

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar

Tuesday, May 23

Senior Menu: Pork Cutlet, creamy noodles, mixed vegetables, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.

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

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, May 24

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

DARE Graduation, 2 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Thursday, May 25

Senior Menu: Hamburger on bun; lettuce, tomato and onion; potato salad, cucumber salad, fresh fruit.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

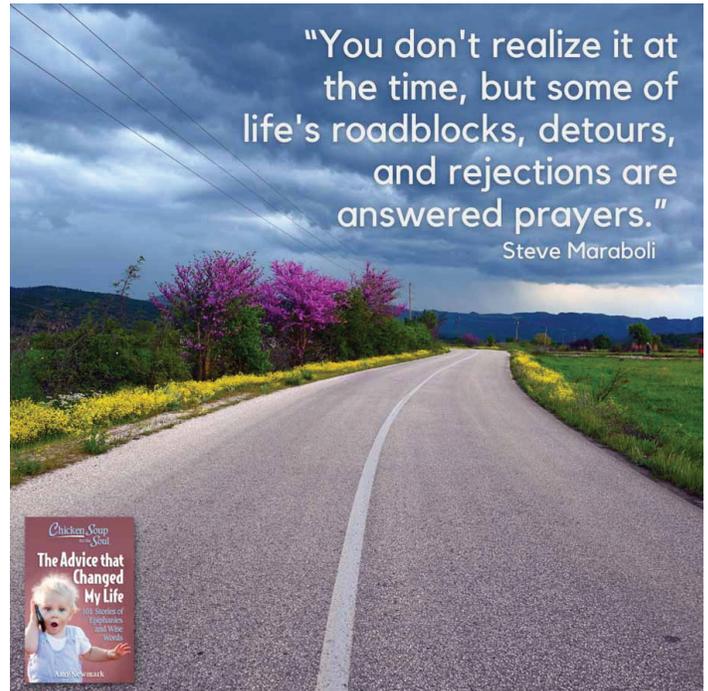
Girls Golf Region 1A at Lee Park, Aberdeen, 10 a.m.

State Track Meet in Sioux Falls

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Friday, May 26

Senior Menu: Lemon chicken breast, creamy noodles, tomato spoon salad, banana bars, whole wheat bread.

Faculty In-Service

State Track Meet in Sioux Falls

Saturday, May 27

State Track Meet in Sioux Falls

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

Sunday, May 28

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; worship at Zion, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m. (Kathy Gubin leading worship)

Legion Baseball: At Clark, 1 game, noon.

Jr. Legion Baseball: at Clark, 1:30 p.m., 1 game

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Now Open!

620 West Third Ave., Groton

M-F
10-6
Saturday
10-4
Sunday
12-4



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The Bulletin by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

Authorities in Washington D.C. have detained the driver of a truck that crashed into security barriers near the White House on Monday night. No injuries were reported. Investigators reportedly found a Nazi flag inside the truck.

Ray Stevenson, an Irish actor best known for his roles in Thor and Rome, has died aged 58. His cause of death is not known.

Authorities in Portugal will soon begin a new search for Madeleine McCann, the British toddler who disappeared in 2007 while on vacation with her family in the Algarve region.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin's mini version of NATO — the Collective Security Treaty Organization — appears to be breaking after Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said his country could exit from the alliance.

President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's meeting on the debt ceiling ended with no deal. However, McCarthy said negotiations are "on the right path."

TikTok is suing the state of Montana after it banned the app. The lawsuit alleges it has violated the First Amendment by abridging free speech.

The Los Angeles Lakers were eliminated from the Western Conference finals, as the Denver Nuggets won 113-111, prompting Lakers superstar LeBron James to question his future.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Lowe's Companies is set to report its first-quarter fiscal earnings before the opening bell, followed by its earnings conference call at 9 a.m. ET.

On the economic calendar, S&P services and manufacturing PMI for May, and new home sales for April are due from 9 a.m. ET.

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Guthmiller places second at Groton Invite

Carly Guthmiller placed second at the Groton Invitational Golf Meet held Monday. Guthmiller shot a 42 in the front nine and a 46 in the back nine for a total score of 88, just three strokes back from the winner, Claire Crawford of Roncalli.

Carlee Johnson placed eighth, shooting a 54 and 48 for a total score of 102. Mia Crank was 15th with scores of 59 and 54 and a total of 113. Others playing were Carly Gilbert with scores of 64 and 63 and a total of 127 and Shaylee Peterson with scores of 69 and 66 and a total score of 135.

Groton Area to compete in state track in 10 events

Groton Area has all five boys relay teams, three girls relay teams and two individuals that qualified for the state track meet this weekend in Sioux Falls. Aspen Johnson qualified in the triple jump and Emma Kutter just made the cut in 24th place in the shot put.

Coach Shaun Wanner said, "A total of 18 kids will be participating in the State Track Meet this weekend in Sioux Falls. Pretty good considering we only ran seven outdoor meets compared to some schools running 10-11 outdoor meets. The weather did hamper us some in April. I'm proud of our kids and how they competed and got better as the season went. Our kids are competing well right now."

Girls 4x200 Relay: (Jerica Locke, Kennedy Hansen, Kella Tracy, Laila Roberts) 16th - 1:51.39

Girls 4x400 Relay: (Laila Roberts, Kennedy Hansen, Jerica Locke, Kella Tracy) 20th - 4:19.94

Girls 4x800 Relay: (Taryn Traphagen, Faith Traphagen, Ashlynn Warrington, Mckenna Tietz) 13th - 10:27.89

Shot Put: Emma Kutter 24th- 34-5.75

Triple Jump: Aspen Johnson 13th- 33-1.25

Boys 4x100m Relay: (Andrew Marzahn, Ryder Johnson, Teylor Diegel, Keegen Tracy) 17th - 45.46

Boys 4x200m Relay: (Keegen Tracy, Ryder Johnson, Andrew Marzahn, Lane Tietz) 14th - 1:34.30

Boys 4x400m Relay: (Keegen Tracy, Ryder Johnson, Andrew Marzahn, Cole Simon) 8th - 3:33.55

Boys 4x800m Relay: (Blake Pauli, Cole Simon, Lane Tietz, Colby Dunker) 21st - 8:50.06

Boys Sprint Medley Relay: (Korbin Kucker, Teylor Diegel, Keegen Tracy, Blake Pauli) 23rd - 3:50.90

Boys:

Andrew Marzahn Relays

Cole Simon Relays

Lane Tietz Relays

Teylor Diegel Relays

Korbin Kucker Relays

Blake Pauli Relays

Keegen Tracy Relays

Ryder Johnson Relays

Girls:

Aspen Johnson Triple Jump

Faith Traphagen Relays

Laila Roberts Relays

Kennedy Hansen Relays

Emma Kutter Shot Put

Rylee Dunker Relays

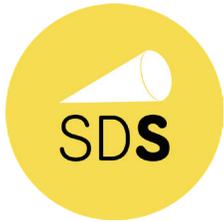
Jerica Locke Relays

Kella Tracy Relays

Ashlynn Warrington Relays

Taryn Traphagen Relays

Kella Tracy Relays



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Rule change would make foreign purchases near Ellsworth reviewable

Proposal arises after controversy over North Dakota project

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR AND SETH TUPPER - MAY 22, 2023 4:07 PM

When a Chinese company was on the verge of building a corn milling plant last year near an Air Force base in North Dakota, people concerned about national security wondered why the federal government hadn't stopped it.

As it turned out, a federal committee tasked with reviewing foreign investments in the U.S. lacked jurisdiction over the area around Grand Forks Air Force Base.

After Congress passed a law in 2018 empowering the committee to review foreign purchases of real estate near sensitive government facilities, the committee went through a rulemaking process to craft a list of those facilities.

The resulting list didn't include the base in Grand Forks, or Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, or some other military installations.

That could soon change. Earlier this month, the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment proposed adding the Grand Forks and Ellsworth bases and six other military installations to the committee's list of sensitive government facilities. That would enable the committee to review and make recommendations to the president, who could block foreign real estate purchases within 100 miles of those installations.

Rule proposed after Biden order

The proposed rule change follows an executive order issued by President Joe Biden last year, after the Grand Forks controversy erupted. The order instructed the committee to expand the scope of its reviews.

"The United States' commitment to open investment is a cornerstone of our economic policy," the Biden administration said in a fact sheet explaining the order. "However," the fact sheet added, "the United States has long recognized that certain investments in the United States from foreign persons, particularly those from competitor or adversarial nations, can present risks to U.S. national security."

When foreign people or entities want to buy property in an area under the Committee on Foreign Investment's jurisdiction – or gain control of certain U.S. businesses, technologies, infrastructure or data – they are required by law to report it. After a 45-day review, the transaction may proceed or be subjected to an investigation. Parties subject to an investigation sometimes withdraw from the transaction. Otherwise, if the committee believes a transaction endangers national security, it can recommend that the president suspend or prohibit the transaction.

According to a report issued this month by the Congressional Research Service, the committee conducted 661 investigations from 2017 to 2021, and 264 of those ended with the affected parties withdrawing. There were four presidential decisions during that five-year period, including one by former President Donald Trump ordering the Chinese company ByteDance to divest from Musical.ly, a social media company that was merged into TikTok. ByteDance has challenged the decision in court.

The proposed Grand Forks project by the Chinese company Fufeng Group has faced public opposition and has not proceeded. If the Committee on Foreign Investment's proposed rule change is adopted, the committee could review future land purchases by foreign companies in the vicinity of the base.

Among other locations proposed by the rule change to come under the committee's jurisdiction, several

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have ties to the B-21 Raider, a stealth bomber plane under development by the Air Force. One of those locations is Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, which will host B-21s.

Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, said the power granted to the committee to review foreign purchases near a base is a balancing act.

"The proposed designation affirms Ellsworth's critical role in America's national security strategy, which will only increase with the arrival of the B-21 mission," Thune said in a written response to South Dakota Searchlight questions. "We need to make sure any proposal balances these security needs while fostering continued economic growth in West River communities surrounding military installations."

Rounds supports law change

After the controversy over the proposed Chinese-owned plant near the Grand Forks Air Force Base last year, Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, introduced the Promoting Agriculture Safeguards and Security Act, and then reintroduced it this year.

The act would prohibit China, Russia, Iran and North Korea from purchasing U.S. farmland and agricultural companies; require the president to report on any waivers granted to prohibited countries; add the U.S. secretary of agriculture as a member of the Committee on Foreign Investment; and require reports from the secretary on the risks of foreign purchases of ag companies.

Rounds said the committee's proposed rule change and his bill are complementary, but he believes the issue is important enough to merit more than just an amended rule.

"Rules get changed up there sometimes for the good, but a lot of times for the bad, and that's the reason why it would be better if we put it into law," Rounds said.

While Rounds commended the effort to expand the committee's real estate jurisdiction, he criticized how long it takes to change rules.

"The federal government is a huge bureaucracy, and by the time it works its way through to where the Treasury is actually doing the rulemaking, it can literally take years to get something done," Rounds said. "Even on really simple stuff."

A public comment period is open until June 5 on the proposal to add eight military installations to the Committee on Foreign Investment's jurisdiction. To make a comment, search the docket number "2023-09259" at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

Proposed additions

The U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment has authority to review an array of foreign investments in the U.S., including foreign purchases of real estate within 100 miles of 32 military installations. A proposed rule change would expand the list to include eight more sites:

- Air Force Plant 42, Palmdale, California
- Dyess Air Force Base, Abilene, Texas
- Ellsworth Air Force Base, Box Elder, South Dakota
- Grand Forks Air Force Base, Grand Forks, North Dakota
- Iowa National Guard Joint Force Headquarters, Des Moines, Iowa
- Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas
- Laughlin Air Force Base, Del Rio, Texas
- Luke Air Force Base, Glendale, Arizona

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Bill that could doom Fairview-Sanford merger heads to Walz's desk; Fairview, Sanford undeterred

BY: MICHELLE GRIFFITH - MAY 22, 2023 10:44 AM

The Minnesota Legislature on Sunday passed a bill that bans anti-competitive health care mergers, which could kill the proposed marriage of Minneapolis-based Fairview Health Services and Sioux Falls-based Sanford Health.

The bill also prohibits out-of-state entities from owning in whole or part University of Minnesota health care entities, as would be the case were Sanford to complete its merger with Fairview, which owns the university's teaching hospital.

But Fairview and Sanford said they intend to continue with the merger — which has already been delayed — despite the legislation.

The legislation prohibits health care transactions that "substantially lessen competition or tend to create a monopoly." Attorney General Keith Ellison is already investigating the proposed Fairview-Sanford merger for potentially running afoul of antitrust and charity laws, but this bill gives the Attorney General's Office greater latitude in bringing a case in state court to ask a judge to prohibit the merger.

The legislation expands the attorney general's oversight of health care mergers by allowing the Attorney General's Office to sue in state court to kill mergers that aren't in the public interest.

The proposed Fairview-Sanford merger has received criticism from legislative Democrats, who say that it would create a health care monopoly in greater Minnesota and likely lead to clinic closures and higher costs for patients.

In a statement Sunday night, Fairview said the legislation will not deter the health care nonprofit company from merging with Sanford, and the proposed merger meets the legislation's requirements.

"This new law does not change our desire to combine with Sanford Health, and while it creates new regulatory processes, we strongly believe that the merger is in the public interest and that we can comply with the new requirements," Fairview said.

Fairview in the statement said it has agreed to notify Ellison 90 days before the merger's closing date, which will be sometime after May 31.

Sanford said in a statement it also believes the merger is in the public's interest.

"We remain confident in the significant benefits of our merger for the patients and communities we serve across greater Minnesota," Sanford said. "Together with Fairview, we will make historic investments to strengthen high-quality care delivery in Minnesota, address critical workforce challenges and expand access to care for the underserved in both rural and urban areas."

Gov. Tim Walz previously said he was open to the Fairview-Sanford merger, though DFL-aligned interest groups and legislators have turned sharply against the merger since then. A Walz spokesperson told the Reformer that he is "expected to sign" the bill.

The Senate passed the bill by a 35-32 vote with one Republican — Sen. Jim Abeler of Anoka — in support. It passed the House by a 70-58 vote on Sunday evening.

The legislation seems tailored to the Sanford-Fairview deal, but it would apply to all mergers and acquisitions of health care organizations that have an annual average revenue of at least \$80 million. The floor was previously \$40 million, but the Senate increased the threshold and added a provision stating the Department of Health would collect data on all transactions in which the health care entity has an average annual revenue between \$10 million and \$80 million.

Ellison, in a statement to the Reformer, said the bill gives his office additional oversight to ensure mergers are beneficial to the public.

"Minnesotans understand why fair markets and competition matter. Many people also recognize the impacts of health care mergers on patients, prices, medical personnel and communities are too often negative," Ellison said in a statement. "This bill gives the Attorney General tools to protect consumers, workers, and all Minnesotans facing health care mergers and to determine whether mergers are in the public interest. This is what Minnesotans are expecting us to do."

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The bill was amended Sunday to specify the University of Minnesota's facilities under the bill's purview: M Health Fairview University (West Bank), the Masonic Children's Hospital and the University of Minnesota Medical Center (East Bank).

The prospect of a South Dakota-based company owning the university's main teaching hospital has outraged politicians and health care advocates. Earlier this session, former Minnesota Govs. Mark Dayton and Tim Pawlenty, the last Republican elected to statewide office, told lawmakers the University's Medical Center shouldn't be controlled by a South Dakota company.

That was also one of the reasons then-Attorney General Lori Swanson was critical of the merger back in 2013. Sanford pulled out of the deal shortly after Swanson held a public hearing during which she grilled company executives.

This story is from Minnesota Reformer, which like South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Minnesota Reformer maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Patrick Coolican for questions: info@minnesotareformer.com. Follow Minnesota Reformer on Facebook and Twitter.

Michelle Griffith covers Minnesota politics and policy for the Minnesota Reformer, with a focus on marginalized communities. Most recently she was a reporter with The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead in North Dakota where she covered state and local government and Indigenous issues. For two years she was also a corps member with Report for America, a national nonprofit that places journalists in local newsrooms and news deserts. She lives in St. Paul and likes to knit and watch documentaries in her free time.

Biden says he's offered \$1 trillion in spending cuts but GOP won't budge on debt limit

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 21, 2023 4:22 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said Sunday his administration has offered \$1 trillion in spending cuts as part of the ongoing talks with Republicans around a budget agreement, but he said no deal has yet been reached.

Biden, speaking from Japan during a press conference following the G7 summit, said his administration wants House Speaker Kevin McCarthy to consider changes to the tax code in addition to spending cuts.

"It's time for Republicans to accept that there's no bipartisan deal to be made solely on their partisan terms — they have to move as well," Biden said.

McCarthy, a California Republican, has rejected increasing taxes on anyone throughout the negotiations.

"My point is that there's a lot of things that they refuse to entertain and they just said revenue is off the table. Well, revenue is not off the table," Biden said. "And so that's what we continue to have significant disagreement on — on the revenue side."

Biden said he planned to call McCarthy while traveling back to Washington, D.C., on Air Force One, suggesting that McCarthy might want to talk directly to him about negotiations.

"I'm hoping that Speaker McCarthy is just waiting to negotiate with me when I get home. I don't know if that's true or not, we'll find out," Biden said.

Last week, Biden and congressional leaders agreed to have two White House aides negotiate with McCarthy's team on a government spending agreement that could clear the way for Congress to raise the debt limit.

The White House and Democrats have insisted that talks around government spending are not tied to raising the debt ceiling, though a wide swath of GOP lawmakers in Congress have said they won't address the borrowing limit without reductions in spending.

Any stalemate that lasts past June 1 puts the country at risk of a first-ever default, according to projections from the Treasury Department.

A default on the debt would have significant implications on hundreds of federal programs as well as the

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global economy. And a default would be vastly different from past partial government shutdowns, which didn't have broad impacts on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, a New York Democrat, called on GOP lawmakers to "get serious" about the negotiations in a Sunday morning tweet.

"House Republicans walked away from a meeting with the Biden administration," Jeffries wrote. "They returned hours later with a ransom note that's nothing more than a partisan right-wing wish list. The MAGA extremists are recklessly driving the nation toward a dangerous default."

McCarthy tweeted Saturday night that the White House wasn't aligned with House Republicans' vision for future government spending.

"President Biden doesn't think there is a single dollar of savings to be found in the federal government's budget," McCarthy wrote. "He'd rather be the first president in history to default on the debt than to risk upsetting the radical socialists who are calling the shots for Democrats right now."

When asked during the press conference who would be blamed if the country entered default, Biden said "on the merits of it, based on what I've offered, I would be blameless."

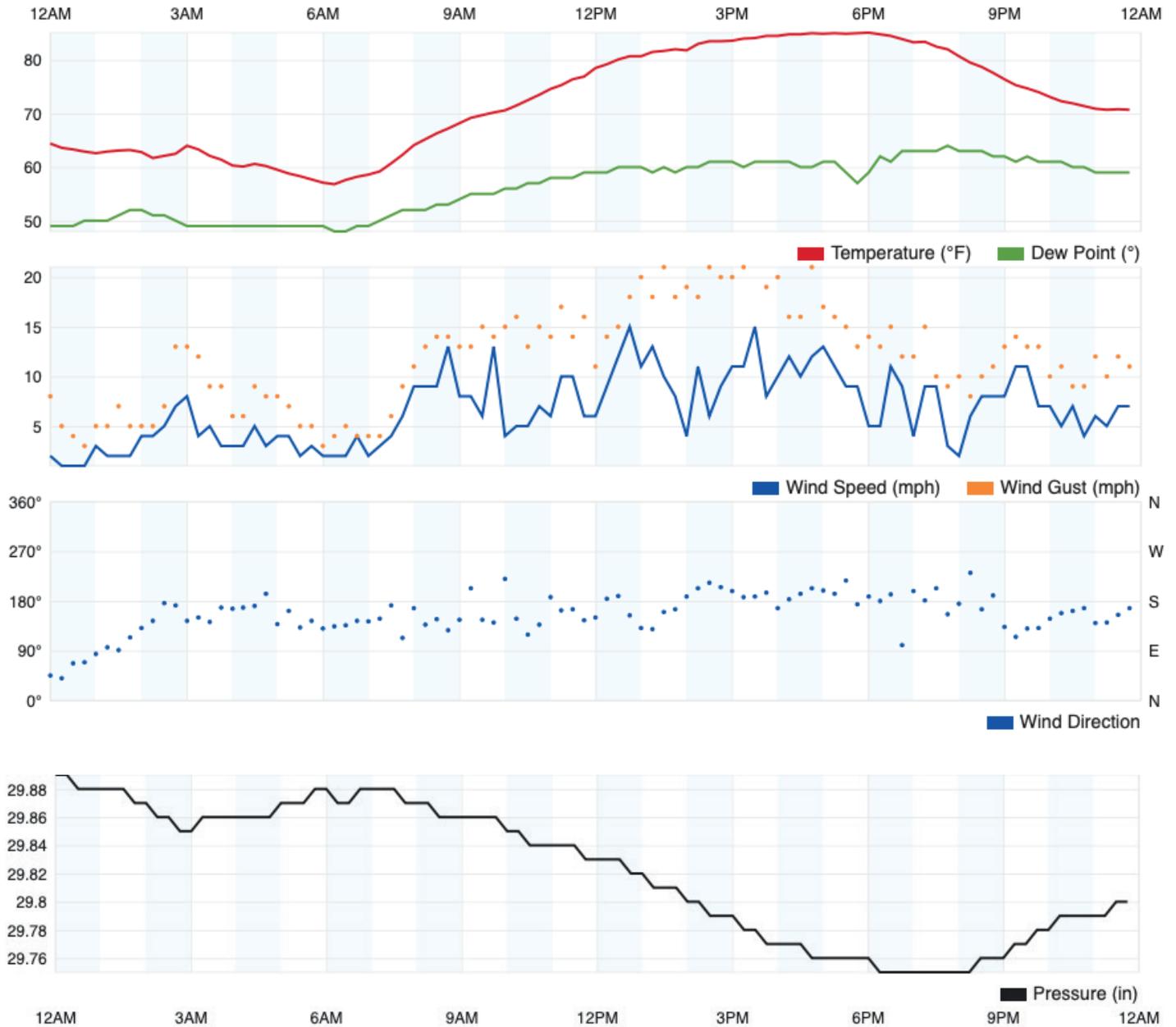
"On the politics of it, no one would be blameless."

