.

Today's birthdays: Movie director John Boorman is 90. Former Sen. Paul Kirk, D-Mass., is 85. Singer-songwriter Bobby Goldsboro is 82. Comedian-singer-musician Brett Hudson is 70. Actor-director Kevin Costner is 68. Country singer-actor Mark Collie is 67. Actor Mark Rylance is 63. Actor Alison Arngrim (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") is 61. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley is 60. Actor Jane Horrocks is 59. Comedian Dave Attell (uh-TEHL') is 58. Actor Jesse L. Martin is 54. Rapper DJ Quik is 53. Rock singer Jonathan Davis (Korn) is 52. Former NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous is 50. Singer Christian Burns (BBMak) is 49. Actor Derek Richardson is 47. Actor Jason Segel is 43. Actor Samantha Mumba is 40. Country singer Kristy Lee Cook (TV: "American Idol") is 39. Actor Devin Kelley is 37. Actor Ashleigh Murray (TV: "Riverdale") is 35. Tennis player Angelique Kerber is 35. Actor Mateus Ward is 24.