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



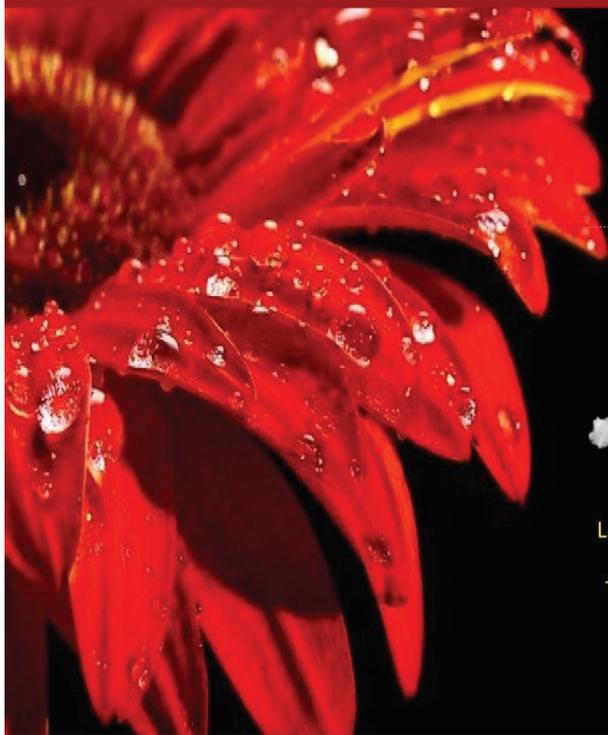
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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance T-storms	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear and Breezy	Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy	Breezy. Sunny then Slight Chance Showers
High: 87 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 84 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 83 °F

NWS ABERDEEN

WEATHER.GOV/ABR



Warm & Breezy Smoky Skies Today & Wednesday

Today	Wednesday	Thursday
mid-upper 80s	upper 70s to mid 80s	upper 70s to mid 80s
		
Late Afternoon/Evening Showers and Thunderstorms across northern SD into west-central MN	Mainly Dry	Afternoon/Evening Showers and Thunderstorms, especially over central SD

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Warm and breezy conditions will be the rule for the next few days across the region. A front shifting south across North Dakota into parts of northern South Dakota and west central Minnesota could spark a few showers and storms late this afternoon into this evening. Mainly dry conditions are expected through mid-week with the next chance for late day storms will be Thursday across central South Dakota.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 5:59 PM

Low Temp: 57 °F at 6:05 AM

Wind: 21 mph at 1:22 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 14 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 94 in 1950

Record Low: 26 in 1897

Average High: 73

Average Low: 47

Average Precip in May.: 2.51

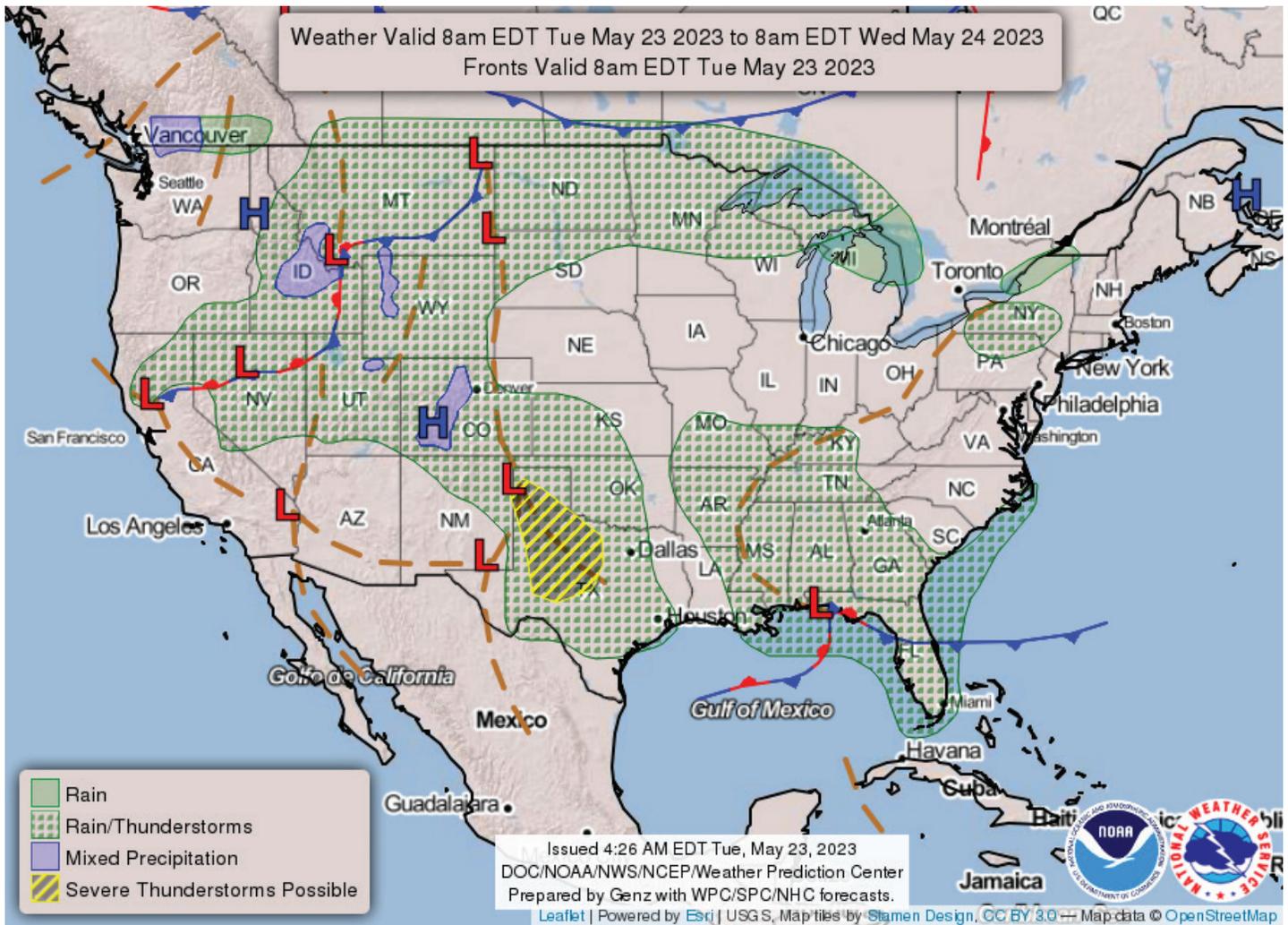
Precip to date in May.: 2.15

Average Precip to date: 6.48

Precip Year to Date: 7.87

Sunset Tonight: 9:06:23 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:51:03 AM



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Today in Weather History

May 23, 1989: A complex of thunderstorms moved from southwest Minnesota through Iowa. One small tornado touched down briefly in Lyon County. But the main story with this complex was high winds and hail. Baseball size hail fell north of George in Lyon, County. Also, two-inch hail occurred in Sac County in Schaller and Odebolt, and golf ball size hail fell in Carroll, Iowa. The hail caused a lot of damage to vehicles, trees, and roofs. Thunderstorm winds of 60 miles an hour were also common across all of northwest Iowa with these storms.

1882 - An unusual late season snow blanketed eastern Iowa, with four to six inches reported around Washington. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1953 - The temperature at Hollis OK soared from a morning low of 70 degrees to an afternoon high of 110 degrees to establish a state record for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1960: A massive earthquake in Chile the previous day produced a tsunami that killed 61 people in Hilo, Hawaii. An additional 180 people died on the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido in Japan. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1968: One of the costliest hailstorms in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma history pummeled the city on this date. Hail the size of baseballs fell over much of the city, resulting in more than 40,000 insurance claims over the 90,000 square mile path of the storm. The final cost was more than \$20 million. The parent thunderstorm also caused flash flooding that left 2 to 4 feet of water in some underpasses and a lightning strike that started a fire that killed two people.

1987 - It was a busy day for thunderstorms in the central U.S. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Shreveport LA and golf ball size hail at Marfa, TX. Hobart, OK, received 3.55 inches of rain in the morning, and another 4.03 inches of rain that evening. Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced 8.5 inches of rain in two hours north of Potter, and 7.5 inches of rain in ninety minutes north of Minatare. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced five inches of hail at Greeley. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across much of the eastern U.S. Golf ball size hail was reported in Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Ohio. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Severe thunderstorms developing along a cold front resulted in 98 reports of large hail and damaging winds in the Northern Plains and Upper Mississippi Valley. Golf ball size hail caused a million dollars damage around Buffalo City, WI, baseball size hail was reported at Northfield and Randolph, MN, and thunderstorm winds gusted to 95 mph at Dunkerton, IA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather continued in the south central U.S. Pueblo, CO, equalled their May record with a high of 98 degrees, and the high of 106 degrees at Midland, TX, marked a record six straight days of 100 degree heat. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - A cold front crossing the western U.S. produced snow over parts of Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Utah, with five inches reported at Austin NV, and four inches at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. Strong winds behind the cold front sharply reduced visibilities in blowing dust over central California, and two multi-vehicle accidents resulted in one death and eighteen injuries. In northern Idaho, a cloud-burst washed tons of topsoil, and rocks as large as footballs, into the valley town of Culdesac. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1997: David McWilliams Ludlum was born 1910 in East Orange, NJ - He is responsible for researching and publishing much of the early history of weather at the beginning of America. David died May 23, 1997, in Princeton, New Jersey. He was an American historian, meteorologist, entrepreneur, and author.

2010: A rare tropical cyclone dubbed Bandu brings high winds and heavy rains to Somalia. The storm then moved into the Gulf of Aden where it quickly weakens and dissipates on the 23rd as it passes between Yemen and Somalia.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

DO WHAT IS NEEDED

The bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City was a tragedy that struck at the heart of America. The disaster prompted many individuals and teams from across the nation to set aside whatever they were doing, and help meet the needs of the survivors.

One rescue team had been working for hours and finally, after being overcome by fatigue, stopped to rest at 2:00 a.m. Sitting there quietly in the darkness, they heard a strange sound - one they could not identify. When they stood up and turned around, they saw an elderly lady sweeping bits and pieces of debris into a neat pile.

"Where are you from?" asked a member of the rescue team.

"Dallas," came the reply. "I can't do very much but when I offered to help, they told me the most important thing I could do was to help clean things up. So I got a broom and started to sweep."

Life is always filled with opportunities to serve others. Whenever we do what needs to be done, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, and do the best we can do, we honor God and bless His name. We must not compare our work with the work of others if we are doing what God has called us to do. If our heart is right, our work will be right, and God will bless it.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to honor You by helping others in their times of need. May we use the gifts and skills You have given us to do whatever we can to serve others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. Galatians 6:4



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)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 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
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 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
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.19.23

5 11 41 44 55 14

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$150,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 26 Mins 24
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.22.23

5 8 23 32 43 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,100,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 26
DRAW: Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.22.23

17 25 37 40 41 1

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 14 Hrs 56 Mins
DRAW: 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.20.23

1 14 22 24 27

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$67,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 26
DRAW: Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.22.23

14 17 38 39 40 14

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 25
DRAW: Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
05.22.23

9 38 48 52 68 25

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$190,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 25
DRAW: Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Car seats and baby formula are regulated. Is social media next?

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

The U.S. surgeon general is warning there is not enough evidence to show that social media is safe for children and teens — and is calling on tech companies, parents and caregivers to take “immediate action to protect kids now.”

With young people’s social media use “near universal” but its true impact on mental health not fully understood, Dr. Vivek Murthy is asking tech companies to share data and increase transparency with researchers and the public and prioritize users’ health and safety when designing their products.

“I recognize technology companies have taken steps to try to make their platforms healthier and safer, but it’s simply not enough,” Murthy told The Associated Press in an interview. “You can just look at the age requirements, where platforms have said 13 is the age at which people can start using their platforms. Yet 40% of kids 8 through 12 are on social media. How does that happen if you’re actually enforcing your policies?”

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies already ban kids under 13 from signing up to their platforms — but children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents’ consent.

Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns about children’s mental health are also easily circumvented. For instance, TikTok recently introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching.

It’s not that the companies are unaware of the harms their platforms are causing. Meta, for instance, studied the effects of Instagram on teens’ mental health years ago and found that the peer pressure generated by the visually focused app led to mental health and body-image problems, and in some cases, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts in teens — especially in girls. One internal study cited 13.5% of teen girls saying Instagram makes thoughts of suicide worse and 17% of teen girls saying it makes eating disorders worse.

The research was revealed in 2021 by whistleblower Frances Haugen. Meta sought to downplay the harmful effects of its platform on teens at the time, but put on hold its work on a kids’ version of Instagram, which the company says is meant mainly for tweens aged 10 to 12.

“The bottom line is we do not have enough evidence to conclude that social media is, in fact, sufficiently safe for our kids. And that’s really important for parents to know,” said Murthy, who’s been traveling around the country talking to parents and young people about the youth mental health crisis. “The most common question I get from parents is whether social media is safe for their kids.”

Policymakers need to address the harms of social media the same way they regulate things like car seats, baby formula, medication and other products children use, Murthy said in a report published Tuesday. Parents — and kids — simply can’t do it all.

“We’re asking parents to manage a technology that’s rapidly evolving that fundamentally changes how their kids think about themselves, how they build friendships, how they experience the world — and technology, by the way, that prior generations never had to manage,” Murthy said. “And we’re putting all of that on the shoulders of parents, which is just simply not fair.”

While Murthy is calling for more research, he says there is ample evidence now that social media can have a “profound risk of harm” on the mental health and well-being of children and teenagers.

One critical factor is children’s brain development. Adults can suffer from the harmful effects of social media. But children and adolescents are at a “fundamentally different stage of brain development, where the pathways in their brains, their social relationships, their self-esteem and identity are all under development,” Murthy said. “And in this case, they’re even more prone to be influenced by social cues, social pressure and social comparison — and those three things exist in overwhelming abundance on social media.”

In fact, frequent social media use may be associated with “distinct changes” in the developing brain, and could increase sensitivity to social rewards and punishments, according to a study cited in the surgeon general’s report.

How and how often they use social media, as well as extreme, inappropriate and harmful content they see could have profound effects on kids’ and teens’ mental health.

And research shows they are using it a lot. al. Up to 95% of youth ages 13 to 17 report using a social media platform, with more than a third saying they use social media “almost constantly,” according to the Pew Research Center.

A systematic review of 42 studies found a “consistent relationship between social media use and poor sleep quality, reduced sleep duration, sleep difficulties, and depression among youth.” On a typical week-day, nearly one in three adolescents report using screen media until midnight or later.

What they see on social media also matters. From being bombarded unrealistic body images to a culture of “hyper-comparison” to bullying, hate and abuse, Murthy said he’s worried that its effects on young people’s mental health are showing up in the “disturbing mental health statistics that we are seeing in our country, which are telling us that depression, anxiety, suicide, loneliness are all going up.”

Murthy’s report doesn’t tell young people to stop using social media altogether. There are benefits, too. It’s where teens can find a community and have a space for self-expression. LGBTQ+ youth, in particular, have been shown to benefit from social media through connecting with peers, developing an identity and finding social support.

“For every family, it may not be feasible to stop your child from using social media or there may be benefit,” Murthy said. “But drawing boundaries around the use of social media in your child’s life so there are times and spaces that are protected, that are tech free, that can be really helpful.”

Murthy’s own children are 5 and 6, but like many parents, he’s already thinking about their future on social media.

“We are planning to delay the use of social media for our kids until after middle school,” he said. “And you know, that’s not going to be easy. But we’re hoping to find other parents and families that we can partner with to make this a little easier, because we know there’s strength in numbers and sometimes making changes on your own is hard.”

4 men arrested on suspicion of hanging Vinícius Júnior effigy off bridge

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

MADRID (AP) — Four men suspected of hanging an effigy of Real Madrid player Vinícius Júnior off a highway bridge in Madrid in January have been arrested, Spanish police said Tuesday.

The arrests come two days after the latest case of racial abuse against the Brazil forward in a Spanish league game against Valencia.

The effigy was hanged by the neck the morning of a derby between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey. Along with it was a banner with the words “Madrid hates Real.”

The perpetrators used a black figure with Vinícius’ name on it, tied a rope around its neck and hanged it from an overpass while still dark in the Spanish capital.

Police said three of those arrested belonged to one of Atletico’s fan groups, and the other was a follower of the group. Some had prior bookings with police for other crimes.

The hate message on the banner is often used by Atletico’s hardcore fans, though at the time they denied being responsible for the display.

The men arrested are between the ages of 19 and 24. Authorities said some were previously identified during matches considered at high risk of violence. Police showed images of them arriving in handcuffs and escorted by agents on Tuesday.

Spanish media said police had used security cameras to identify the perpetrators but no action had been taken until now. Police did not say if the timing of the arrests had to do with the widespread attention

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being received by the latest abuse against Vinícius on Sunday.

Spain has been criticized worldwide for its lack of action in racism cases in soccer. Brazilian government officials, including President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, had publicly expressed their concerns.

Vinícius, who is Black, has been subjected to repeated racist taunts in Spain, especially this season after he began celebrating his goals by dancing.

The match against Valencia was temporarily stopped after Vinícius said a fan behind one of the goals called him a monkey and made monkey gestures toward him. Vinícius considered leaving the field but eventually continued playing.

The Brazilian received support from officials and athletes around the world and heavily criticized Spanish soccer for not doing more to stop racism.

The lights at the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro were turned off Monday night in a show of solidarity for Vinícius.

"It's an action of solidarity that is moving," Vinícius said on Twitter. "But more than everything, what I want is to inspire and bring more light to our fight."

Vinícius thanked all the support he has received in the last months in Brazil and abroad.

"I know who you are," he said. "Count on me, because the good ones are the majority and I'm not going to give up. I have a purpose in life, and if I have to keep suffering so that future generations won't have to go through these types of situations, I'm ready and prepared."

Valencia banned for life a fan identified of insulting Vinícius during the game. Real Madrid took the case to prosecutors as a hate crime.

The Spanish league has filed nine criminal complaints of cases of racial abuse against Vinícius in the last two seasons, with most of them being shelved by prosecutors.

The league said Tuesday it will seek to increase its authority to issue sanctions in cases of hate crimes during games. It had been saying it can only detect and denounce incidents to authorities and the country's soccer federation.

Supporters have been fined and banned from stadiums for their abuse against Vinícius, but so far only a Mallorca fan may end up going on trial for allegedly racially insulting the Brazilian during a game.

The first trial against a fan accused of racial abuse in Spanish professional soccer is expected to happen at some point this year; the case involved Athletic Bilbao forward Iñaki Williams, who was insulted by an Espanyol supporter in a match in 2020.

Tales Azzoni on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/tazzoni>

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

No debt ceiling agreement, but Biden and McCarthy call White House talks productive

By LISA MASCARO, STEPHEN GROVES and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy both said they had a productive debt ceiling discussion late Monday at the White House, but there was no agreement as negotiators strained to raise the nation's borrowing limit in time to avert a potentially chaotic federal default.

It's a crucial moment for the Democratic president and the Republican speaker, just 10 days before a looming deadline to raise the debt limit.

As soon as June 1, Treasury Secretary Janel Yellen said in a letter to Congress, "it is highly likely" the government will be unable to pay all the nation's bills. Such an unprecedented default would be financially damaging for many Americans and others around the world relying on U.S. stability, sending shockwaves through the global economy.

Each side praised the other's seriousness, but basic differences remained. They are at odds over how to trim annual budget deficits. Republicans are determined to cut spending while Biden's team offered to

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hold spending levels flat. Biden wants to increase some taxes on the wealthiest Americans and some big companies, but McCarthy said early on that that is out of the question.

"The time of spending, just spending more money in America and government is wrong," McCarthy said after the Oval Office meeting.

In a brief post-meeting statement, Biden called the session productive but merely added that he, McCarthy and their lead negotiators "will continue to discuss the path forward." Upbeat, McCarthy said their teams would work "through the night."

Biden said all agreed that "default is not really on the table."

Though there is no agreement on basic issues, the contours of a deal seem within reach. A budget deal would unlock a separate vote to lift the debt ceiling, now \$31 trillion, to allow more borrowing.

Negotiations are focused on finding compromise over a 2024 budget year cap that would be key to resolving the standoff. Republicans insisted next year's spending be less than it is now, but the White House instead offered to hold spending flat at current 2023 numbers.

Republicans initially sought to roll back next year's spending to 2022 levels, and impose 1% caps on spending growth for 10 years, though a later proposal narrowed that to about six years. The White House wants a two-year budget deal, keeping 2024 spending flat. They proposed a 1% cap on spending growth for 2025, according to a person familiar with the talks and granted anonymity to discuss them.

A compromise on those topline spending levels would enable McCarthy to deliver for conservatives, while not being so severe that it would chase off the Democratic votes that would be needed in the divided Congress to pass any bill.

"We're going to find a baseline that we agree to that will be less than what we spent this year," McCarthy said back at the Capitol.

Time is growing short. The House speaker promised lawmakers he will abide by the rule to post any bill for 72 hours before voting, making any action doubtful until the end of the week — just days before the potential deadline. The Senate would also have to pass the package before it could go to Biden's desk to be signed into law.

After a weekend of start-stop talks, both Biden and McCarthy have declared a need to close out a compromise deal. U.S. financial markets turned down last week after negotiations paused amid a jittery economy.

Biden and McCarthy spoke by phone Sunday while the president was returning home on Air Force One after the Group of Seven summit in Japan.

Biden used his concluding news conference in Hiroshima, Japan, to say he had done his part by agreeing to spending cuts and to warn, "It's time for Republicans to accept that there is no deal to be made solely, solely, on their partisan terms."

"Now it's time for the other side to move from their extreme position," he said.

The call between the two revived talks, and negotiators met for 2 1/2 hours at the Capitol late Sunday evening. Negotiators were back at it again for nearly three hours Monday morning ahead of the session at the White House. The White House team returned late Monday night for nearly two hours at the Capitol, leaving before midnight upbeat but with little comment.

But McCarthy continued to blame Biden for having refused to engage earlier on the debt ceiling, an issue that is often linked to the federal budget.

GOP lawmakers have been holding tight to demands for sharper spending cuts with caps on future spending, rejecting the alternatives proposed by the White House that call for reducing deficits in part with new revenue from taxes.

McCarthy has insisted personally in his conversations with Biden that tax hikes are off the table.

Republicans also want work requirements on the Medicaid health care program, though the Biden administration has countered that millions of people could lose coverage. The GOP additionally introduced new cuts to food aid by restricting states' ability to waive work requirements in places with high joblessness. But Democrats have said any changes to work requirements for government aid recipients are nonstarters.

GOP lawmakers are also seeking cuts in IRS funding and, by sparing defense and veterans accounts

from reductions, would shift the bulk of spending reductions to other federal programs.

The White House has countered by keeping defense and nondefense spending flat next year, which would save \$90 billion in the 2024 budget year and \$1 trillion over 10 years.

All sides have been eyeing the potential for the package to include a framework to ease federal regulations and speed energy project developments. They are all but certain to claw back some \$30 billion in unspent COVID-19 funds now that the pandemic emergency has officially lifted.

For months, Biden had refused to engage in talks over the debt limit, contending that Republicans in Congress were trying to use the borrowing limit vote as leverage to extract administration concessions on other policy priorities.

But with June nearing and Republicans putting their own spending legislation on the table, the White House launched talks on a budget deal that could accompany an increase in the debt limit.

McCarthy faces a hard-right flank that is likely to reject any deal, which has led some Democrats encouraging Biden to resist any compromise with the Republicans and simply raise the debt ceiling on his own to avoid default.

The president, though, said he was ruling out the possibility, for now, of invoking the 14th Amendment as a solution, saying it's an "unresolved" legal question that would become tied up in the courts.

Miller reported and Associated Press writer Josh Boak contributed from Hiroshima, Japan. Associated Press writers Kevin Freking, Farnoush Amiri, Seung Min Kim, Darlene Superville, Fatima Hussein, Colleen Long and Will Weissert in Washington contributed to this report.

Russia fights alleged incursion from Ukraine for second day, reports more drone attacks

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian troops and security forces fought for a second day Tuesday against an alleged cross-border raid that Moscow blamed on Ukrainian military saboteurs but which Kyiv portrayed as an uprising against the Kremlin by Russian partisans.

Vyacheslav Gladkov, governor of the Belgorod region on the Ukraine border, said forces continued to sweep the rural area around the town of Graivoron, where the alleged attack on Monday took place. Twelve civilians were wounded in the attack, he said, and an older woman died during the evacuation.

Gladkov urged residents of the area who evacuated to stay put and not come back to their homes just yet. "We will let you know immediately ... when it is safe," Gladkov said. "Security agencies are carrying out all the necessary actions. We're waiting for the counterterrorism operation to be over."

It was impossible to independently verify who was behind the attack or what its aims were. Disinformation has been one of the weapons of the almost 15-month war.

While it is not the first time Russia has alleged an incursion by Ukrainian saboteurs, it is the first time the operation to counter the raid has continued for a second day, highlighting the struggles Moscow is facing amid its bogged-down invasion of Ukraine and embarrassing the Kremlin. Russian territory and Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine have also been hit by drones and explosions that have derailed trains, though Kyiv officials brush off accusations of orchestrating them.

Ukraine said that Russian citizens belonging to murky groups calling themselves the Russian Volunteer Corps and the "Freedom of Russia" Legion were behind the assault.

Russian dissidents unhappy about Russian President Vladimir Putin's policies were behind the assault, Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar said Tuesday.

"These are Russian patriots, as we understand it. People who actually rebelled against the Putin regime," she said.

The "Freedom of Russia" Legion in its Telegram channel on Tuesday claimed both groups were still operating in the Belgorod area and aimed to "liberate" the region.

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Belgorod officials earlier this year said they had spent nearly 10 billion rubles (\$125 million; 116 million euros) on fortifications to protect the region from an incursion amid the war.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the raid "elicits deep concerns," and a "bigger effort" is required to prevent such raids in the future.

Peskov refused to say how many attackers were involved in the assault nor would he comment on why efforts to put down the attackers are taking so long. In a conference call with reporters Tuesday, he re-directed those questions to Russia's Defense Ministry and Federal Security Service, or FSB.

The U.K. Defense Ministry said that Russian security forces "highly likely" are fighting partisans in at least three locations in Belgorod.

"Russia is facing an increasingly serious multi-domain security threat in its border regions, with losses of combat aircraft, improvised explosive device attacks on rail lines, and now direct partisan action," it said in a tweet on Tuesday.

Russia's Investigative Committee, the country's top law enforcement agency, announced an investigation into alleged terrorism and attempted murder in connection with the incident.

In addition to the alleged incursion, Gladkov reported multiple drone attacks on Graivoron and other settlements of the Belgorod region on Monday night. The attacks resulted in no casualties, but damaged buildings and caused a fire. On Tuesday morning, two more drones were shot down by the region's air defense systems.

Gladkov first reported on Monday afternoon that a Ukrainian Armed Forces saboteur group entered Graivoron, a town about five kilometers (three miles) from the border with Ukraine. The town also came under Ukrainian artillery fire, he said.

He later announced a counterterrorist operation in the area, and said that authorities were imposing special controls, including personal document checks, and stopping the work of companies that use "explosives, radioactive, chemically and biologically hazardous substances."

The Russian Volunteer Corps claimed to have breached the border in early March. The shadowy group describes itself as "a volunteer formation fighting on Ukraine's side." Little is known about the group, and it's not clear if it has any ties with the Ukrainian military. The same is true for the "Freedom of Russia" Legion.

The Belgorod region in southwest Russia, just like its neighboring Bryansk region and several other areas, has witnessed sporadic spillover from the war, with its border towns and villages regularly coming under shelling and drone attacks.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian forces have made minor progress against Russian forces on the edge of Bakhmut, the eastern Ukrainian city that Moscow claims to have captured, according to Maliar, the Ukrainian deputy defense minister.

She said Tuesday that Ukrainian troops still control the southwestern outskirts of the city and that fighting continues in the suburbs, on Russia's flanks.

Ukrainian military leaders say the fight in Bakhmut isn't over.

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

Police in Portugal resume search for Madeleine McCann, British child missing since 2007

By FILIPE BENTO Associated Press

ARADE DAM, Portugal (AP) — Portuguese police aided by German and British colleagues on Tuesday resumed their search for Madeleine McCann, the British child who disappeared in the country's southern Algarve region 16 years ago.

Between 20 and 30 officers, some in uniform, could be seen in the area by the Arade dam, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Praia da Luz, where the 3-year-old was last seen alive in 2007.

Witnesses said that police began searching shortly before 8 a.m. Tuesday in an area several kilometers (miles) away from the tent. About three hours later, firefighters could be seen in a dinghy in the reservoir.

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Portuguese police have cordoned off the area to the media and public. More than a dozen cars and police vans could be seen arriving early Tuesday.

On Monday, Portuguese detectives issued a statement saying the search was being resumed at the request of German authorities and with help from British officials.

Portuguese media say this is the fourth search for McCann, following the initial one in 2007 and then in 2013 and 2014. Another search was held in Germany in 2020.

This search is believed to be the first in the dam area following the German tips.

German prosecutors in Braunschweig said in a written statement Tuesday that "criminal procedural measures are currently taking place in Portugal as part of the investigation into the Madeleine McCann case."

They added that "the measures are being implemented by way of mutual legal assistance by the Portuguese prosecution authorities with the support of officers from the Federal Criminal Police Office."

"More detailed information on the background is not being released at this time for investigative tactical reasons," the statement said.

In mid-2020, German officials said that a 45-year-old German citizen, identified by media as Christian Brueckner, who was in the Algarve in 2007, was a suspect in the case. Brueckner has denied any involvement.

Brueckner is currently serving a seven-year prison sentence in Germany for a rape he committed in Portugal in 2005.

He is under investigation on suspicion of murder in the McCann case but hasn't been charged. He spent many years in Portugal, including in Praia da Luz, around the time of Madeleine's disappearance.

The case stirred worldwide interest for several years, with reports of sightings of her stretching as far away as Australia, along with a slew of books and television documentaries about the case.

Rewards for finding Madeleine, who would now be 20, reached several million dollars.

British, Portuguese and German police are still piecing together what happened on the night when the toddler disappeared from her bed in the southern Portuguese resort on May 3, 2007. She was in the same room as her twin brother and sister, who were 2 at the time, while her parents had dinner with friends at a nearby restaurant.

Referring to the latest searches, Braunschweig prosecutor Christian Wolters said Tuesday that "we are investigating there in Portugal on the basis of certain tips," but he declined to give further details.

Wolters explained that there are German Federal Criminal Police officers on site. He said the search would "take a little time." Portuguese officials said that the search would take place over several days.

Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin, and Ciarán Giles and Jennifer O'Mahony in Madrid, contributed to this report.

Prince Harry's effort to pay for British police protection fails in court

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A London judge ruled Tuesday against Prince Harry in his efforts to pay for police protection when he visits Britain.

A High Court judge rejected the Duke of Sussex's assertion that the British government exceeded its authority when it denied him the right to hire police to provide security in the U.K.

The British government stopped providing security after Harry and his wife, Meghan, quit their royal duties and moved to California in 2020. A lawyer for the government argued in court that it should allow hiring of "police officers as private bodyguards for the wealthy."

Harry has said he doesn't feel safe visiting Britain with his young children, and has cited aggressive press photographers.

The case was argued last week on the same day Harry and Meghan sought cover from paparazzi in a New York police station after a spokesperson said they had been involved in a "near catastrophic car chase" with photographers after a gala event.

No one was injured and no citations given, but police said photographers made it challenging for the couple to get where they were going.

Harry is separately challenging the decision to deny him government-paid security. That lawsuit is the only one of five active legal cases he has in London courts that is not against British tabloid publishers over allegations of libel or phone hacking.

He is due to testify next month in an ongoing trial against the publisher of the Daily Mirror over allegations it used illegal means to gather material for dozens of articles about the duke, dating back as far as the 1990s.

Cars set on fire in Cardiff as UK police face 'large scale disorder' after road crash

LONDON (AP) — Several dozen youths pelted police with objects and set cars and trash bins ablaze in Cardiff in local unrest that erupted after two teenagers died in a road accident, officials said Tuesday.

Police said "large scale disorder" broke out after officers were called to the scene of a crash in the Ely district of the Welsh capital on Monday evening.

"First and foremost our thoughts are with families of the two boys who have died following the collision in Ely and with those affected by the disorder which followed," said Assistant Chief Constable Mark Travis of South Wales Police.

"These are scenes we do not expect to see in our communities, particularly a close-knit community such as Ely."

Scenes livestreamed on YouTube showed dozens of people, many wearing hoods or ski masks, milling around while others threw objects and shot off fireworks at a line of police officers with riot shields blocking one end of the street.

A fire was burning and a helicopter could be heard hovering overhead. Shortly before midnight, a car was set on fire and burned fiercely, while a second vehicle was overturned and set ablaze.

The mayhem continued into the early hours of Tuesday, and at one point police officers were stationed outside Ely Police Station after suggestions it could be targeted.

Police said officers had made arrests, but did not say how many.

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner Alun Michael said a dozen police officers were injured. None was in a life-threatening condition.

Michael told the BBC that the violence started after a fatal accident involving "two teenagers on an off-road bike or scooter." He said false rumors swept the area that the accident followed a police chase.

Police said the crash "had already occurred when officers arrived."

Resident John Urquhart said tensions rose in the area when police failed to tell local people what had happened.

"There was no attempt to communicate with the crowd and they showed nothing but disdain for the community and acted like we didn't deserve to know what happened on our own doorstep," he said.

"There was nobody going through the crowd. Crucially, I think the police really needed people to be out talking to the community and putting their minds at ease."

Family of Colorado man killed by police during mental health crisis gets \$19 million settlement

By JESSE BEDAYN and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — The parents of a 22-year-old Colorado man killed by a sheriff's deputy while suffering a mental health crisis will get \$19 million from government state and local agencies and changes to how officers are trained, under a settlement announced Tuesday.

The shooting of Christian Glass after his SUV became stuck in the mountain town of Silver Plume last year drew national attention and prompted calls to reform how authorities respond to people with mental

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health problems.

As part of the settlement, Sally and Simon Glass also negotiated for changes they hope will prevent another family from suffering a loss like theirs. Clear Creek County will establish a crisis response team and its sheriff's office will train and certify all deputies in crisis intervention, according to documents released by their attorneys.

The state of Colorado, which had three officers on the scene of Glass' June 11, 2022 killing, in addition to those from local agencies, will create a virtual reality training scenario for the Colorado State Patrol based on the shooting that will focus on de-escalation in stressful situations involving officers from different agencies.

A video message from Simon and Sally Glass will also be shown to state troopers and Division of Gaming officers at the beginning of their active bystander training. The program focuses on encouraging officers to intervene if they think a fellow officer is going too far or needs to step away from an incident.

There was no indication from body camera footage that officers from other agencies attempted to stop the breach of the vehicle before Christian Glass was shot.

An attorney for the Glasses', Siddhartha H. Rathod, said they hope hearing their story will help officers have the strength to intervene if necessary.

"Any of the seven officers there could have stopped this simply by saying something. They want to empower law enforcement to have this courage," he said of the shooting.

The settlement, which the communities of Georgetown and Idaho Springs also joined, is the largest for a police killing in Colorado, topping the \$15 million settlement reached in 2021 for the death of Elijah McClain, and also ranks among the top in the United States, Rathod said. His law firm, Rathod Mohamedbhai LLC, also represented the mother of McClain, a 23-year-old Black man who died in 2019 after police in the Denver suburb of Aurora forcibly restrained him and a paramedic injected him with the powerful sedative ketamine.

Former Clear Creek County sheriff's deputy Andrew Buen, who shot Glass, and his supervisor, former Sgt. Kyle Gould, are both being prosecuted in Glass' death. A grand jury found they needlessly escalated the standoff after he called 911 for help. Gould was not at the scene but was watching events unfold on body camera footage and authorized officers to remove Glass from his vehicle, according to court documents.

Lawyers for both officers unsuccessfully tried to get the charges against them thrown out. While Buen's lawyer objected to how information was presented to the grand jury, Gould's lawyer argued that Glass needed to be evaluated for drugs, alcohol and mental health problems and could not just be allowed to leave.

In response to police killings of people in mental distress, reformers have pushed for crisis intervention and de-escalation training for police and even alternative policing programs where mental health responders are sent to some emergency calls instead of law-enforcement.

Some cities, including Denver, have programs where EMTs and mental health clinicians can be dispatched instead of police. But the area where Glass was killed, about an hour's drive away from Denver, did not have that option at the time.

Glass, whose car became stuck on a dirt road, initially told the dispatcher that he was being followed and made other statements which the indictment said showed he was paranoid, hallucinating or delusional and experiencing a mental health crisis.

Officers' body camera footage showed Glass refusing to get out of his car, making heart shapes with his hands to officers and praying: "Dear Lord, please, don't let them break the window."

After roughly an hour of negotiations, officers decided to breach the car even though there was no indication that Glass posed a danger or was suspected of a crime, according to the grand jury.

Once the window was smashed, body camera footage shows officers peppering Glass with bean bag rounds, then tasing him. Glass brandished a knife in "a state of complete panic and self-defense" before twisting in his seat to thrust a knife in an officer's direction, according to the grand jury. Buen then fired his gun five times into Glass.

The grand jury found that at no point was the other officer in "imminent danger of being stabbed by Mr. Glass."

"But for the decision by Gould to remove Mr. Glass from the vehicle there is no reason to believe that Mr. Glass would have been a danger to any law enforcement personnel, to himself, or to any member of the public," the indictment said.

Body camera footage doesn't show officers from other agencies — including the Colorado State Patrol, gaming division, and police from the nearby towns of Idaho Springs and Georgetown — attempting to stop the breach of the vehicle.

When Glass' parents first publicly called for accountability for their son's death last year, Sally Glass said Christian was "petrified" the night he was killed and the officers had no empathy for him. She asked for people to pray for their son and for structural change in policing.

"They should be protecting us, not attacking us," she said.

Street traders offer a better bargain than stores as Zimbabwe's currency crumbles

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Festus Nyoni picked out a few items in a supermarket in Zimbabwe's capital, looked at the prices and knew she was in the wrong place.

She abandoned her shopping cart and headed for a nearby street jammed with traders offering bargains in U.S. dollars. From the trunk of a car, she picked toiletries, rice and soups. For her two children, a young street vendor dodged traffic to offer her a box of candy.

"I can't keep up with those Zim dollar prices in the supermarket — it's insane," Nyoni said, referring to the local currency. "For the price of one in the supermarket, I am getting two soaps in the street."

A yearslong currency crisis that forced the 2009 adoption of the U.S. dollar — one of the world's most reliable assets — is changing shopper preferences in this southern African nation of 15 million. Many people are shunning brick-and-mortar stores, where prices must be charged in local currency and rise frequently.

On the street, costs are more stable because shoppers pay exclusively in U.S. dollars.

With greenbacks scarce at banks, many people and businesses get them on the black market, making the official exchange rate — 1,000 Zimbabwe dollars to one U.S. dollar — that retailers are required to use artificially low. It's double that on the street, so to break even, stores are forced to make their products more expensive.

"Zimbabwe dollar inflation on the black market is on a rampage, so retailers have to constantly change their prices," economist Prosper Chitambara said.

Other countries like Lebanon and Ecuador also have turned to using the U.S. dollar to beat back inflation and other economic woes, with mixed success. Facing Lebanon's worst financial crisis in modern history, many stores and restaurants there are demanding dollars.

Similarly, manufacturers and suppliers are now pushing for payment in U.S. dollars from stores that are forced to sell the same products using the freefalling Zimbabwe dollar, said Denford Mutashu, president of the Retailers Association of Zimbabwe.

"It's currently impossible to purchase goods in U.S. dollars and sell in local currency and recover the money spent," said Mutashu, adding that manufacturers are increasingly preferring informal traders over formal retailers to avoid using local currency.

"The informal market is ready to pay in U.S. dollars. The Zimbabwe dollar is being squeezed out," Mutashu said.

Zimbabwe's economy is inching toward "full dollarization," with the local currency facing collapse, local investment firm Inter-Horizon Securities said. It slumped by 34% in April alone.

Street traders in cars, on bicycles or on foot clog sidewalks, roads and parking spaces. They sell items ranging from groceries to cosmetics, brooms, dog chains, car parts and medicines.

Next to the entrance of a fashion shop, street traders displayed new and secondhand clothing at knock-

down prices. Some landlords have divided large buildings into tiny rooms where groceries are sold.

Many young people, including college graduates, end up becoming street vendors, said Wadzai Mangoma, director of the lobbying group Vendors Initiative for Social and Economic Transformation.

"Our prices are not subject to the artificially low official exchange rate, so we have taken over the supply of basic commodities," Mangoma said. "However, competition is also very high because the majority are turning to informal trade for employment."

To stand out, street traders are becoming creative and turning on the charm, a far cry from their usual brazen approach.

One recent day, a driver at a busy intersection gestured about a lack of money to buy anything but got a surprise.

"Take it. It's free today," said a street trader, handing him a comb.

Free gifts, kneeling as if in prayer, cleaning drivers' windows and polite greetings are all part of the act. A man sang and danced while selling electronics to people stuck in a traffic jam.

Street traders are part of the culture in much of Africa, with over two-thirds of people in Zimbabwe employed in the informal sector, the African Development Bank said.

It's a big change: Locals largely worked in formal industries after independence from white minority rule in 1980.

Following early successes, years of corruption, seizures of white-owned farms, frequent currency policy changes, electricity shortages and crippling debt have decimated the mineral-rich country's once-flourishing economy. The government says Western sanctions over human rights allegations have made things worse.

Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube on May 11 announced measures to stabilize the currency and attributed the economic "instability" to "skewed preference for the U.S. dollar as a savings currency." The measures include removing restrictions to allow individuals with foreign currency to import basic goods duty free.

The government also launched gold coins as legal tender last year and rolled out a gold-backed digital currency in early May.

But some analysts are not optimistic.

"I don't expect a significant impact," said Chitambara, the economist. "The government should liberalize the exchange rate and reduce supply of Zim dollars."

Until a solution is found, Nyoni, the shopper, will avoid brick-and-mortar stores.

"It makes better sense to buy from the streets," she said. "At least there is no guessing of prices each time I go shopping."

The cyber gulag: How Russia tracks, censors and controls its citizens

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — When Yekaterina Maksimova can't afford to be late, the journalist and activist avoids taking the Moscow subway, even though it's probably the most efficient route.

That's because she's been detained five times in the past year, thanks to the system's pervasive security cameras with facial recognition. She says police would tell her the cameras "reacted" to her — although they often seemed not to understand why, and would let her go after a few hours.

"It seems like I'm in some kind of a database," says Maksimova, who was previously arrested twice: in 2019 after taking part in a demonstration in Moscow and in 2020 over her environmental activism.

For many Russians like her, it has become increasingly hard to evade the scrutiny of the authorities, with the government actively monitoring social media accounts and using surveillance cameras against activists.

Even an online platform once praised by users for easily navigating bureaucratic tasks is being used as a tool of control: Authorities plan to use it to serve military summonses, thus thwarting a popular tactic by draft evaders of avoiding being handed the military recruitment paperwork in person.

Rights advocates say that Russia under President Vladimir Putin has harnessed digital technology to

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"unprecedented amounts and speed of spreading of fakes" about the war. The official also cited extremist remarks, calls for protests and "LGBT propaganda" to be among banned content the new systems will identify.

Activists say it's hard to know if the new systems are operating and how effective they are. Darbinyan, of the internet freedom group, describes it as "horrible stuff," leading to "more censorship," amid a total lack of transparency as to how the systems would work and be regulated.

Authorities could also be working on a system of bots that collect information from social media pages, messenger apps and closed online communities, according to the Belarusian hacktivist group Cyberpartisans, which obtained documents of a subsidiary of Roskomnadzor.

Cyberpartisans coordinator Yuliana Shametavets told AP the state-created bots are expected to infiltrate Russian-language social media groups for surveillance and propaganda.

"Now it's common to laugh at the Russians, to say that they have old weapons and don't know how to fight, but the Kremlin is great at disinformation campaigns and there are high-class IT experts who create extremely effective and very dangerous products," she said.

Government regulator Roskomnadzor did not respond to a request for comment.

EYES ON — AND UNDER — THE STREETS

In 2017-18, Moscow authorities rolled out a system of street cameras enabled by facial recognition technology.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, authorities were able to trace and fine those leaving their homes in violation of lockdowns.

That same year, Russian media reported schools would get cameras, too. Vedomosti reported they will be linked to a facial recognition system dubbed "Orwell," for the British writer of the dystopian novel "1984," with his all-seeing character, "Big Brother."

When protests over the imprisonment of opposition leader Alexei Navalny broke out in 2021, the system was used to track down and detain those attending demonstrations, sometimes weeks afterward. After Putin announced a partial mobilization for men to fight in Ukraine in September 2022, it apparently helped officials round up draft evaders.

A man who was stopped on the Moscow subway after failing to comply with a mobilization summons said police told him the facial recognition system alerted them to his presence, according to his wife, who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity because she feared retaliation.

In 2022, "Russian authorities expanded their control over people's biometric data, including by collecting such data from banks, and using facial recognition technology to surveil and persecute activists," Human Rights Watch reported this year.

Maksimova, the activist who repeatedly gets stopped on the subway, filed a lawsuit contesting the detentions, but lost. Authorities argued that because she had prior arrests, police had the right to detain her for a "cautionary conversation" — in which officers explain a citizen's "moral and legal responsibilities."

Maksimova says officials refused to explain why she was in their surveillance databases, calling it a state secret. She and her lawyer are filing an appeal of the court ruling.

There are 250,000 surveillance cameras in Moscow enabled by the software — at entrances to residential buildings, in public transportation and on the streets, Darbinyan said. Similar systems are in St. Petersburg and other large cities, like Novosibirsk and Kazan, he said.

He believed the authorities want to build "a web of cameras around the entire country. It sounds like a daunting task, but there are possibilities and funds there to do it."

'TOTAL DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE'

In November, Putin ordered the government to create an online register of those eligible for military service after efforts to mobilize 300,000 men to fight in Ukraine revealed that enlistment records were in serious disarray.

The register, promised to be ready by fall, will collect all kinds of data, "from outpatient clinics to courts to tax offices and election commissions," political analyst Tatyana Stanovaya said in a recent commentary

for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

That will let authorities serve draft summonses electronically via a government website used to apply for official documents, like passports or deeds. Once a summons appears online, recipients cannot leave Russia. Other restrictions — like suspension of a driver's license or a ban on buying and selling property — are imposed if they don't comply with the summons within 20 days, whether they saw it or not.

Stanovaya believes these restrictions could spread to other aspects of Russian life, with the government "building a state system of total digital surveillance, coercion and punishment." For instance, a December law mandates that taxi companies share their databases with the successor agency of the Soviet KGB, giving it access to travelers' dates, routes of trips and payment.

"The cyber gulag, which was actively talked about during the pandemic, is now taking its real shape," Stanovaya wrote.

Associated Press writer Yuras Karmanau in Tallinn, Estonia, contributed.

Sherpa guide Kami Rita scales Mount Everest for a record 28th time

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Veteran Sherpa guide Kami Rita has scaled Mount Everest for the 28th time Tuesday, beating his own record less than a week after setting it, as two guides compete with each other for the title of most climbs of the world's highest peak.

Kami Rita, considered one of the greatest mountain guides, reached the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit at 9:20 a.m. local time Tuesday, according to expedition organizer Seven Summits Treks.

His latest climb comes a day after fellow Sherpa guide Pasang Dawa matched his record of 27 trips to the summit.

The race for the title began with Pasang Dawa climbing the peak for the 26th time on May 14, equaling Kami Rita's previous record. Kami Rita went on to the peak three days later for the 27th time.

With a few more days left in the spring climbing season, both Sherpa guides were on the mountain helping their clients up the snowy peak. May is the busiest month to make the dangerous climb since it has the best weather conditions.

Kami Rita first summited Everest in 1994 and has been making the trip nearly every year since. He is one of many Sherpa guides whose expertise and skills are vital to the safety and success each year of foreign climbers who seek to stand on top of the mountain.

His father was among the first Sherpa guides. In addition to his Everest climbs, Rita has scaled several other peaks that are among the world's highest, including K2, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Lhotse.

Hundreds of climbers have scaled Mount Everest, or plan to make their attempt, this month.

The Nepalese authorities have issued about 480 climbing permits to foreign climbers, which is the most issued for any year. At least as many local Sherpa guides would be accompanying them during the climbing season.

So far, 10 people have died during this year's spring climbing season on Everest.

Jokic leads Denver Nuggets past LeBron's Lakers 113-111, into their first NBA Finals

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Nikola Jokic is a player unlike almost anything the NBA has ever seen, and now he's taking his Denver Nuggets somewhere they've never been.

Jokic had 30 points, 14 rebounds and 13 assists, and the Nuggets advanced to the NBA Finals for the first time in team history Monday night, sweeping the Western Conference finals with a 113-111 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

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Jamal Murray scored 25 points for the top-seeded Nuggets, who overcame LeBron James' 31-point first half and a 15-point halftime deficit with a tenacious finish in Game 4 to earn their first conference title in their 47 NBA seasons.

"It's incredible," Murray said. "It's a lot of fun. It's surreal. We're going to keep making history, that's the thing. We're going to keep that mindset."

Jokic earned his eighth triple-double of the playoffs by the third quarter, breaking Wilt Chamberlain's 1967 NBA record for triple-doubles in a single postseason. The bulky Serbian center with a point guard's grace also led the Nuggets' gritty defensive effort despite picking up his fifth foul midway through the fourth quarter.

Jokic didn't leave the floor for the final 33 minutes of Game 4 — and when Denver needed a big basket, Jokic delivered that as well. He muscled past Anthony Davis for the game's final points on a layup with 51 seconds to play.

"I think that's why playoffs are so nice and so interesting, because you don't care about how tired you are," Jokic said. "You don't care about minutes, fouls, shots, percentage. You just want to win a game. Some plays today we weren't playing good defense sometimes, (but) you can win it in every kind of possible way."

James finished with 40 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists after the highest-scoring postseason half of his career, but even the top scorer in NBA history couldn't keep the deep, dynamic Nuggets from their sixth consecutive victory overall.

James missed two tying shots in the final seconds, with Aaron Gordon getting official credit for blocking his tying try at the buzzer.

The Nuggets will cap their superb season by playing for their first NBA championship. Denver both eliminated the Lakers for the first time in eight playoff meetings and swept a playoff series for the first time, likely earning several days off before the finals.

Unless the Boston Celtics make basketball history by rallying from their 3-0 deficit in the East finals, Denver will host the eighth-seeded Miami Heat to open the NBA Finals, beginning June 1.

"Me and AD were just talking in the locker room (and) we came to the consensus this is one of the best teams, if not the best team, we've played together for all four years," James said of the Nuggets. "Just well-orchestrated, well put together. They have scoring. They have shooting. They have playmaking. They have smarts. They have length. They have depth. And one thing about their team, when you have a guy like Jokic, who as big as he is but also as cerebral as he is, you can't really make many mistakes versus a guy like that."

The Lakers erased a seven-point deficit and tied it with five minutes to play, but Jokic hit a 25-foot fallaway 3-pointer — the kind of ridiculously impressive shot for a big man that Jokic makes routinely. After Davis hit two free throws to tie it with 1:13 left, Jokic put the Nuggets ahead again.

James then badly missed a strange fallaway jumper with 26 seconds left. Murray missed a turnaround to give the Lakers one last chance, but James' drive at the buzzer was thwarted by Murray and Gordon, who scored 22 points.

"For that game to go down to the wire and for the ball to be in LeBron James' hands, those seconds were an eternity," Denver coach Michael Malone said. "When the buzzer went off, it was almost surreal for a second. Couldn't be more proud of this group."

James scored 21 points in the first quarter and worked desperately to keep the Lakers competitive in the final game of his 20th NBA season. But the Lakers couldn't even force a Game 5, with an apparently exhausted Davis scoring 10 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and adding 14 rebounds.

Austin Reaves scored 17 points for the Lakers, who were swept in a playoff series for the 11th time in team history, including nine best-of-seven series.

The loss ended seventh-seeded Los Angeles' incredible turnaround after starting the season 2-10 under new coach Darvin Ham. After bolstering their roster at the trade deadline and surging into the postseason with two months of strong play, the Lakers then knocked off second-seeded Memphis and eliminated

defending champion Golden State to stir their worldwide fans' hopes for one of the most unlikely championship runs in NBA history.

"Nothing but love and respect for the Denver Nuggets," Ham said. "Love the way they play and what they are about. We also saw ways that ... I think we have an opportunity to do something special here, also, and we've just got to build off of this."

Facing elimination for the first time in their remarkable playoff run, the Lakers took a 73-58 halftime lead. After tying his playoff career high for points in a quarter in his record 282nd postseason game, James matched his career high for points in any first half — but the Nuggets responded with a 36-16 third quarter.

TIP-INS

Nuggets: Kentavious Caldwell-Pope converted a four-point play in the first quarter. He finished with 13 points. ... The Nuggets have yet to trail in any series, and they're 8-0 at home in the playoffs – 10-0 since March. Denver is 12-3 overall in the postseason.

Lakers: James got an accidental 3-pointer in the first half when his lob pass to Rui Hachimura went in the basket. ... Ham shook up his starting lineup, replacing struggling D'Angelo Russell and Jarred Vanderbilt with Dennis Schröder and Hachimura. The moves immediately worked, with the two new starters combining for 19 points in the first half. ...Kyrie Irving watched the game from courtside. The star free-agent guard has been linked to a reunion with James on the Lakers next season. Other fans at courtside included Vin Diesel, Adam Sandler and Aaron Donald.

AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Why do so many Black women die in pregnancy? One reason: Doctors don't take them seriously

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Angelica Lyons knew it was dangerous for Black women to give birth in America.

As a public health instructor, she taught college students about racial health disparities, including the fact that Black women in the U.S. are nearly three times more likely to die during pregnancy or delivery than any other race. Her home state of Alabama has the third-highest maternal mortality rate in the nation.

Then, in 2019, it nearly happened to her.

What should have been a joyous first pregnancy quickly turned into a nightmare when she began to suffer debilitating stomach pain.

Her pleas for help were shrugged off, she said, and she was repeatedly sent home from the hospital. Doctors and nurses told her she was suffering from normal contractions, she said, even as her abdominal pain worsened and she began to vomit bile. Angelica said she wasn't taken seriously until a searing pain rocketed throughout her body and her baby's heart rate plummeted.

Rushed into the operating room for an emergency cesarean section, months before her due date, she nearly died of an undiagnosed case of sepsis.

Even more disheartening: Angelica worked at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the university affiliated with the hospital that treated her.

Her experience is a reflection of the medical racism, bias and inattentive care that Black Americans endure. Black women have the highest maternal mortality rate in the United States — 69.9 per 100,000 live births for 2021, almost three times the rate for white women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Black babies are more likely to die, and also far more likely to be born prematurely, setting the stage for health issues that could follow them through their lives.

"Race plays a huge part, especially in the South, in terms of how you're treated," Angelica said, and the effects are catastrophic. "People are dying."

To be Black anywhere in America is to experience higher rates of chronic ailments like asthma, diabe-

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tes, high blood pressure, Alzheimer's and, most recently, COVID-19. Black Americans have less access to adequate medical care; their life expectancy is shorter.

From birth to death, regardless of wealth or social standing, they are far more likely to get sick and die from common ailments.

Black Americans' health issues have long been ascribed to genetics or behavior, when in actuality, an array of circumstances linked to racism — among them, restrictions on where people could live and historical lack of access to care — play major roles.

Discrimination and bias in hospital settings have been disastrous.

The nation's health disparities have had a tragic impact: Over the past two decades, the higher mortality rate among Black Americans resulted in 1.6 million excess deaths compared to white Americans. That higher mortality rate resulted in a cumulative loss of more than 80 million years of life due to people dying young and billions of dollars in health care and lost opportunity.

A yearlong Associated Press project found that the health challenges Black Americans endure often begin before their first breath.

The AP conducted dozens of interviews with doctors, medical professionals, advocates, historians and researchers who detailed how a history of racism that began during the foundational years of America led to the disparities seen today.

Angelica Lyons' pregnancy troubles began during her first trimester, with nausea and severe acid reflux. She was prescribed medication that helped alleviate her symptoms but it also caused severe constipation.

In the last week of October 2019, while she was giving her students a test, her stomach started to hurt badly.

"I remember talking to a couple of my students and they said, 'You don't look good, Ms. Lyons,'" Angelica recalled.

She called the University of Alabama-Birmingham Hospital's labor and delivery unit to tell them she was having a hard time using the bathroom and her stomach was hurting. A woman who answered the phone told her it was a common pregnancy issue, Angelica said, and that she shouldn't worry too much.

"She made me feel like my concern wasn't important, and because this was my first pregnancy, I decided not to go because I wasn't sure and thought maybe I was overreacting," Angelica said.

The pain persisted. She went to the hospital a few days later and was admitted.

She had an enema — a procedure where fluids are used to cleanse or stimulate the emptying of bowels — to alleviate her constipation, but Angelica continued to plead with them that she was in pain.

"They were like, 'Oh, it's nothing, it's just the Braxton Hicks contractions,'" she said. "They just ignored me."

She was sent home but her stomach continued to ache, so she went back to the hospital a day later. Several tests, including MRIs, couldn't find the source of the issue.

Angelica was eventually moved to the labor and delivery floor of the hospital so they could monitor her son's heartbeat, which had dropped slightly. There, they performed another enema that finally helped with the pain. She also was diagnosed with preeclampsia, a dangerous condition that can cause severe pregnancy complications or death.

Then she began to vomit what appeared to be bile.

"I got worse and worse with the pain and I kept telling them, 'Hey, I'm in pain,'" Angelica said. "They'd say, 'Oh, you want some Tylenol?' But it wasn't helping."

She struggled to eat dinner that night. When she stood up to go to the bathroom, she felt a sharp pain ricochet throughout her body.

"I started hollering because I had no idea what was going on," she said. "I told my sister I was in so much pain and to please call the nurse."

What happened next remains a blur. Angelica recalls the chaos of hospital staff rushing her to labor and delivery, putting up a blue sheet to prepare her for an emergency C-section as her family and ex-husband tried to understand what went wrong.

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track, censor and control the population, building what some call a “cyber gulag” — a dark reference to the labor camps that held political prisoners in Soviet times.

It’s new territory, even for a nation with a long history of spying on its citizens.

“The Kremlin has indeed become the beneficiary of digitalization and is using all opportunities for state propaganda, for surveilling people, for de-anonymizing internet users,” said Sarkis Darbinyan, head of legal practice at Roskomsvoboda, a Russian internet freedom group the Kremlin deems a “foreign agent.”

RISING ONLINE CENSORSHIP AND PROSECUTIONS

The Kremlin’s seeming indifference about digital monitoring appeared to change after 2011-12 mass protests were coordinated online, prompting authorities to tighten internet controls.

Some regulations allowed them to block websites; others mandated that cellphone operators and internet providers store call records and messages, sharing the information with security services if needed. Authorities pressured companies like Google, Apple and Facebook to store user data on Russian servers, to no avail, and announced plans to build a “sovereign internet” that, if needed, could be cut off from the rest of the world.

At the time, many experts dismissed these efforts as futile, and some still seem ineffective. Russia’s measures might amount to a picket fence compared to China’s Great Firewall, but the Kremlin online crackdown has gained momentum.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, online censorship and prosecutions for social media posts and comments spiked so much that it broke all existing records.

According to Net Freedoms, a prominent internet rights group, more than 610,000 web pages were blocked or removed by authorities in 2022 — the highest annual total in 15 years — and 779 people faced criminal charges over online comments and posts, also a record.

A major factor was a law, adopted a week after the invasion, that effectively criminalizes antiwar sentiment, said Net Freedoms head Damir Gainutdinov. It outlaws “spreading false information” about or “discrediting” the army, using it against those publicly opposing the war.

Human Rights Watch cited another 2022 law allowing authorities “to extrajudicially close mass media outlets and block online content for disseminating ‘false information’ about the conduct of Russian Armed Forces or other state bodies abroad or for disseminating calls for sanctions on Russia.”

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ‘SHOULDN’T FEEL SAFE’

Harsher anti-extremism laws adopted in 2014 targeted social media users and online speech, leading to hundreds of criminal cases over posts, likes and shares. Most involved users of the popular Russian social media platform VKontakte, which reportedly cooperates with authorities.

As the crackdown widened, authorities also targeted Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Telegram. About a week after the invasion, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were blocked in Russia, but users of the platforms were still prosecuted.

Marina Novikova, 65, was convicted this month in the Siberian city of Seversk of “spreading false information” about the army for antiwar Telegram posts, fining her the equivalent of over \$12,400. A Moscow court last week sentenced opposition activist Mikhail Kriger to seven years in prison for Facebook comments in which he expressed a desire “to hang” Putin. Famous blogger Nika Belotserkovskaya, who lives in France, received a nine-year prison term in absentia for Instagram posts about the war that the authorities claimed spread “fakes” about the army.

“Users of any social media platform shouldn’t feel safe,” Gainutdinov said.

Rights advocates worry that online censorship is about to expand drastically via artificial intelligence systems to monitor social media and websites for content deemed illicit.

In February, the government’s media regulator Roskomnadzor said it was launching Oculus — an AI system that looks for banned content in online photos and videos, and can analyze more than 200,000 images a day, compared with about 200 a day by humans.

Two other AI systems in the works will search text materials.

In February, the newspaper Vedomosti quoted an unidentified Roskomnadzor official as lamenting the

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She later learned that she nearly died.

"I was on life support," recalled Angelica, 34. "I coded."

She woke up three days later, unable to talk because of a ventilator in her mouth. She remembers gesturing wildly to her mother, asking where her son, Malik, was.

He was OK. But Angelica felt so much had been taken from her. She never got to experience those first moments of joy of having her newborn placed on her chest. She didn't even know what her son looked like.

Maternal sepsis is a leading cause of maternal mortality in America. Black women are twice as likely to develop severe maternal sepsis, as compared to their white counterparts. Common symptoms can include fever or pain in the area of infection. Sepsis can develop quickly, so a timely response is crucial.

Sepsis in its early stages can mirror common pregnancy symptoms, so it can be hard to diagnose. Due to a lack of training, some medical providers don't know what to look for. But slow or missed diagnoses are also the result of bias, structural racism in medicine and inattentive care that leads to patients, particularly Black women, not being heard.

"The way structural racism can play out in this particular disease is not being taken seriously," said Dr. Laura Riley, chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Weill Cornell Medicine and New York-Presbyterian Hospital. "We know that delay in diagnosis is what leads to these really bad outcomes."

In the days and weeks that followed, Angelica demanded explanations from the medical staff of what happened. But she felt the answers she received on how it occurred were sparse and confusing.

A spokesperson for the University of Alabama at Birmingham said in a statement to The Associated Press that they couldn't talk about Angelica's case because of patient privacy laws. They pointed to a recent internal survey done by its Obstetrics and Gynecology department that showed that most of its patients are satisfied with their care and "are largely feeling respected," and said the university and hospital "maintain intentional, proactive efforts in addressing health disparities and maternal mortality."

Angelica's son, Malik, was born eight weeks early, weighing under 5 pounds. He spent a month in intensive care. He received home visits through the first year of life to monitor his growth.

While he's now a curious and vivacious 3-year-old who loves to explore the world around him, Angelica recalls those days in the ICU, and she feels guilty because she could not be with him.

"It's scary to know I could have died, that we could have died," Lyons said, wiping away tears. ____

For decades, frustrated birth advocates and medical professionals have tried to sound an alarm about the ways medicine has failed Black women. Historians trace that maltreatment to racist medical practices that Black people endured amid and after slavery.

To fully understand maternal mortality and infant mortality crises for Black women and babies, the nation must first reckon with the dark history of how gynecology began, said Deirdre Cooper Owens, a historian and author.

"The history of this particular medical branch ... it begins on a slave farm in Alabama," Owens said. "The advancement of obstetrics and gynecology had such an intimate relationship with slavery, and was literally built on the wounds of Black women."

Reproductive surgeries that were experimental at the time, like cesarean sections, were commonly performed on enslaved Black women.

Physicians like the once-heralded J. Marion Sims, an Alabama doctor many call the "father of gynecology," performed torturous surgical experiments on enslaved Black women in the 1840s without anesthesia.

And well after the abolition of slavery, hospitals performed unnecessary hysterectomies on Black women, and eugenics programs sterilized them.

Health care segregation also played a major role in the racial health gap still experienced today.

Until Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Black families were mostly barred from well-funded white hospitals and often received limited, poor or inhumane medical treatment. Black-led clinics and doctors worked to fill in the gaps, but even after the new protections, hospitals once reserved for Black families remained under-resourced, and Black women didn't get the same support regularly available for white women.

That history of abuse and neglect led to deep-rooted distrust of health care institutions among com-

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munities of color.

"We have to recognize that it's not about just some racist people or a few bad actors," said Rana A. Hogarth, an associate professor of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. "People need to stop thinking about things like slavery and racism as just these features that happened that are part of the contours of history and maybe think of them more as foundational and institutions that have been with us every step of the way."

Some health care providers still hold false beliefs about biological differences between Black and white people, such as Black people having "less sensitive nerve endings, thicker skin, and stronger bones." Those beliefs have caused medical providers today to rate Black patients' pain lower, and recommend less relief.

The differences exist regardless of education or income level. Black women who have a college education or higher have a pregnancy-related mortality rate that is more than five times higher than that of white women. Notably, the pregnancy-related mortality rate for Black women with a college education is 1.6 times higher than that of white women with less than a high school degree.

In Angelica Lyons' home state of Alabama, about 40 mothers die within one year after delivery. The toll on Black mothers is disproportionate.

The state's infant mortality rate for 2021 was 7.6 deaths per 1,000 live births. The disparities between Black and white babies is stark: The infant mortality rate in 2021 for white mothers was 5.8, while the infant mortality rate for Black mothers was 12.1, an increase from 10.9 from the prior year.

Black babies account for just 29% of births in Alabama, yet nearly 47% of infant deaths.

A 2020 report by the Alabama Maternal Mortality Review Committee found that more than 55% of 80 pregnancy-related deaths that they reviewed in 2016 and 2017 could have been prevented.

Alabama launched its Maternal Mortality Review Committee in 2018 to investigate maternal deaths. But Dr. Scott Harris, Alabama's Department of Public Health State Health Officer, said work remains to collect a fuller picture of why the disparities exist.

"We certainly know that from national numbers as well that Black women have worse maternal outcomes at every income level, which is pretty startling," said Dr. Harris. "Age matters and just overall ZIP code matters. Unfortunately, where people live, where these children are born, is strongly associated with infant mortality. I think we'll see something similar for maternal outcomes."

And concerns about access and barriers to care remain.

In Alabama, 37% of counties are maternity care deserts — more than 240,000 women live in counties with no or little care. About 39% of counties don't have a single obstetric provider.

Alabama is not alone in this. More than 2.2 million American women of childbearing age live in maternity care deserts, and another 4.8 million such women reside in counties with limited access to maternity care.

Angelica Lyons said she wanted to seek maternal care at another hospital but the University of Alabama was the only one near her home equipped to handle her high-risk pregnancy, which included high blood pressure near the beginning.

Dr. Harris acknowledged the lack of access to care is a barrier for Black women who live in the state's rural areas. Much of the state's public health efforts are targeted along the rural Black Belt, which gets its name from the rich soil but it was also a region where many plantations were clustered.

Centuries later, the Black Belt continues to be a high-poverty region with a large Black population. More than half of the nation's Black population lives in the South.

"We've talked a lot about structural racism and the impact of that on African American women and how it has no place in society," Harris said. "I think we have to publicly call it what it is."

Angelica Lyons' traumatic birth experience was not the only one in her family. After two miscarriages, her younger sister, Ansonia, became pregnant in 2020, and it was difficult.

Doctors told her she was suffering from regular morning sickness, though she was vomiting blood.

She was eventually diagnosed with an excessive vomiting disorder, hyperemesis gravidarum, and was extremely dehydrated. Ansonia spent months in and out of the same hospital where her sister had been

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treated.

"They said, 'Welcome to the pregnancy, sweetheart. This is what pregnancy is,'" Ansonia, 30, recalled. "I told her, 'No, this is not normal for me to be throwing up 10 to 20 times a day.' My own primary care wasn't listening to me."

Ansonia said throughout her pregnancy she encountered hospital staff that made stereotypical jokes, calling her child's father her "baby daddy," a trope often lobbed at Black parents.

"She said, 'So, your baby daddy, where does he work?'" Ansonia recalled. "I said, 'I don't know what a baby daddy is but the father of my child is at work.' She asked where he worked and I told her he had two businesses and she acted like she was surprised."

Ansonia said staff assumed she didn't have any health insurance, when she had insurance through her employer.

Ansonia has Type 2 diabetes and had issues with her blood pressure and heart throughout the pregnancy. She started to see a cardiologist and by the time she was 21 weeks pregnant, she was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. She was placed on a medley of medications, and her doctors decided to deliver the baby early via C-section.

Ansonia was scared, given everything she witnessed her sister go through nearly two years prior.

"There were several times I told my boyfriend that I thought that I was going to die," she said.

The C-section went well. Ansonia's son, Adrien, was due in July 2021 but he was born at the end of May. He spent his first five days in the intensive care unit, then was hospitalized for another two weeks for some early breathing problems.

Cesarean delivery rates are higher for Black women than white women, 36.8% and 31%, respectively, in 2021.

Problems continued for Ansonia after the delivery. She ended up needing a blood transfusion and was unable to see her son for his first few days of life.

A few months postpartum, she was still vomiting and having fainting spells that led to her being admitted to the hospital off and on. Her arms suffered from bruising from needles used to treat her throughout the pregnancy. She had always been slow to heal from any bruising, a common problem for diabetics.

Yet a doctor who had been involved throughout her entire pregnancy questioned why she had bruises on her arms and asked if she "smoked weed" or took any other recreational drugs. The hospital declined to comment, citing patient privacy laws.

"I said, 'This is from me being stuck so many times and having to be in the hospital.' I told him I don't do any drugs," she said.

He still sent her blood work off to be tested. The tests came back negative.

"That just made me not trust them, it made me not want to go back," she said.

There are indications that the sufferings of Black mothers and their babies are being recognized, however late.

In 2019, U.S. Rep. Lauren Underwood, an Illinois Democrat, and Rep. Alma Adams, a North Carolina Democrat, launched the Black Maternal Health Caucus. It is now one of the largest bipartisan congressional caucuses. The caucus introduced the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act in 2019 and again in 2021, proposing sweeping changes that would increase funding and strengthen oversight. Key parts of the legislation have been adopted but the bill itself has yet to be approved.

Biden's budget for fiscal year 2024 includes \$471 million in funding to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates, expand maternal health initiatives in rural communities, and implicit bias training and other initiatives. It also requires states to provide continuous Medicaid coverage for 12 months postpartum, to eliminate gaps in health insurance. It also includes \$1.9 billion in funding for women and child health programs.

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra told The Associated Press more must be done at all levels of government to root out racism and bias within health care.

"We know that if we provide access to care for mother and baby for a full year, that we probably help produce not just good health results, but a promising future for mom and baby moving forward," he said.

Shelonda Lyons always taught both her daughters the bitter truth of racism, hoping it would prepare them to navigate life growing up in Birmingham, the Deep South city known for its place in civil rights history.

"When we were young, she was showing us those images of all the Black people being hung, being burned on the trees," Angelica said, pointing to a book that remains on the family's coffee table. "She wanted us to understand it, to know where we lived and that racism was something that we might have to deal with."

But Shelonda never could have prepared for the treatment her daughters endured during their pregnancies. She remembers feeling helpless and angry.

"It's like a slap in the face to me because at what point do you realize that you're dealing with human beings? That it doesn't matter what color they are," she said, adding that now she worries any time they or her grandsons need to go to the doctor. "I don't have a lot of trust."

Angelica underwent two surgeries in the weeks that followed her C-section to repair internal damage and address her infection. She had to wear a colostomy bag for several months until she healed.

More than three years later, her stomach remains disfigured.

"I love my child, I love him all the same but this isn't the body I was born with," she said. "This is the body that they caused from them not paying attention to me, not listening to me."

Kat Stafford, based in Detroit, is a national investigative race writer for the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. She is a 2022 Knight-Wallace Reporting Fellow at the University of Michigan. Follow her on Twitter: https://twitter.com/kat__stafford.

From birth to death, legacy of racism lays foundation for Black Americans' health disparities

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

From birth to death, Black Americans fare worse in measures of health compared to their white counterparts. They have higher rates of infant and maternal mortality, higher incidence of asthma during childhood, more difficulty treating mental health as teens, and greater rates of high blood pressure, Alzheimer's disease and other illnesses.

The Associated Press spent the past year exploring how the legacy of racism in America has laid the foundation for the health inequities that Black people face.

Here's a breakdown of each story of a five-part series:

Birth: Why do so many Black women die in pregnancy? One reason: Doctors don't take them seriously.

Childhood: Black children are more likely to have asthma. A lot comes down to where they live.

Teen years: Black kids face racism before they even start school. It's driving a major mental health crisis.

Adulthood: High blood pressure plagues many Black Americans. Combined with COVID, it's catastrophic.

Elders: A lifetime of racism makes Alzheimer's more prevalent in Black Americans.

US Border Patrol says agents who killed man in Arizona were answering report of gunfire

AJO, Ariz. (AP) — U.S. Border Patrol agents answering reports of gunfire shot and killed a man on a tribal reservation in southern Arizona after he abruptly threw something and raised his arm, the agency said Monday.

The FBI and Tohono O'odham Nation are investigating Thursday night's fatal shooting of Raymond Mattia.

Monday's U.S. Customs and Border Protection statement said tribal police had asked Border Patrol agents for help in responding to a report of shots fired west of the Menagers Dam community on tribal

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land near the U.S.-Mexico border.

At around 9:30 p.m., the agents were told that reports indicated shots had been fired near the home of a "named individual" and a tribal officer went to the location to look for the person, with the agents following in separate cars, the statement said.

A few minutes after arriving, the police officer and the agents encountered a man outside of a home near their parked cars, the statement said.

The man threw some kind of object toward the officer that landed a few feet away and then "abruptly extended his right arm away from his body and three agents fired their service weapons, striking the individual several times," the statement said.

Because of bad weather, no air ambulance was available to take the man to a hospital and despite life-saving efforts he was declared dead shortly after 10 p.m., according to the statement.

An autopsy was conducted but the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office didn't immediately release details.

The three Border Patrol agents who opened fire and at least seven others were wearing body cameras and activated them during the incident, the statement said.

On Sunday, tribal chairman Ned Norris Jr. identified the man as Mattia, a member of the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Norris and the Border Patrol didn't immediately release other details about the shooting, including whether investigators had confirmed the earlier reports of gunfire and whether any weapon was found.

Tucson TV station KVOA reported earlier that family members of Mattia, who didn't want to be identified by name, told the station that he had called the Border Patrol because there were multiple migrants who had trespassed into his yard and he wanted assistance getting them out of his property.

Family members also said that Mattia had gone outside when he saw the agents and was only two feet from his front door when dozens of shots were fired at him.

Those details also couldn't immediately be verified.

Shelters start to fill in Guam as US territory in Pacific braces for Typhoon Mawar

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Authorities in Guam warned anyone not living in a fully concrete house to head to safety elsewhere and emergency shelters began to fill as residents braced for Typhoon Mawar, a powerful storm that could deliver the biggest hit in two decades to the U.S. territory in the Pacific.

Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero urged residents in a YouTube message to remain calm and prepare for Mawar, which the weather service said could hit the southern part of Guam around midday Wednesday. She ordered the National Guard to help those in low-lying areas evacuate ahead of the storm as residents stocked up on jugs of water and generators.

"Current forecasts are not favorable to our island," she said. "We are at the crosshairs of Typhoon Mawar. Take action now, stay calm, stay informed and stay safe."

If Guam doesn't take a direct hit, it will be very close, said Patrick Doll, the lead meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam.

The center of the Category 3 storm was about 195 miles (313.8 kilometers) southeast of Guam on Tuesday, and moving northwest at 9 to 10 mph (14.4 to 16 kph) toward Guam, according to the weather service.

It was expected to arrive as a 140 mph (225 kph) Category 4 typhoon, weather officials said. Winds could reach up to 150 mph (241 kph), Guerrero said in her video message.

The typhoon could cause "extensive damage," Doll told The Associated Press.

The governor said she would place Guam essentially in a lockdown effective 1 p.m. Tuesday and those in low-lying areas needed to leave by 6 p.m. Tuesday.

Rain from the storm's outer bands was falling Tuesday..

A storm surge of 6 to 10 feet (1.82 to 3 meters) above the normal high tide was expected and could

reach up to 15 feet (4.6 meters). Surf was expected to build sharply in the next day or two along south- and east-facing reefs, with dangerous surf of 20 to 25 feet (6 to 7.6 meters) Tuesday afternoon into Wednesday, the weather service said.

At the island's grocery and hardware stores Monday, people were leaving with shopping carts full of canned goods, cases of water and generators, the Pacific Daily News reported.

The Rev. Francis X. Hezel, a Jesuit priest and assistant pastor at Santa Barbara Church in Dededo, was trying to visit people at the hospital before it closed to visitors Tuesday.

Before hitting the road, he said he had trouble finding someone to help him put air in his tires because everyone was busy readying their homes to withstand the storm.

"I live in a rectory," he said. "I'm just closing the windows hoping that the gusts don't bash them in. Praying for the best, I guess."

Officials warned residents who aren't in fully concrete structures to consider moving for safety. Many homes are made of wood and tin.

"The triple threat of cat 4 typhoon force winds, torrential rains and life-threatening storm surge are all expected for Guam and Rota," the weather service said in a Tuesday morning update.

Rota, an island in the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, was also under a typhoon warning, Doll said. Tinian and Saipan, in the northern Marianas, were under tropical storm warnings.

Some people in those areas are still in temporary shelters or tents after Category 5 Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018, Doll noted.

"Guam takes a Category 4 or 5 hit every five to seven years. Mother Nature has spared us as of late," Doll said, adding that the last direct hit was in 2002. "So we are way overdue."

Donald Trump to appear by video as judge reinforces ban on attacking witnesses

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The judge in Donald Trump's criminal case is holding a hybrid hearing Tuesday to make doubly sure the former president is aware of new rules barring him from using evidence to attack witnesses.

Trump won't have to show up to court for the afternoon hearing at a Manhattan courthouse, avoiding the mammoth security and logistical challenges that accompanied his arraignment last month.

Instead, the Republican will be connected by video conference, with his face beamed onto courtroom TV monitors. His lawyers and prosecutors must still appear in person.

Judge Juan Manuel Merchan agreed to the extra step of personally instructing Trump on the restrictions after listing them May 8 in what's known as a protective order.

Trump is allowed to speak publicly about the case, but he risks being held in contempt if he uses evidence turned over by prosecutors in the pretrial discovery process to target witnesses or others involved in the case.

Trump pleaded not guilty April 4 to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records related to payments his company made to his former lawyer, Michael Cohen.

Prosecutors say those payments were intended to reimburse and compensate Cohen for orchestrating hush money payments during the 2016 campaign to bury allegations of extramarital sexual encounters. Trump denies having had extramarital flings and says the prosecution is politically motivated.

Merchan's protective order bars Trump and his lawyers from disseminating evidence to third parties or posting it to social media, and it requires that certain, sensitive material shared by prosecutors be kept only by Trump's lawyers, not Trump himself.

Prosecutors sought the order soon after Trump's arrest, citing what they say is his history of making "harassing, embarrassing, and threatening statements" about people he's tangled with in legal disputes.

Merchan, noting Trump's "special" status as a former president and current candidate, has made clear that the protective order shouldn't be construed as a gag order and that Trump has a right to publicly

defend himself.

Trump's lawyers are seeking to have his criminal case moved to federal court. It will continue in state court while that plays out.

Success coaches 'dig a little deeper' to help community college students

By VALERIA OLIVARES, The Dallas Morning News undefined

DALLAS (AP) — Daisy Donjuan's family never saw the value in college. After graduating from high school, she did what was expected of her — dropped education, worked and pitched in at home.

When she enrolled in Dallas College after a five-year break in school, she had to navigate a dizzying array of options and decisions as she sought a career outside of retail management.

With the help of a success coach, Donjuan created a plan to graduate through the college's paralegal program. She avoided taking classes that didn't advance her goals and stayed on top of coursework.

"It felt good, the fact that someone is actually checking up on you and that they're keeping up with you," Donjuan, 24, said. "They actually care about us succeeding."

Amid declines in enrollment in community colleges nationally and low completion rates, Dallas College invested nearly three years ago in hiring counselors who take a more hands-on approach to advising. The program pairs students with success coaches to navigate any challenges that stand in the way of their graduation.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is part of Saving the College Dream, a series by the Education Reporting Collaborative involving AL.com, The Associated Press, The Christian Science Monitor, The Dallas Morning News, The Hechinger Report, The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina, and The Seattle Times, with support from the Solutions Journalism Network.

Supporting students — particularly those who come from nontraditional paths — is key as difficult circumstances, unclear pathways to a career and uncertainty about the value of a college degree can derail their education, experts say.

Without purposeful guidance on choosing the right classes or taking advantage of available resources, students can easily get lost and end up "making decisions that don't get them to a degree," said Josh Wyner, who leads higher education programs at The Aspen Institute.

About half of Dallas College's students are first-generation; a little more than 20% are parents; and about 22% are adult learners who are at least 25 with a full-time job, according to self-reported responses and data from a fall 2022 survey.

Donjuan's father, a car salesman, often boasted that he was able to create a business without a high school diploma or degree. Following his lead, she began working at a retail store but quickly ran out of room for growth after reaching a management position.

Mulling over the sacrifices her father made when he upended his life in Mexico in pursuit of a better life, Donjuan saw this as wasted potential.

"I felt lost," she said. "I wanted to break that cycle. We can do better than this ... we came for a reason."

Such details about a student's life usually aren't immediately available to success coaches. That's why it's key to ask probing questions that "dig a little deeper" to find the underlying challenges interfering in students' education, said Garry Johnson, a success coach at Dallas College's Richland Campus.

If a student is missing classes due to transportation issues, Johnson can point those who take six credits or more to a free bus pass. Experiencing food insecurity? Here's the campus' food pantry. Need last-minute child care? These are the four system campuses that offer flexible assistance.

"No student should be hungry, homeless or hopeless," Johnson said. "Our job ... is to address the whole student, not just mere academics."

Nationally, the number of students at community colleges has fallen 37% since 2010, or by nearly 2.6

million, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

Their student-to-advisor ratio at community colleges is usually quite high and labor costs are among the biggest barriers for such institutions, said Nikki Edgecombe, a senior research scholar at the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University.

"The underlying hope is that these navigators and these coaches help students manage to navigate the inevitable bumps that will come up and be able to persist in their academic studies," Edgecombe said.

Trustees approved \$10 million for the success coaches at Dallas College, nearly doubling the school's advising capacity. More than 64,500 students are enrolled at Dallas College, and the system employs nearly 240 success coaches across its seven campuses.

Students are assigned to one coach, allowing them to develop more meaningful relationships with someone who can help them "navigate the Dallas College maze," said Jermain Pipkins, dean of success coaching at the school.

Building rapport with students is key, said Lisa Frost, a success coach. After Frost coached a student on how to ask her instructor about grades and opportunities to earn extra credit, the student soon opened up about how she had never been able to speak her own mind with her family.

"This simple skill alone helped this student overcome a barrier of being shy to ask what she wanted without holding back," Frost said.

Lawmakers in Texas have called for factoring student success into how much state money goes to each community college. Dallas College leaders say they're ahead because of their emphasis on keeping students on track.

Kianna Vaughn, 28, didn't immediately go to college after graduating from high school in 2013 because of the cost. Although she was accepted by Texas Southern University, she didn't qualify for financial aid.

A well-paying job cushioned Vaughn's worries for some years, but she noticed younger people were often filling positions above her own. Despite her years of experience, the absence of a degree was holding her back.

After enrolling at Dallas College last year, Vaughn met with a success coach who helped her lay out a plan that allowed her to juggle school and a full-time job. Now, Vaughn is set to transfer to Jarvis Christian University, a historically Black institution, starting next year to pursue a bachelor's degree.

"I was stagnant for a very long time," she said. "If you want more you have to go for it, it's not as easy as being comfortable where you are. But it's worth it."

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Judge dismisses Kari Lake's final claim in election loss for Arizona governor

PHOENIX (AP) — A judge on Monday dismissed the only remaining legal claim in Republican Kari Lake's challenge of her loss in last year's race for Arizona governor, affirming the election of Democrat Katie Hobbs.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Peter A. Thompson said Lake failed to prove her claim that Maricopa County did not verify signatures on mail ballots as required by law.

Lake was among the most vocal of last year's Republican candidates promoting former President Donald Trump's election lies, which she made the centerpiece of her campaign. She has built a loyal following among Trump supporters and is openly considering a run for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Kyrsten Sinema, an independent and former Democrat. Lake is also often mentioned as a potential vice presidential pick for Trump.

While most other election deniers around the country conceded after losing their races in November, Lake did not. She has touted her legal battle in fundraising appeals and speeches around the country.

Lake did not immediately comment on the ruling.

She filed suit after losing to Hobbs by about 17,000 votes, asking the courts to install her as governor or

order a new election. Thompson dismissed the case, but the Arizona Supreme Court revived a claim that challenges how signature verification procedures were used on early ballots in Maricopa County, home to more than 60% of the state's voters. County officials had defended the signature verification efforts and said they had nothing to hide.

Lake's signature verification claim was the subject of a three-day trial. Her lawyers argued that there was evidence that lower-level screeners who found inconsistencies in signatures ran them up the chain of command, where they were neglected by higher level verifiers.

She did not contest whether voters' signatures on ballot envelopes matched those in their voting records.

The former TV anchor faced a high bar in proving not only her allegation over signature verification efforts but also that it affected the outcome of her race.

Thompson, who was appointed to the bench by former Republican Gov. Jan Brewer, said she did not meet that high bar.

"The evidence the Court received does not support Plaintiff's remaining claim," he wrote.

Earlier in her lawsuit, Lake had focused on problems with ballot printers at some polling places in Maricopa County. The defective printers produced ballots that were too light to be read by the on-site tabulators at polling places. Lines were backed up in some areas amid the confusion. Lake alleged ballot printer problems were the result of intentional misconduct.

County officials say everyone had a chance to vote and all ballots were counted because those affected by the printers were taken to more sophisticated counters at election headquarters.

In mid-February, the Arizona Court of Appeals rejected Lake's assertions, concluding she presented no evidence that voters whose ballots were unreadable by tabulators at polling places were unable to vote.

The following month, the state Supreme Court declined to hear nearly all of Lake's appeal, saying there was no evidence to support her claim that more than 35,000 ballots were added to vote totals.

Earlier this month, the court sanctioned Lake's lawyers \$2,000 for making false statements when saying that more than 35,000 ballots had been improperly added to the total count.

'Mother Nature has no mercy': Man gets stuck waist-deep in Alaska mud flats, drowns as tide comes in

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A man who was walking on tidal mud flats with friends in an Alaska estuary got stuck up to his waist in the quicksand-like silt and drowned as the tide came in before frantic rescuers could extract him, authorities said.

Zachary Porter, 20, of Lake Bluff, Illinois, was submerged Sunday evening as the tide came in, and his body was recovered Monday morning, Alaska State Troopers spokesperson Austin McDaniel told The Associated Press. A member of Porter's group called 911 when they couldn't get him out, but it was too late, authorities said.

The accident was the latest tragedy at Turnagain Arm, a 48-mile-long (77-kilometer-long) estuary carved out long ago by glaciers that travels southeast from the Anchorage area and parallels a major highway. At low tide, the estuary is known for its dangerous mud flats made of silt created by glacier-pulverized rocks. At least three other people have gotten stuck and drowned there over the years. Many more have been rescued, including someone who was fishing there last month.

"It's big, it's amazing, it's beautiful, and it's overwhelming," Kristy Peterson, the administrator and lead EMT for the Hope-Sunrise Volunteer Fire Department, said of Alaska. "But you have to remember that it's Mother Nature, and she has no mercy for humanity."

Peterson, who responded to the call, spoke with others in Porter's party but didn't talk to him during the desperate rescue attempt.

"When we respond, we respond with the utmost of good intentions and as mothers and fathers and uncles and brothers," she said. "We respond with as much passion and vigor as we can."

The volunteer members of the department will gather later in the week for a debriefing, she said. "I have been in contact with all my members, and they're all heartbroken," Peterson said. "This is a hard situation."

The accident occurred near the community of Hope, a quaint community of about 80 people. It lies across Turnagain Arm just 22 miles — but a 90-minute drive — from Anchorage.

The estuary travels southeast from the Anchorage area and parallels the Seward Highway, the only highway that goes south and delivers tourists from Anchorage to the sportsman's paradise of the Kenai Peninsula.

At low tide, Turnagain Arm is known for its mud flats that "can suck you down," Peterson said. "It looks like it's solid, but it's not."

When the tide comes back in, the silt gets wet from the bottom, loosens up and can create a vacuum if a person walks on it.

Signs are posted warning people of hazardous waters and mud flats.

"I've really got to warn people against playing the mud," Peterson said. "It's dangerous."

Some people attempt to walk across Turnagain Arm or walk the 9 miles (14 kilometers) from Anchorage to Fire Island during low tide, sometimes prompting rescue efforts.

There have been other deaths on the mud flats. In 1988, newlyweds Adeana and Jay Dickison were gold dredging on the eastern end of the arm when her ATV got stuck in the mud, the Anchorage Daily News reported. She then became stuck when trying to push it out and drowned with the incoming tide.

In 1978, an unnamed Air Force sergeant attempting to cross Turnagain Arm was swept away with the leading edge of the tide. His body was never found, the Anchorage newspaper reported. In 2013, Army Capt. Joseph Eros died while trying to cross from Fire Island back to Anchorage.

Earlier this month, a man was rescued from the mud flats after one leg became stuck, and he sank to his waist while fishing in Turnagain Arm.

Peterson said they got the rescue call after Porter was in serious trouble, and it takes time to mobilize. Another department — about an hour's drive away — also responded.

Peterson urged people to call 911 as soon as possible.

"If you think that there's an issue, if you think that there even might be an issue, call," she said. "Because we can get resources moving, and we would rather turn around and go home than it be a disaster."

E. Jean Carroll adds Trump's post-verdict remarks to defamation case, seeks at least \$10M

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — E. Jean Carroll, the advice columnist who won a \$5 million sexual abuse and defamation award against former President Donald Trump, is seeking at least \$10 million more in a court filing Monday that seeks to hold him liable for remarks he made after the verdict.

The amended lawsuit was filed in Manhattan by Carroll's lawyers, who said Trump "doubled down" on derogatory remarks about the former Elle magazine columnist during a cable television appearance a day after the verdict.

"It is hard to imagine defamatory conduct that could possibly be more motivated by hatred, ill will, or spite," they wrote of Trump's remarks at a CNN town hall. "This conduct supports a very substantial punitive damages award in Carroll's favor both to punish Trump, to deter him from engaging in further defamation, and to deter others from doing the same."

A nine-person jury two weeks ago decided Trump had sexually abused Carroll at an upscale Manhattan department store in early spring 1996. It also found that Trump had made false statements that damaged her reputation after she went public with her allegations in a 2019 book.

Carroll testified during the trial that Trump raped her in a department store dressing room. Trump, who is campaigning for the presidency, did not attend the trial or testify.

The jury decided Carroll hadn't proved she had been raped, but found that Trump had sexually abused

her. Trump continues to deny that the attack happened. He said Carroll made up the allegation to help sell her book.

Joe Tacopina, a Trump lawyer, declined to comment on the new legal claim.

Carroll defamation claims against Trump have proceeded in two separate lawsuits, one decided in the trial that just concluded, and another that previously dealt only with derogatory remarks that Trump made in 2019 while he was still president.

That lawsuit, which has been tied up in still-unresolved legal appeals, is the one to which Carroll, 79, has added her new claims.

Carroll's lawyers asked for a speedy resolution "while she remains in good health and before Donald Trump's time and attention are consumed entirely by his presidential campaign."

A spokesperson for the U.S. government lawyers declined to comment.

Carroll's lawyers added that "Trump was motivated by purely personal reasons, rather than presidential or official reasons," saying he "implied that Carroll was too ugly for him to sexually assault, falsely stated that Carroll had previously lodged fake allegations of sexual misconduct against other men, and invented a baseless narrative that Carroll fabricated her accusation for money, to promote a book, or to further a political conspiracy — without possessing or pointing to one iota of support for those claims."

In the new claim, Carroll's lawyers said Trump, "undeterred by the jury's verdict, persisted in maliciously defaming Carroll yet again" at the CNN event.

"He doubled down on his prior defamatory statements, asserting to an audience all too ready to cheer him on that 'I never met this woman. I never saw this woman,' that he did not sexually assault Carroll, and that her account — which had just been validated by a jury of Trump's peers one day before — was a 'fake,' 'made up story' invented by a 'whack job.' Those statements resulted in enthusiastic cheers and applause from the audience on live TV," the lawyers wrote.

They added: "Trump used a national platform to demean and mock Carroll. He egged on a laughing audience as he made light of his violent sexual assault, called Carroll names, implied that Carroll was asking to be assaulted, and dismissed the jury's verdict vindicating Carroll."

Pope sends Vatican official to Bolivia as abuse allegations escalate

By CARLOS VALDEZ Associated Press

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — Pope Francis has sent one of his top sex crimes investigators to Bolivia at a time when the Andean nation is being shaken by an escalating pedophilia scandal involving priests.

Monsignor Jordi Bertomeu, a leading member of the church's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, arrived in Bolivia on the same day as a former Jesuit seminarian landed in the country vowing to reveal more information about alleged cases of abuse.

The Bolivian Episcopal Conference said Bertomeu's visit is not directly related to the recent sex abuse allegations but had been planned earlier to analyze "the progress made in the field of the culture of prevention" promoted by the Vatican.

Bertomeu arrived in Bolivia from Paraguay, where he had been investigating similar accusations against church officials and in 2018 he led the investigation into abuses committed by priests against minors in Chile.

The meetings in Bolivia "will be conducted in an atmosphere of profound closeness to all those who have been victims of the scourge of abuse in the Church," the Episcopal Conference said in a statement.

Bertomeu "is a person of great trust to Pope Francis, who is responsible for addressing these issues, and he is coming to provide some guidance on how we can handle this issue, listen to and support the victims," said Monsignor Giovanni Arana, the Episcopal Conference's secretary.

The visit comes soon after case of Spanish Jesuit Alfonso Pedrajas became public. According to a private diary accessed by the Spanish newspaper El País, Pedrajas allegedly abused about 85 minors in Catholic boarding schools in Bolivia in the 1970s and 1980s. He died of cancer in 2009.

The Prosecutor's Office has initiated an investigation, which remains confidential, and has called on victims to file complaints.

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The Jesuit Society in Bolivia has apologized to the victims and pledged to support the investigation while denouncing Pedrajas' superiors for an alleged cover up. Many of the superiors are no longer in office or have died.

Pedro Lima, a former Bolivian Jesuit seminarian considered an important witness, has vowed to cooperate with the investigation. His arrival in Bolivia coincide with Bertomeu's.

"I am not only a witness but also a victim of abuses of power, sexual abuse, and abuse of conscience by the Jesuit Society in Bolivia," Lima said upon his arrival in the Bolivian capital of La Paz on Monday to testify before the Prosecutor's Office.

During a news conference, Lima accused three Jesuits of covering up the alleged abuses.

"Apologies are not enough, these abuses cannot go unpunished. There must be reparation for the victims, and I am here to ensure that these painful events never happen again," said Lima, who declined to provide details about the alleged abuses he suffered.

Lima's assertions were questioned by the lawyer for the Jesuits, Audalia Zurita, who said Lima "held a position of power" to denounce the alleged abuses when in 2006 and 2007 he was a member of the Constituent Assembly that reformed Bolivia's constitution and did not do so.

Lima left the Jesuit Society, where he was a teacher in schools and boarding houses, in 2001 and turned to politics. In 2012, he left the country claiming "political persecution" by the Movement Toward Socialism party, and sought refuge with the Jesuits in Paraguay, where he worked until recently.

"Of course, I worked with the Jesuits in Paraguay. Having worked with them does not mean that I should remain silent... when I wanted to denounce, they said there were no victims, no evidence," he said.

Pedrajas' case has brought other previously unresolved cases to light. Prosecutor Wilfredo Chávez stated that "there are 23 priests implicated in pedophilia in the country," including one who was sent to pre-trial detention for three months last week.

There have been isolated protests in some churches and Catholic schools in Bolivia since the Pedrajas case came to light.

Biden's shift on F-16s for Ukraine came after months of internal debate

By AAMER MADHANI and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's decision to allow allies to train Ukrainian forces on how to operate F-16 fighter jets — and eventually to provide the aircraft themselves — seemed like an abrupt change in position but was in fact one that came after months of internal debate and quiet talks with allies.

Biden announced during last week's Group of Seven summit in Hiroshima, Japan, that the U.S. would join the F-16 coalition. His green light came after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spent months pressing the West to provide his forces with American-made jets as he tries to repel Russia's now 15-month-old grinding invasion.

Long shadowing the administration's calculation were worries that such a move could escalate tensions with Russia. U.S. officials also argued that learning to fly and logistically support the advanced F-16 would be difficult and time consuming.

But over the past three months, administration officials shifted toward the view that it was time to provide Ukraine's pilots with the training and aircraft needed for the country's long-term security needs, according to three officials familiar with the deliberations who requested anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Still, the change in Biden's position seemed rather sudden.

In February, Biden was insistent in an interview with ABC's David Muir that Ukraine "doesn't need F-16s now" and that "I am ruling it out for now." And in March, a top Pentagon policy official, Colin Kahl, told U.S. lawmakers that even if the president approved F-16s for Ukraine, it could take as long as two years to get Ukrainian pilots trained and equipped.

But as the administration was publicly playing down the prospect of F-16s for Ukraine in the near term, an internal debate was heating up.

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Quiet White House discussions stepped up in February, around the time that Biden visited Ukraine and Poland, according to the U.S. officials.

Following the trip, discussions that included senior White House National Security Council, Pentagon and State Department officials began on the pros and cons and the details of how such a transfer might work, officials said. Administration officials also got deeper into consultations with allies.

In April, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin heard from defense leaders from allied countries during a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group who were looking for U.S. permission to train the Ukrainians on F-16s, according to a Defense Department official who was not authorized to comment publicly. Austin raised the matter during the NSC policy discussions and there was agreement that it was time to start training.

Austin also raised the issue with Biden before the G7 summit with a recommendation "to proceed with approving allies" to train the Ukrainians and transfer the aircraft, the department official said. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also was a strong advocate for pushing forward with the plan during the U.S. policy talks and conveying to Biden increasing European urgency on the issue, officials said.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan traveled to London on May 8 for talks with British, French and German allies on Ukraine, and F-16s were high on the agenda. They got into the nitty gritty on how to go about provide training and which countries might be willing to transfer jets to Ukraine. It was agreed that the focus would be on training first, according to one of the officials.

Sullivan, before leaving London, spoke by phone with his counterparts from the Netherlands and Poland, both countries that have F-16s and "would be essential to any efforts to provide Ukraine jets for any future use." Denmark also could potentially provide the jets, the official added.

Biden and Sullivan discussed how the upcoming G7 summit in Hiroshima could provide a good opportunity for him to make the case to key allies on the administration's shifting stance on fighter jets.

They also discussed Biden backing allies providing jets to Ukraine — a line he had previously appeared not to want to cross out of concern that it could draw the West into what could be seen as direct confrontation with Moscow.

Biden, in private talks with fellow G7 leaders on Friday, confirmed that the U.S. would get behind a joint effort to train Ukrainian pilots on the F-16 and that as things went on, they would work together on who would provide them and how many would be sent.

State, Pentagon and NSC officials are now developing the training plan and "when, where and how to deliver F-16s" to Ukraine as part of the long-term security effort, the official said.

U.S. officials say it will take several months to iron out details, but the U.S. Air Force has quietly determined that the actual training could realistically be done in about four months. The Air Force based the far shorter estimate on a visit by two Ukrainian pilots to a U.S. air base in March, where they got to learn about the F-16 and fly simulators. The training, officials say, would take place in Europe.

White House officials have bristled at the notion that Biden's decision amounted to a sea change.

The administration had been focused on providing Ukraine with weapons — including air defense systems, armored vehicles, bridging equipment and artillery — that were needed for a coming counteroffensive. There also were concerns that sending F-16s would eat up a significant portion of the money allocated for Ukraine.

What changed, the official added, is that other allies got to a point where they were willing to provide their own jets as part of a U.S.-based coalition.

The Biden administration is still examining whether it will directly provide its own F-16s to Ukraine. Regardless, it needed buy-in from other allies because the U.S. wouldn't be able to provide the full fleet of jets Zelenskyy says is needed.

Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall said the F-16 will give Ukraine a key capability for the long term but it won't be a "game changer."

Kendall told a gathering of reporters on Monday there has been an awareness that "we needed to go there at some point, but we didn't have a sense of urgency about this. I think we're at a reasonable place to make that decision now."

Another potential wrinkle in the F-16 conversation involves Turkey.

Turkey wants to buy 40 new F-16s from the U.S., but some in Congress oppose the sale until Turkey approves NATO membership for Sweden, which applied to join the alliance in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has objected to Sweden's perceived support of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, the leftist extremist group DHKP-C and followers of the U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara claims was behind a failed military coup attempt in 2016.

Erdogan is facing opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu in a runoff election on Sunday. If Erdogan wins, as expected, White House officials are increasingly hopeful that the Turkish leader will withdraw his opposition to Sweden's membership, according to the U.S. official.

If Erdogan drops opposition to Sweden joining NATO, it could lead to Turkey getting its long desired F-16s and may eventually add to the number of older F-16s in circulation, which could benefit Ukraine.

—
Associated Press White House correspondent Zeke Miller contributed reporting.

Mexicans near Popocatepetl stay vigilant as volcano's activity increases

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

SANTIAGO XALITZINTLA, Mexico (AP) — At the edge of this town near the Popocatepetl volcano, away from the din of traffic, there was an occasional low rumble Monday, like an idling engine.

A cloud of superfine ash descended, slightly reducing visibility and coming to rest on vehicles' windshields. For more than a week, the 17,797-foot (5,425-meter) mountain just 45 miles (about 70 kilometers) southeast of Mexico City and known affectionately as "El Popo," has been increasingly explosive, spewing great plumes of gas, ash and incandescent rock into the air.

The activity led the Mexican government to raise the warning level and to close schools in dozens of municipalities across three states. On Monday, local, state and federal officials held drills for the possibility of evacuations.

"You hear it more at night," said Violeta Fuentes, 39, who lives with her husband and two children, ages 9 and 12, on the outskirts of Santiago Xalitzintla. That's also when they can see the glow from the crater. "Last night, several times it would go out one moment and then light up again."

Fuentes said she was a bit unnerved by it "because you can see (the volcano) doesn't want to be okay anymore." The family worried about the impact the falling ash would have on their crops. Her father-in-law's corn across the street was already coated in it.

The alerts and preparations, however, are old hat for residents here.

Job Amalco, a driver, said it was normal. "It doesn't scare us. We're spectators of what nature gives us," he said proudly.

But anxiety was beginning to build among some.

"It's worrisome, above all because of the children, because you don't know if there will be an enormous explosion or a small one," said Claudia de la Cruz, 27, who has two children ages 3 and 5.

Her husband hikes up the volcano's flanks each day to collect firewood to make charcoal. "He says that there it sounds like the peaks are crashing down and it shakes, but he's brave for us," she said.

De la Cruz remembers as a girl the first time she saw the mountain glow and how back then residents had very little information. She trusts that now with a cellphone they will know in real time what is happening.

Still, the real warning residents listen for — as it has been her whole life — will be the urgent tolling of the town's church bells. Monday they rang out as part of the drill.

There were no signs of panic Monday, but people worried about the possibility of having to evacuate, leaving homes and animals unattended. Authorities have warned people to stay out of 7.5-mile (12-kilometer) radius around the peak.

Florencio de Olarte, 69, and Plácida de Aquino, 72, recalled having to evacuate their home in the center

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of town twice before, years ago. On those occasions, "you could see (the volcano) was lit up, throwing out rocks," Olarte said.

One of their children already wants them to come to Mexico City, but the couple doesn't want to leave before authorities tell them they have to, because of their turkeys, pig and donkey. "We have animals and couldn't leave them," Aquino said.

"Right now there's a lot of smoke plume and it oozes and thunders, the curtains shake," Aquino said. But for the moment nothing more.

The volcano's activity temporarily halted flights at the capital's two airports over the weekend.

On Monday, an ash plume extended hundreds of miles (hundreds of kilometers) to the east, stretching out over the Bay of Campeche, according to a U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report.

On Sunday, national Civil Defense Coordinator Laura Velázquez said in a news conference that the stoplight-style warning system for the volcano remained on yellow, but had risen to phase 3. Still, she said, "there is no risk to the population at this time."

In this phase, large domes develop and explode in increasing intensity, launching incandescent rock into the air and pyroclastic flows down its flanks.

Velázquez said only three of the volcano's 565 explosions since September had been big, and the current activity was not the greatest of this century. On Monday, she oversaw the drill in Santiago Xalitliltla.

"We don't know what's going to happen," she said Monday. "We are prepared for any scenario."

The Defense Department said it was ready to activate 6,500 troops if necessary. Shelters were being prepared.

Some 25 million people live within a 60-mile (100-kilometer) radius, most of those in Mexico City's metropolitan area.

Popocatepetl came to life in 1994 after a decades-long dormancy and experienced periods of greater activity from 2000 to 2003 and 2012 to 2016.

Breakthrough proposal would aid drought-stricken Colorado River as 3 Western states offer cuts

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM and KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Arizona, Nevada and California said Monday they're willing to cut back on their use of the dwindling Colorado River in exchange for money from the federal government -- and to avoid forced cuts as drought threatens the key water supply for the U.S. West.

The \$1.2 billion plan, a potential breakthrough in a year-long stalemate, would conserve an additional 3 million acre-feet of water through 2026, when current guidelines for how the river is shared expire. About half the cuts would come by the end of 2024. That's less than what federal officials said last year would be needed to stave off crisis in the river but still marks a notable step in long and difficult negotiations between the three states.

The 1,450-mile (2,334-kilometer) river provides water to 40 million people in seven U.S. states, parts of Mexico and more than two dozen Native American tribes. It produces hydropower and supplies water to farms that grow most of the nation's winter vegetables.

In exchange for temporarily using less water, cities, irrigation districts and Native American tribes in the three states will be paid. The federal government plans to spend \$1.2 billion, said Lauren Wodarski, a spokesperson to U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, a Nevada Democrat.

Though adoption of the plan isn't certain, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton called it an "important step forward." She said the bureau will pull back its proposal from last month that could have resulted in sidestepping the existing water priority system to force cuts while it analyzes the three-state plan. The bureau's earlier proposal, if adopted, could have led to a messy legal battle.

"At least they're still talking. But money helps you keep talking," said Terry Fulp, former regional director of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado Basin region.

The three Lower Basin states are entitled to 7.5 million acre-feet of water altogether from the river. An

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acre-foot of water is roughly enough to serve two to three U.S. households annually.

California gets the most, based on a century-old water rights priority system. Most of that goes to farmers in the Imperial Irrigation District, though some also goes to smaller water districts and cities across Southern California. Arizona and Nevada have already faced cuts in recent years as key reservoir levels dropped based on prior agreements. But California has been spared.

Under the new proposal, California would give up about 1.6 million acre-feet of water through 2026 — a little more than half of the total. That's roughly the same amount the state first offered six months ago.

But the threat of forced federal cuts — made more strongly last month — appears to have prompted action.

"It's always a concern when states lose control of their own process," said John Entsminger, general manager for the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

The Imperial Irrigation District would account for more than half of California's cuts. J.B. Hamby, chairman of the Colorado River Board of California, said the district has already taken measures to improve water efficiency and will need to do more. He said the district is working on a pilot summer idling program where farmers would sign up to turn off their water for 60 days for forage crops. During that time of year, yields are already down and more water is required, he said.

Bill Hasencamp, manager of Colorado River resources for the Metropolitan Water District of California, which supplies water to 19 million people in southern California, said the wet winter means the state simply needs less water. His district is planning on leaving 250,000 acre feet this year in Lake Mead, and won't withdraw it until after 2026.

The district will also turn over to the federal government a program that pays farmers to fallow land that typically nets them about 130,000 acre feet of water a year, he said. Metropolitan will save roughly \$100 million over three years, he said.

Buschatzke stressed that the announcement is not a final deal.

"We agreed to a proposal. This is not an agreement," Buschatzke said during a conference call with reporters. Buschatzke said the proposal still needs analysis and approval from the federal government, which will determine how much funding will be allocated for entities that give up water.

The plan doesn't change how much water the Upper Basin states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah or Wyoming will receive. Becky Mitchell, director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, said that Upper Basin states didn't have a chance to analyze the Lower Basin's plan in detail.

"The wet winter has given us a bit of space to negotiate, but we must not squander this gift from Mother Nature," Mitchell said. She said Colorado and other basin states urged federal officials to return to longer-term discussions about how to preserve water levels at Lakes Mead and Powell beyond 2026.

The Colorado River has been in crisis for years due to a multi-decade drought in the West intensified by climate change, rising demand and overuse. Water levels at key reservoirs dipped to unprecedented lows, though they have rebounded somewhat thanks to heavy precipitation this winter.

In recent years the federal government has cut some water allocations and offered billions of dollars to pay farmers, cities and others to cut back. But key water officials didn't see those efforts as enough to prevent the system from collapsing.

Last summer, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation called for the seven basin states to figure out how to cut their collective use of Colorado River water by about 2 to 4 million acre feet in 2023 alone — roughly 15% to 30% of their annual use — but states blew past that deadline and an agreement remained elusive.

In April, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released a plan that considered two ways to force cuts for Arizona, Nevada and California. One contemplated using a decades-old water priority system that would have benefited California and some Native American tribes with senior water rights. The other would have been a percentage cut across the board.

Michael Cohen, a senior researcher at the Pacific Institute focused on the Colorado River, called the amount of cuts the three states have proposed a "huge, huge lift" and a significant step forward.

"It does buy us a little additional time," he said. But if more dry years are ahead, "this agreement will

not solve that problem.”

Associated Press writer Amy Taxin in Orange County contributed. Naishadham reported from Washington.

Drag show restaurant files federal lawsuit against Florida and Gov. DeSantis

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A popular Orlando restaurant that regularly features drag shows filed a federal lawsuit against the state of Florida and Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday, less than a week after he signed a bill that targets drag performances.

The lawsuit filed in Orlando federal court by the owner of Hamburger Mary's Orlando claims the state is depriving the business of its First Amendment rights to free expression. The restaurant is asking the court to temporarily stop the law from taking effect while the case moves forward.

DeSantis has made anti-LGBTQ+ legislation a large part of his agenda as he prepares to seek the Republican presidential nomination. He signed the bill restricting drag performances — along with bills that ban gender-affirming care for minors, restrict discussion of personal pronouns in schools and force people to use certain bathrooms — last Wednesday in front of a cheering crowd at the evangelical Cambridge Christian School in Tampa.

Hamburger Mary's Bar & Grille has more than a dozen locations around the U.S., with the Orlando restaurant opening in 2008. According to the lawsuit, the restaurant had hosted “family friendly” drag shows on Sundays, but the new Florida law is forcing them to ban children from all shows. This has led to a 20% drop in Sunday bookings.

Proponents of the legislation have said the law is meant to keep children from viewing sexually explicit performances. Lawyers for the business argue the new law is so broad and vague that it could be applied to almost any performance that involves a man dressing up like a woman, even if the performance isn't sexual in nature. The lawsuit said the business owners can't risk having their business or liquor licenses suspended or risk facing criminal prosecution by allowing children at the shows.

The governor's office didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment about the lawsuit.

School shooter asks for mercy from life sentence; teacher, principal want him to stay in prison

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — A school shooter serving a life sentence without parole for killing a first grader on a South Carolina playground when he was 14 is asking a judge to lessen his sentence so he can eventually get out of prison.

Jesse Osborne's lawyer asked Judge Lawton McIntosh on Monday to reconsider his sentence so Osborne, now 21, could have some hope of freedom in his 50s or 60s.

Attorney Frank Eppes said the judge didn't fully consider a psychologist's report that Osborne's lashed out because of abuse and can be rehabilitated.

“Give Jesse some hope to live with,” Eppes said at a televised court hearing.

Osborne himself asked for a chance at life outside a prison cell, apologizing to the family of 6-year-old Jacob Hall who he killed and everyone at the school that day.

“I would just like to say sorry to every single one of them. Because my evil actions hurt their lives,” Osborne said. “I'm just going to try to better myself in the Department of Corrections the rest of my life.”

But the teacher whose class was having recess, the parent of a wounded child, the father of the student celebrating his birthday, the superintendent who saw the bloodstained class rug and the school principal all said at Monday's hearing at the Anderson County Courthouse that they don't want to ever see Osborne out of prison.

Principal Denise Fredericks recognized Osborne as he paced outside Townville Elementary School with

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a backpack full of ammunition for 12 minutes after his gun jammed before police arrived to arrest him. Osborne had been a student there for seven years.

"I do wish Jesse a life where he can wake up, breathe, eat, work, be productive — but not outside the walls of a prison," Fredericks said. "In my opinion, his current sentence is still so, so much more merciful than the sentence he gave to Jacob and our school family."

Prosecutors said Hall's family didn't wish to speak in court but want Osborne to never be released from prison.

Osborne is serving two life sentences after pleading guilty. Before opening fire at the school on Sept. 28, 2016, he shot and killed his father while he slept in a recliner, kissed his rabbit and other pets goodbye, then stole his dad's truck and drove to his former elementary school, according to Osborne's confession.

Osborne crashed his truck into the school fence and fired at the first grade class celebrating a classmate's birthday at recess. Hall bled to death from a gunshot to his leg. Two other student and a teacher suffered minor injuries.

Uneaten cupcakes with the Batman logo could still be seen on the ground inside police tape hours after the shooting.

"My son hates his birthday now," father Jeff Bernard told the judge.

Prosecutors said Osborne wanted to kill dozens but he was carrying the wrong ammunition and his gun jammed after every shot.

"He didn't stop because he wanted to. The gun jammed. Thank God the gun jammed," Fredericks said.

Osborne's lawyer said a video call he had open to a group chat with people who knew his plan showed him sobbing, upset and ready to give up after the first shots.

Osborne is asking the judge to consider a supplemental report from a psychologist that disagrees with prosecution experts who testified at Osborne's original sentencing that he is a dangerous and pathological liar with no remorse.

Osborne's brain was still developing in his teens. The psychiatrists cited by the defense said he has shown guilt and grief and responded to treatment during the nearly seven years since his arrest on school grounds.

Osborne's lawyer suggested a 30-year minimum sentence for the two counts of murder, followed by 15 years for shooting at the other children and then lifetime monitoring by GPS after he is released from prison with one review after 10 years.

McIntosh asked for a detailed report from the defense expert in the next month and told prosecutors they would have at least 10 days to respond.

A number of students never returned to the school after the shooting. Some haven't returned to any school. A popped balloon ended a school dance in tears. Recess is still filled with anxiety, said teacher Meghan Hollingsworth, whose class was celebrating the birthday that day. Her child was in kindergarten just down the hall.

"The screams of children having fun sends a panic through me as I look to see who is screaming and see if they are OK," she said.

She asked the judge to think about a sign in her first grade classroom and uphold his life sentence handed down more than three years ago,

"You are free to choose, but you are not free from the consequences of your choices," it reads.

Ray Stevenson, of 'Rome' and 'Thor' movies, dies at 58

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Ray Stevenson, who played the villainous British governor in "RRR," an Asgardian warrior in the "Thor" films, and a member of the 13th Legion in HBO's "Rome," has died. He was 58.

Representatives for Stevenson told The Associated Press that he died Sunday but had no other details to share on Monday.

Stevenson was born in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, in 1964. After attending the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and years of working in British television, he made his film debut in Paul Greengrass's 1998 film

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"The Theory of Flight." In 2004, he appeared in Antoine Fuqua's "King Arthur" as a knight of the round table and several years later played the lead in the pre-Disney Marvel adaptation "Punisher: War Zone."

Though "Punisher" was not the best-reviewed film, he'd get another taste of Marvel in the first three "Thor" films, in which he played Volstagg. Other prominent film roles included the "Divergent" trilogy, "G.I. Joe: Retaliation" and "The Transporter: Refueled."

A looming presence at 6-foot-4, Stevenson, who played his share of soldiers past and present, once said in an interview, "I guess I'm an old warrior at heart."

On the small screen, he was the roguish Titus Pullo in "Rome," a role that really got his career going in the United States and got him a SAG card, at the age of 44. The popular series ran from 2005 to 2007.

"That was one of the major years of my life," Stevenson said in an interview. "It made me sit down in my own skin and say, just do the job. The job's enough."

In the Variety review of "Rome," Brian Lowery wrote that "the imposing Stevenson certainly stands out as a brawling, whoring and none-too-bright warrior — a force of nature who, despite his excesses, somehow keeps landing on his feet."

He was Blackbeard in the Starz series "Black Sails," Commander Jack Swinburne in the German television series "Das Boot," and Othere on "Vikings."

Stevenson also did voice work in "Star Wars Rebels" and "The Clone Wars," as Gar Saxon, and has a role in the upcoming Star Wars live-action series "Ahsoka," in which he plays a bad guy, Baylan Skoll. The eight-episode season is expected on Disney+ in August.

In an interview with Backstage in 2020, Stevenson said his acting idols were, "The likes of Lee Marvin (and) Gene Hackman."

"Never a bad performance, and brave and fearless within that caliber," Stevenson said. "It was never the young, hot leading man; it was men who I could identify with."

Stevenson has three sons with Italian anthropologist Elisabetta Caraccia, who he met while working on "Rome."

TikTok files lawsuit to overturn Montana's 1st-in-nation ban on the video sharing app

By AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Social media company TikTok Inc. filed a lawsuit Monday seeking to overturn Montana's first-in-the-nation ban on the video sharing app, arguing the law is an unconstitutional violation of free speech rights and is based on "unfounded speculation" that the Chinese government could access users' data.

The lawsuit by TikTok, owned by Chinese tech company ByteDance, follows one filed last week by five content creators. They made similar arguments including that the state of Montana has no authority to take action on matters of national security. Both lawsuits were filed in federal court in Missoula.

Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed the bill Wednesday and the content creators' lawsuit was filed hours later. The law is scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, but cybersecurity experts say it could be difficult to enforce.

TikTok says it has not shared and would not share U.S. user data with the Chinese government and has taken measures to protect the privacy and security of its users, including storing all U.S. user data in the United States, according to the lawsuit.

Some lawmakers, the FBI and officials at other agencies are concerned that the video-sharing app could be used to allow the Chinese government to access information on U.S. citizens or push pro-Beijing misinformation that could influence the public.

Chinese law compels Chinese companies to share data with the government for whatever purposes it deems to involve national security. TikTok says this has never happened.

"The Chinese Communist Party is using TikTok as a tool to spy on Americans by collecting personal information, keystrokes, and even the locations of its users — and by extension, people without TikTok

who affiliate with users may have information about themselves shared without even knowing it," Emily Flower, a spokesperson for the Montana Department of Justice, said in a statement.

"We expected legal challenges and are fully prepared to defend the law that helps protect Montanans' privacy and security," she wrote

The federal government and about half the U.S. states, including Montana, have banned TikTok from government-owned devices.

Montana's new law prohibits downloads of TikTok in the state. It would fine any "entity" — an app store or TikTok — \$10,000 per day for each time someone "is offered the ability" to access the social media platform or download the app. The penalties would not apply to users.

Chatter about a TikTok ban has been around since 2020, when then-President Donald Trump attempted to bar the company from operating in the U.S. through an executive order that was halted in federal courts. Congress has also considered banning the app over security concerns.

Supreme Court won't hear dispute over California law barring sale of foie gras

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Monday it won't get involved in a dispute over a California animal cruelty law that bars foie gras from being sold in the state, leaving in place a lower court ruling dismissing the case.

Foie gras is made from the enlarged livers of force-fed ducks and geese, and animal welfare groups had supported the law. As is typical, the court did not comment in declining to hear the case, and it was among many the court said Monday it would not hear.

The law doesn't completely bar Californians from eating foie gras in the state. Courts have ruled that residents can still order foie gras from out-of-state producers and have it sent to them. Restaurants and retailers are still forbidden from selling it or giving it away, however.

The foie gras case had been on hold at the high court while the justices considered a different case involving another California animal cruelty law, that one governing the sale of pork in the state. In that case, the justices earlier this month backed that law, which requires more space for breeding pigs. The pork industry has said the ruling will lead to higher costs nationwide for pork chops and bacon.

California's foie gras law, however, predates the pork law and went into effect in July 2012. It says: "A product may not be sold in California if it is the result of force feeding a bird for the purpose of enlarging the bird's liver beyond normal size."

Farmers and producers of poultry products in Canada sued over the law along with New York-based Hudson Valley Foie Gras. The case has been going on since 2012. Most recently, a trial court dismissed the case and a federal appeals court agreed with that outcome. The Supreme Court's decision not to step in leaves that decision in place.

In a statement released through their attorney, Michael Tenenbaum, the groups that brought the case said they were disappointed both with the way the high court resolved the California pork law case earlier in the month and with the high court's decision not to step in to their case.

"Like farmers across the Nation, we are disappointed with the Supreme Court's fractured ruling in the pork producers' case, which allowed California's politicians to tell people what they can and can't eat. And we believe the Court should have agreed to add our case to its plate for the upcoming term, since it presents an even more compelling challenge to these nanny-state bans," the statement read.

A spokesperson for California Attorney General Rob Bonta, whose office defended the law, said in an e-mailed statement the office was pleased with the decision.

FACT FOCUS: Fake image of Pentagon explosion briefly sends jitters through stock market

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

An image of black smoke billowing next to a bureaucratic-looking building spread across social media Monday morning, with the claim that it showed an explosion near the Pentagon.

The posts sent a brief shiver through the stock market and were quickly picked up by news outlets outside the U.S., before officials jumped in to clarify that no blast actually took place and the photo was a fake.

Experts say the viral image had telltale signs of an AI-generated forgery, and its popularity underscores the everyday chaos these now increasingly sophisticated and easy-to-access programs can inflict.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: An image shows an explosion near the Pentagon.

THE FACTS: Police and fire officials in Arlington, Virginia, say the image is not real and there was no incident at the U.S. Department of Defense headquarters across the Potomac from the nation's capital.

Despite this, the image and claim was spread by outlets including RT, a Russian government-backed media company formerly known as Russia Today. It was also widely shared in investment circles, including an account bearing Twitter's signature blue verification check mark that falsely suggested it was associated with Bloomberg News.

"Reports of an explosion near the Pentagon in Washington DC," the Russian state news agency wrote in a since-deleted tweet to its more than three million followers.

The timing of the fake image, which appeared to spread widely just after the U.S. stock market opened for trading at 9:30 a.m., was enough to send a ripple through the investment world.

The S&P 500 briefly dropped a modest 0.3% as social media accounts and investment websites popular with day traders repeated the false claims.

Other investments also moved in ways that typically occur when fear enters the market. Prices for U.S. Treasury bonds and gold, for example, briefly began to climb, suggesting investors were looking for someplace safer to park their money.

The image's rapid spread prompted the Arlington County Fire Department to take to social media to knock down the rumors.

"@PFPAOfficial and the ACFD are aware of a social media report circulating online about an explosion near the Pentagon," the agency wrote, referring to the acronym for the Pentagon Force Protection Agency that polices the Pentagon. "There is NO explosion or incident taking place at or near the Pentagon reservation, and there is no immediate danger or hazards to the public."

Capt. Nate Hiner, a spokesperson for the fire department, confirmed the agency's tweet was authentic but declined to comment further, deferring to the Pentagon police force, which didn't respond to email and phone messages.

Misinformation experts say the fake image was likely created using generative artificial intelligence programs, which have allowed increasingly realistic, but oftentimes flawed, visuals to flood the internet recently.

Inconsistencies in the building, fence and surrounding area are imperfections typically found in AI-generated images, noted Hany Farid, a computer science professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who specializes in digital forensics, misinformation and image analysis.

"Specifically, the grass and concrete fade into each other, the fence is irregular, there is a strange black pole that is protruding out of the front of the sidewalk but is also part of the fence," he wrote in an email.

"The windows in the building are inconsistent with photos of the Pentagon that you can find online."

Chirag Shah, co-director of the Center for Responsibility in AI Systems & Experiences at the University of Washington in Seattle, cautioned that spotting fakes won't always be as obvious.

Society will need to lean more on "crowdsourcing and community vigilance to weed out bad information and arrive at the truth" as AI technology improves, he argued.

"Simply relying on detection tools or social media posts are not going to be enough," Shah wrote in an

email.

Before the explosion hoax, the biggest Beltway intrigue on Wall Street's mind Monday morning was whether the U.S. government will avoid a disastrous default on its debt.

But as the market is becoming increasingly reactive to headline-grabbing news, misinformation can be especially damaging when it's shared by outlets even vaguely deemed as credible, said Adam Kobeissi, editor-in-chief at The Kobeissi Letter, an industry publication.

"A lot of these moves are happening because of high frequency trading, algorithmic trading, which is basically taking headlines, synthesizing them and then breaking them down into a trade on a millisecond basis," he explained by phone, noting that much of the market is now automated. "It's basically like you're pulling a trigger every time a headline comes out."

Associated Press business reporters Stan Choe and Wyattte Grantham-Philips in New York contributed to this story.

This is part of AP's effort to address widely shared misinformation, including work with outside companies and organizations to add factual context to misleading content that is circulating online. Learn more about fact-checking at AP.

Steer on the run for weeks lassoed, captured on Detroit-area freeway

HOLLY, Mich. (AP) — A team of wranglers — including one on horseback — chased down and captured a wayward steer named Lester across several lanes of a Detroit-area freeway.

State police in-car video shows the tail-end of Sunday afternoon's chase on northbound Interstate 75 in Holly, about 57 miles (120 kilometers) northwest of Detroit.

A rider on horseback and three people in two ATVs can be seen chasing Lester in and around fields and woods along the east side of the freeway as the state police car follows slowly behind on the shoulder.

At one point, Lester races from near a clump of trees toward the freeway lanes and is quickly cut off by one of the ATVs before running behind the vehicle and into traffic. Three vehicles pass the steer as it runs into the northbound lanes.

The rider on horseback catches up and lassos Lester, which then runs into the median and hops a guardrail onto the freeway's southbound shoulder before it is stopped.

"Eventually after much tom foolery, the critter was captured and removed from the freeway," the state police wrote on the agency's Twitter page. "Troopers reopened the freeway and things quickly got back to normal. The bovine was not charged and is back in the pasture with a story to tell all the other livestock."

Lester had been on the lam for several weeks from a ranch where Lester and four other bovine were relocated after escaping from pens at an animal rescue facility in Rose Township, said Bill Mullan, a spokesperson for Oakland County.

Another agency called in wranglers who initially captured the group, but Lester escaped again and was on the loose until his recapture Sunday.

What makes a standing ovation last 22 minutes at Cannes?

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — The Cannes Film Festival is on, which means stopwatches are out.

Nowhere are the length of standing ovations at high-wattage premieres more carefully recorded and parsed than in Cannes. Did a movie garner a triumphant eight-minute standing ovation? Or did the audience stand for a mere four or five minutes?

How has such an unlikely metric come to reverberate around the world within minutes of a premiere? And why is everyone standing for so long? Doesn't anyone's hands get tired?

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Such effusive displays of enthusiasm have come to be a hallmark of Cannes and, sometimes, a bit of marketing gimmick for films looking to resonate far from the Croisette. If Cannes, the world's largest and glitziest film festival, stands for cinematic excess, its thunderous standing ovations can seem like its greatest overindulgence. No one needs a bathroom break?

Less widely understood, though, is how the pageantry of Cannes shapes and distorts standing ovations. When audiences rise after the credits roll in the Grand Theatre Lumière, Cannes' biggest screen, they aren't just standing and applauding the movie they just watched.

Immediately after a film wraps, a cameraman swoops in and begins shooting the filmmaker and cast members, who are sitting in the middle of the theater. That video plays live on the screen for everyone inside while the camera — often very patiently — puts each prominent actor in close-up. Applause is only partly for the movie; it's also for each star.

When "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" recently premiered in Cannes, the camera gave Mads Mikkelsen, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Ethann Isidore, Harrison Ford and director James Mangold each their own moment to bask in adulation. In the end, trade publications — which have reporters inside the theater to keep time — clocked the standing ovation at five minutes. Variety pronounced it a "lukewarm" reception.

Inflation may be such a scourge that it's even affecting standing O's. In most places in the world, a five-minute standing ovation would count as a dream response. In Cannes, it's supposedly as tepid as a day-old espresso.

Reviews for "Dial of Destiny" were, indeed, mixed. But it's also possible that the audience — or the movie's stars — had had enough after a 142-minute movie that was preceded by a much-cheered tribute to Ford. The next day, a visibly emotional Ford called the experience "indescribable."

"The warmth of this place, the sense of community, the welcome is unimaginable," said Ford. "And it makes me feel good."

Much of how long a standing ovation endures relates to whether the film's stars push it along or cater to the camera. At the premiere of Martin Scorsese's "Flowers of the Killer Moon," after the film's expansive cast had gotten their close-ups, Leonardo DiCaprio and others in the film kept clapping, even when most of the auditorium had stopped. Then, Osage tribe members rallied more life into the applause with loud, celebratory whooping.

Nine minutes was ultimately the call for "Flowers of the Killer Moon," enough to mark a high for this year's festival. Scorsese's period epic draw the kind of headlines that every film wants out of Cannes. Movies don't get second chances for a first impression, after all.

And for those who experience such responses first-hand, it can be deeply emotional. In 2015, Todd Haynes' luminous '50s romance "Carol" launched in Cannes with a 10-minute standing ovation.

"I don't think we put on the poster that there was a 20-minute standing ovation at Cannes," says Christine Vachon, the film's producer. "But when it happens, and a movie is celebrated after a lot of hard work, of course it's incredibly gratifying."

The longest Cannes ovation on record belongs to Guillermo del Toro's "Pan's Labyrinth," which scored a 22-minute feting, enough time to watch an episode of "Seinfeld" without the ads. Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11," on its way to winning the Palme d'Or at the 2004 Cannes, was applauded for 20 minutes. Jeff Nichols' "Mud" was cheered for 18 minutes in 2012.

A stopwatch-breaking ovation doesn't always translate to quality. Lee Daniels' "The Paperboy" isn't exactly considered a modern-day classic, but it managed a 15-minute standing O in 2012.

Cannes has long been known for its passionate responses. Some hugely revered films, like Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now," have famously been booed at the festival. But boos are more likely to be heard in the press screenings than the gala formal-attire premieres. At those, a standing ovation is more or less a matter of etiquette.

At this year's festival, the most star-studded films have gone over well. Haynes' "May December," with Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore, nearly matched the response to his "Carol," with an eight-minute ovation. Karim Aïnouz's historical drama "Firebrand," starring Alicia Vikander and Jude Law, clocked in with the same. Vikander called the high-decibel roar of the crowd a stirring, unforgettable experience.

"I was shivering a bit," Vikander said. "It really gets to you."

___ Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Suspect 'stands silent' in slayings of 4 Idaho college students; judge enters not guilty pleas

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The suspect in the stabbing deaths of four University of Idaho students opted Monday to "stand silent" to murder charges, prompting the judge to enter not guilty pleas on his behalf ahead of a trial in which he could face the death penalty.

The Nov. 13, 2022, killings stunned the rural community of Moscow, Idaho, and prompted many students to leave campus early, switching to remote learning for the remainder of the semester.

Bryan Kohberger, 28, was arrested late last year and charged with burglary and four counts of first-degree murder in connection with the slayings of Madison Mogen, Kaylee Goncalves, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin at a rental home near the University of Idaho campus.

Kohberger declined to enter pleas in Latah County District Court, with his defense attorney Anne Taylor telling the judge that they were going to "stand silent" at this time. In response, 2nd District Judge John Judge entered not guilty pleas on Kohberger's behalf.

It's uncommon but not unheard of for defendants to "stand silent" in criminal cases. Sometimes it is done because defendants and their attorneys feel they need more time to weigh the ramifications of entering a plea of guilty or not guilty; other times it can be part of a broader legal strategy or simply a defendant's personal choice.

Kohberger declined to waive his right to a speedy trial, so the judge scheduled it to begin Oct. 2. It's still possible that the trial, expected to last six weeks, could be delayed or moved to a different location.

Kohberger was a graduate student studying criminology at nearby Washington State University when the University of Idaho students were killed, but prosecutors have not released any information about how they believe he may have chosen the victims or whether he had met any of them previously.

Police released few details about the investigation until after Kohberger was arrested at his parents' home in eastern Pennsylvania early Dec. 30, 2022. Court documents detailed how police pieced together DNA evidence, cellphone data and surveillance video that they say links Kohberger to the slayings.

Investigators said traces of DNA found on a knife sheath inside the home where the students were killed matches Kohberger, and that a cellphone belonging to Kohberger was near the victims' home on a dozen occasions prior to the killings. A white sedan allegedly matching one owned by Kohberger was caught on surveillance footage repeatedly cruising past the rental home around the time of the killings.

Kernodle, Chapin, Mogen and Goncalves were friends and members of the university's Greek system, and the three women lived together in the rental home just across the street from campus. Chapin — Kernodle's boyfriend — was there visiting on the night of the attack.

Latah County Prosecutor Bill Thompson now has 60 days to inform the court whether he will seek the death penalty in the case.

The small courtroom was packed for the arraignment, with some members of the news media and other onlookers lining up outside three hours before the proceeding was set to begin, Boise television station KTVB reported. Family members of Goncalves were among those who attended, one of them weeping as the charges were read.

New search for Madeleine McCann, UK toddler missing since 2007, Portuguese police confirm

LISBON (AP) — Portuguese police have said they will resume searching for Madeleine McCann, the British toddler who disappeared in the country's Algarve region in 2007, in the next few days.

Portugal's Judicial Police released a statement confirming local media reports that they would conduct

the search at the request of the German authorities and in the presence of British officials.

Earlier on Monday, police were seen erecting tents and cordons in an area by the Arade dam, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) from Praia da Luz, where the 3-year-old was last seen alive.

British, Portuguese and German police are still piecing together what happened when the toddler disappeared from her bed in the southern Portuguese resort on May 3, 2007. She was in the same room as her 2-year-old twin brother and sister while her parents had dinner with friends at a nearby restaurant.

In mid-2020, Germany's police identified Christian Brueckner, a 45-year-old German citizen who was in the Algarve in 2007, as a suspect in the case. Brueckner has denied any involvement.

The suspect is under investigation on suspicion of murder in the McCann case but hasn't been charged. He spent many years in Portugal, including in Praia da Luz around the time of Madeleine's disappearance.

Prosecutors in the northern German city of Braunschweig in October have charged Brueckner in several separate cases involving sexual offenses allegedly committed in Portugal between 2000 and 2017.

Braunschweig prosecutor Christian Wolter said Monday his office would release a statement about the case on Tuesday morning.

Madeleine's disappearance stirred worldwide interest, with public claims of having spotted her stretching as far away as Australia, along with a slew of books and television documentaries about the case.

Rewards for finding Madeleine reached several million dollars.

More women sue Texas, asking court to put emergency block on state's abortion law

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One woman had to carry her baby, missing much of her skull, for months knowing she'd bury her daughter soon after she was born. Another started mirroring the life-threatening symptoms that her baby was displaying while in the womb. An OB-GYN found herself secretly traveling out of state to abort her wanted pregnancy, marred by the diagnosis of a fatal fetal anomaly.

All of the women were told they could not end their pregnancies in Texas, a state that has enacted some of the nation's most restrictive abortion laws.

Now, they're asking a Texas court to put an emergency hold on some abortion restrictions, joining a lawsuit launched earlier this year by five other women who were denied abortions in the state, despite pregnancies they say endangered their health or lives.

More than a dozen Texas women in total have joined the Center for Reproductive Rights' lawsuit against the state's law, which prohibits abortions unless a mother's life is at risk — an exception that is not clearly defined. Texas doctors who perform abortions risk life in prison and fines of up to \$100,000, leaving many women with providers who are unwilling to even discuss terminating a pregnancy.

"Our hope is that it will allow physicians at least a little more comfort when it comes to patients in obstetrical emergencies who really need an abortion where it's going to effect their health, fertility or life going forward," Molly Duane, the lead attorney on the case, told The Associated Press. "Almost all of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit tell similar stories about their doctors saying, if not for this law, I'd give you an abortion right now."

The Texas attorney general's office, which is defending the state in the lawsuit, did not immediately return an email seeking comment Monday.

The lawsuit serves as a nationwide model for abortion rights advocates to challenge strict new abortion laws states that have rolled out since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year. Sixteen states, including Texas, do not allow abortions when a fatal fetal anomaly is detected while six do not allow exceptions for the mother's health, according to an analysis by KFF, a health research organization.

Duane said the Center for Reproductive Rights is looking at filing similar lawsuits in other states, noting that they've heard from women across the country. Roughly 25 Texas women have contacted the organization about their own experiences since the initial lawsuit was filed in March.

The women who joined the lawsuit describe being elated about finding out they were pregnant before

the experience turned catastrophic.

Jessica Bernardo and her husband spent years trying to conceive, even consulting fertility doctors, before finally become pregnant with a daughter, Emma, last July.

Almost immediately, Bernardo was coughing so hard and often she would sometimes throw up. Fourteen weeks into the pregnancy, test results revealed her baby likely had Down Syndrome, so she consulted a specialist who gave her devastating news: Emma's heart was underdeveloped and she had a rare, deadly disorder called fetal anasarca, which causes fluid to build up in the body.

"He handed me a tissue box," recalled Bernardo, who lives in Frisco, Texas. "I thought maybe the worst thing he was going to tell us was that she's going to have Down Syndrome. Instead, he said, 'I can tell you right away...she wouldn't make it.'"

The doctor warned her to watch out for high blood pressure and coughing, symptoms of Mirror syndrome, another rare condition where a mother "mirrors" the same problems the fetus is experiencing.

With Bernardo's blood pressure numbers climbing, her OB-GYN conferred with the hospital's ethics board to see if she could end the pregnancy but was advised Bernardo wasn't sick enough. Bernardo spent \$7,000 traveling to Seattle for an abortion a week later.

Even if Emma made it through the pregnancy, doctors would have immediately needed to drain excess fluids from her body, only for her to survive a few hours or days, Bernardo said.

"Reading about everything they would do sounded like complete torture to a newborn that would not survive," she said. "Had I not received an abortion, my life would have very likely been on the line."

Other women facing similar situations have not had the financial resources to travel outside of the state. Samantha Casiano, a 29-year-old living in eastern Texas, found out halfway through her pregnancy last year that her daughter, Halo, had a rare diagnosis of anencephaly, where much of the skull and brain is missing. Her doctor told her she would have to continue with the pregnancy because of Texas law, even though her baby would not survive.

With five children, including a goddaughter, at home she quickly realized she could not afford an out-of-state trip for an abortion. The next few months of her pregnancy were spent trying to raise money for her daughter's impending funeral, soliciting donations through online websites and launching fundraisers to sell Mexican soup. Halo was born in April, living for only four hours.

"I was so full of heartbreak and sadness, all at the same time," Casiano said.

Women in the lawsuit say they could not openly discuss abortion or labor induction with their doctors, instead asking their doctors discreetly if they should travel outside of the state.

Dr. Austin Dennard, an OB-GYN in Dallas, never talked about her own abortion with her doctors after they discovered anencephaly on the baby's ultrasound during her third pregnancy last year. She worried her out-of-state trip to end the pregnancy could jeopardize her medical license or invite harassment against her and her husband, also an OB-GYN. Dennard was inspired to go public with her case when one of her own patients joined the original lawsuit filed in March after traveling to Colorado to abort a twin fetus diagnosed with a life-threatening genetic disorder.

"There was an enormous amount of fear that I experienced afterward," Dennard said. "It's an additional way of feeling silenced. You feel you have to do it in secret and not tell anyone about it."

Dennard is expecting another child later this year.

Associated Press writer Paul Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

Russia TV celebrates as it reports the capture of Bakhmut, comparing it to Berlin in 1945

By DASHA LITVINOVA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Russian TV went into a full frenzy of celebration as it reported Moscow's capture of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut. There were comparisons to the Red Army liberating Berlin in 1945, congratulations relayed from President Vladimir Putin and announcers emphasizing the victory by using

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the city's nearly century-old Soviet name of Artyomovsk.

"The myth that Artyomovsk is an unassailable fortress has been crushed," an anchor said Sunday night on Channel One, Russia's most popular state broadcaster. "Those are historic events."

A report from the smoldering city in eastern Ukraine followed, showing Russian fighters yelling "Victory!" and placing two flags -- the Russian tricolor and the black flag of the private military contractor Wagner -- atop a tall, partly destroyed building.

The flags were mounted "so that everyone could see them," the correspondent said, even though the bombed-out, deserted 400-year-old city looks like a ghost of itself after the longest and bloodiest battle of the war.

Despite the Russian claims, top Ukrainian military leaders say the fight there is not over, even though they still control only a small part of the city. Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar said Monday that Ukrainian troops hold parts of its southwestern outskirts, while fighting continues for the strategic heights in the northern and southern suburbs.

But Kyiv says its troops played a key role in the strategy of exhausting Russian forces. Tens of thousands of fighters on both sides have died in the grinding nine-month battle for Bakhmut.

Satellite imagery shows infrastructure, apartment blocks and buildings reduced to rubble from relentless artillery attacks.

Putin badly needed a victory in Bakhmut, analysts say, especially after a winter offensive by his forces failed to take other front-line cities and towns. And Russia still wants to capture the entire Donetsk region — a goal that was emphasized several months after the assault on Kyiv failed.

On Channel One, a Russian fighter told the correspondent he felt "probably the same emotions our grandfathers had in Berlin," referring to the Red Army's victorious sweep of the German capital at the end of World War II.

A similar segment on Russia 1, another major state TV channel, saw a correspondent proclaim that "the fight for Bakhmut ended in defeat" for Ukraine. Now Russian forces can advance toward the cities of Siversk, Kostyantynivka and Kramatorsk, and even the southeastern city of Dnipro in southeastern Ukraine, she said.

Two pro-Kremlin tabloids came out with headlines Monday celebrating the reported capture of the city. "Bakhmut is taken. What next? The city has again become Artyomovsk," said a bright red headline on the front of Komsomolskaya Pravda.

Moskovsky Komsomolets went even further and called it, "The Artyomovsk turning point," noting beneath that "The Ukrainian Armed Forces failed to hold onto their important fortress city, Bakhmut."

A column on the state news agency RIA Novosti touched on the strategic value of Bakhmut, saying 224 days of fighting allowed Russia "to grind up the best divisions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and destroy their equipment on an industrial scale."

"This was its strategic value for us," RIA Novosti columnist Viktoria Nikiforova wrote. "This forced Ukrainian handlers to delay their 'counteroffensive' for months, and gave our forces time to prepare for repelling it," she wrote, countering Western arguments that Bakhmut held little strategic importance for Russia.

The celebratory tone continued Monday even as Russia reported an incursion into its territory in the border region of Belgorod by Ukrainian saboteurs, triggering a "counterterrorism operation."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the attack was meant "to draw attention away from the Bakhmut axis, to minimize the political effect of Ukrainian side losing Artyomovsk."

The fog of war made it impossible to confirm the situation inside Bakhmut, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying the city was not fully occupied.

In a video on Telegram, Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin said the city came under full Russian control about midday Saturday, proclaiming it "completely taken" as he held a Russian flag with a group of at least nine masked fighters in body armor and heavy weapons. Prigozhin had feuded publicly with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu over adequate supplies of munitions to Wagner's private forces.

About 55 kilometers (34 miles) north of the Russian-held regional capital of Donetsk, Bakhmut was an important industrial center, surrounded by salt and gypsum mines and home to about 80,000 people

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before the war, in a country of more than 43 million.

The city was named Artyomovsk in 1924 after a Bolshevik revolutionary when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, and was known for its sparkling wine produced in underground caves. Its broad, tree-lined avenues, lush parks and late 19th century mansions have been reduced to a wasteland.

For Ukraine, which changed the name of the city to Bakhmut in 2016, the important factor has been the high number of Russian casualties and sapping of their adversary's morale for the small patch of the 1,500-kilometer (932-mile) front line as Kyiv prepares a counteroffensive in the 15-month-old war.

"The enemy failed to surround Bakhmut. They lost part of the heights around the city. The continuing advance of our troops in the suburbs greatly complicates the enemy's presence," Maliar said. "Our troops have taken the city in a semi-encirclement, which gives us the opportunity to destroy the enemy."

In recent weeks, Ukrainian forces had made significant advances near strategic roads through the surrounding countryside, chipping away at Russia's northern and southern flanks with the aim of encircling Wagner fighters in the city.

Nearly 20 square kilometers (8 square miles) of territory were recaptured, Maliar said last week. Hundreds of meters more were regained almost every day since, according to Serhii Cherevatyi, spokesman for Ukraine's Operational Command East.

Russia deployed reinforcements to Bakhmut to replenish the lost northern and southern flanks and prevent more Ukrainian breakthroughs, according to Ukrainian officials and outside observers.

Ukraine's tactical gains in the rural area outside Bakhmut could be more significant than they seem, some analysts say.

"It was almost like the Ukrainians just took advantage of the fact that, actually, the Russian lines were weak," said Phillips O'Brien, a professor of strategic studies at the University of St. Andrews. "The Russian army has suffered such high losses and is so worn out around Bakhmut that ... it cannot go forward anymore."

Days before Russia announced it controlled the city, Ukrainian forces held only a handful of buildings amid constant Russian bombardment. Outnumbered and outgunned, they described nightmarish days.

Russia's artillery dominance was so overwhelming, accompanied by continuous human waves of mercenaries, that defensive positions could not be held for long.

"The importance of our mission of staying in Bakhmut lies in distracting a significant enemy force," said Taras Deiak, commander of a special unit of a volunteer battalion. "We are paying a high price for this."

The northern and southern flanks regained by Ukraine are located near two highways that lead to Chasiv Yar, a town 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Bakhmut, that are key logistics supply routes. One is dubbed the "road of life."

Ukrainian forces on this road often came under Russian fire. Armored vehicles and pickup trucks heading to the city to replenish Ukrainian troops were frequently destroyed.

With those high plains now under Ukrainian control, its forces have more breathing room.

"This will help us design new logistic chains to deliver ammunition in and evacuate the injured or killed boys," said Deiak, speaking from inside Bakhmut on Thursday, two days before Russia claimed the city.

Kullab reported from Kyiv, Ukraine. Danica Kirka in London contributed.

Who is Tim Scott? Here's what to know about the newest 2024 GOP presidential candidate

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — As Sen. Tim Scott enters the 2024 GOP presidential field, he will be eager to introduce himself to voters who might not know much about him.

Here is what you should know about the South Carolina Republican:

FOREMOST: FAITH

Raised by a single mother, Scott, 57, talks often of how Frances Scott worked long hours as a nurse's

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assistant to provide for her two sons. It was a meager existence, the senator said, but it was centered around their strong Christian faith.

At age 18, Scott became what he terms a "born-again believer."

His faith is an integral part of his political and personal narrative, as well as his belief in being a positive catalyst for change. He often quotes Scripture at campaign events, weaving his reliance on spiritual guidance into his stump speech and using "Faith in America" to describe his series of appearances before joining the race.

Last year in a speech at the Reagan Presidential Library, Scott said he saw America "at a crossroads — with the potential for a great resetting, a renewal, even a rebirth." His autobiography, released last year, is titled "America: A Redemption Story."

When his now-rival Nikki Haley appointed him to the U.S. Senate in 2012, Scott became the first Black senator from the South since just after the Civil War. In a 2014 special election to serve out the remainder of his term, Scott became the first Black candidate to win a statewide race in South Carolina since the Reconstruction era.

Before that, Scott had just been elected to his second term representing South Carolina's 1st Congressional District. He served a single term in the state House, as well as, beginning in 1995, nearly 14 years on the Charleston County Council, while also operating an insurance business. He also briefly ran for lieutenant governor, ultimately abandoning that pursuit to seek the congressional seat vacated by retiring Rep. Henry Brown.

At that time, South Carolina's governor and lieutenant governor were elected separately; had Scott stayed in that race and won it, he and Haley would have served together as South Carolina's top officeholders.

'I DISRUPT THEIR NARRATIVE'

The Senate's sole Black Republican, Scott doesn't shy away from pointing out that his is often the only face of color in many rooms of conservatives.

"When I fought back against their liberal agenda, they called me a prop. A token. Because I disrupt their narrative," he said in an April video announcing his presidential exploratory committee, shot on the site of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, where the Civil War's first shots were fired.

In his Reagan Library speech last year, Scott said that belief in conservative values had changed his life, arguing that his ability to succeed in politics had disproven critiques from liberals he said "you can call me a prop, you can call me a token. ... Just understand what you call me is no match for the proof of my life."

Rejecting the notion that the country is inherently racist, Scott has repudiated the teaching of critical race theory, an academic framework that presents the idea that the nation's institutions maintain the dominance of white people.

He has also spoken on the Senate floor about his personal experiences as a Black man in America.

"I have felt the anger, the frustration, the sadness and the humiliation that comes with feeling like you're being targeted for nothing more than just being yourself," Scott said in 2016, recounting how he was pulled over seven times in a year.

But Scott argues that liberals have tried to weaponize race by portraying nonwhite citizens as politically oppressed.

"Hear me clearly: America is not a racist country," he said in a nationally televised response to President Joe Biden's 2021 address to Congress. "It's backwards to fight discrimination with different types of discrimination. And it's wrong to try to use our painful past to dishonestly shut down debates in the present."

MONEY TALKS

Scott is coming into the campaign with more cash on hand than any other presidential candidate in U.S. history. At the end of his 2022 campaign, he had \$22 million left over, which he plans to immediately transfer to his presidential coffers.

There are millions more in other organizations created to support Scott and his efforts. Opportunity Matters Fund, a pro-Scott super political action committee, spent more than \$20 million to help Republicans in 2022, reporting \$13 million-plus on hand to start 2023. Tech billionaire Larry Ellison has donated at least \$30 million to the organization since 2021, according to federal filings.

Another super PAC, Opportunity Matters Fund Action, had around \$3 million at the end of last year.
HISTORY WITH TRUMP

Scott has maintained a generally cordial relationship with Trump, despite initially endorsing Florida Sen. Marco Rubio in the 2016 GOP presidential primary.

But he also spoke out against Trump after the then-president said there were “very fine people on both sides” of a deadly clash between white supremacists and anti-racist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. Scott said that Trump’s principles had been compromised and that without some introspection, “it will be hard for him to regain ... moral authority.”

Scott also called it “indefensible” after Trump retweeted a post in June 2020 containing a racist slogan associated with white supremacists. Trump later deleted it.

In his 2022 book, Scott said that Trump “listened intently” to his viewpoints on race-related issues. And on the campaign trail, Scott has railed against political correctness in much the same fashion as Trump.

“If you wanted a blueprint to ruin America, you’d keep doing exactly what Joe Biden has let the far left do to our country for the past two years,” Scott said this year in Iowa. “Tell every white kid they’re oppressors. Tell Black and brown kids their destiny is grievance, not greatness.”

Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>

One year after Uvalde shooting, investigation of police response continues

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A criminal investigation in Texas over the hesitant police response to the Robb Elementary School shooting is still ongoing as Wednesday marks one year since a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers inside a fourth-grade classroom in Uvalde.

The continuing probe underlines the lasting fallout over Texas’ deadliest school shooting and how the days after the attack were marred by authorities giving inaccurate and conflicting accounts about efforts made to stop a teenage gunman armed with an AR-style rifle.

The investigation has run parallel to a new wave of public anger in the U.S. over gun violence, renewed calls for stricter firearm regulations and legal challenges over authorities in Uvalde continuing to withhold public records related to the shooting and the police response.

Here’s a look at what has happened in the year since one of America’s deadliest mass shootings:

POLICE SCRUTINY

A damning report by Texas lawmakers put nearly 400 officers on the scene from an array of federal, state and local agencies. The findings laid out how heavily armed officers waited more than an hour to confront and kill the 18-year-old gunman. It also accused police of failing “to prioritize saving innocent lives over their own safety.”

All of the students killed were between the ages of 9 and 11 years old.

At least five officers who were put under investigation after the shooting were either fired or resigned, although a full accounting is unclear. The head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Col. Steve McCraw, put much of the blame after the attack on Uvalde’s school police chief, who was later fired by trustees.

McCraw had more than 90 of his own officers at the school — more than any other agency — and has rebuffed calls by some Uvalde families and lawmakers to also resign.

Uvalde County District Attorney Christina Mitchell said last week that Texas Rangers are still investigating the police response and that her office will ultimately present the findings to a grand jury. She said she did not have a timeline for when the investigation would be finished.

On Monday, Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin said he was frustrated by the pace of the investigations a year later.

“They don’t have answers to simple questions they should have,” McLaughlin said of the families.

CALLS FOR GUN CONTROL INTENSIFY

President Joe Biden signed the nation's most sweeping gun violence bill in decades a month after the shooting. It included tougher background checks for the youngest gun buyers and added more funding for mental health programs and aid to schools.

It did not go as far as restrictions sought by some Uvalde families who have called on lawmakers to raise the purchase age for AR-style rifles. In the GOP-controlled Texas Capitol, Republicans this year rejected virtually all proposals to tighten gun laws over the protests of the families and Democrats.

Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has also waved off calls for tougher gun laws, just as he did after mass shootings at a Sutherland Springs church in 2017 and an El Paso Walmart in 2018. The issue has not turned Texas voters away from Abbott, who easily won a third term months after the Uvalde shooting.

UVALDE GRIEVES

The Uvalde school district permanently closed the Robb Elementary campus and plans for a new school are in the works. Schools in Uvalde will be closed Wednesday.

About a dozen students in the classroom where the shooting unfolded survived the attack. Some returned to class in person last fall. Others attended school virtually, including a girl who spent more than two months in the hospital after being shot multiple times.

Veronica Mata, a kindergarten teacher in Uvalde, also returned to class this year after her 10-daughter Tess was among those killed in the attack.

Some Uvalde families have filed lawsuits against the gun maker and law enforcement.

Russia alleges border incursion by Ukrainian saboteurs; Kyiv claims they are disgruntled Russians

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian officials claimed that Ukrainian military saboteurs launched an attack across the border Monday, wounding eight people in a small town. Kyiv officials denied any link with the group and blamed the fighting on a revolt by disgruntled Russians against the Kremlin.

Neither version of events could be independently verified in an area that has witnessed sporadic spillover from the almost 15-month war in Ukraine.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, said that a Ukrainian Armed Forces saboteur group entered the town of Graivoron, about five kilometers (three miles) from the border. The town also came under Ukrainian artillery fire, he said.

Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said eight people were wounded and most residents had left the area, but the situation remained "tense."

In nearby Zamostye village, a projectile hit a kindergarten and caused a fire. One woman was wounded in her hand, Gladkov said. He also reported that Russian anti-aircraft systems shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle over Belgorod region.

Gladkov said a counterterrorist operation was underway and that authorities were imposing special controls, including personal document checks and stopping the work of companies that use "explosives, radioactive, chemically and biologically hazardous substances."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin was informed about the alleged saboteur incursion. An effort to "push them out from the Russian territory and liquidate them" was underway, he said.

Peskov described the action as an attempt by Ukraine to divert attention from the eastern city of Bakhmut, which Moscow claimed to have captured after months of battle but where Kyiv says it is still fighting.

But Ukrainian military intelligence officials didn't confirm that Kyiv had deployed saboteurs. Instead, they claimed that Russian citizens seeking regime change in Moscow were behind the Graivoron incursion.

Ukraine intelligence representative Andrii Cherniak said Russian citizens belonging to murky groups calling themselves the Russian Volunteer Corps and the "Freedom of Russia" Legion were behind the assault.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's advisor, Mykhailo Podolyak, said on Twitter that Ukraine "has nothing to do with it." He suggested an "armed guerrilla movement" was behind the attack.

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The Russian Volunteer Corps claimed in a Telegram post it had crossed the border into Russia again, after claiming to have breached the border in early March.

The Russian Volunteer Corps describes itself as "a volunteer formation fighting on Ukraine's side." Little is known about the group, and it is not clear if it has any ties with the Ukrainian military. The same is true for the "Freedom of Russia" Legion..

The RVC was founded last August and reportedly consists mostly of anti-Putin far-right Russian extremists who have links with Ukrainian far-right groups.

Earlier Monday, Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest atomic power station, spent hours operating on emergency diesel generators after losing its external power supply for the seventh time since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog said.

"The nuclear safety situation at the plant (is) extremely vulnerable," Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in a tweet.

Hours later, national energy company Ukrenergo said on Telegram that it had restored the power line that feeds the plant.

But for Grossi, it was another reminder of what's at stake at the Russian-occupied plant which has seen shelling close by.

"We must agree to protect (the) plant now; this situation cannot continue," Grossi said, in his latest appeal for the area to be spared from the fighting between Ukrainian and Russian forces. IAEA staff are deployed at the plant, which is occupied by Russian troops.

The plant's six nuclear reactors, which are protected by a reinforced shelter able to withstand an errant shell or rocket, have been shut down. But a disruption in the electrical supply could disable cooling systems that are essential for the reactors' safety even when they are shut down. Emergency diesel generators, which officials say can keep the plant operational for 10 days, can be unreliable.

Grossi said it was the seventh time the plant had lost its outside power supply since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is one of the 10 biggest atomic power stations in the world.

Ukraine's presidential office said Monday morning that at least three Ukrainian civilians were killed and 16 others were injured in Russian assaults over the previous 24 hours.

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that four out of 16 Russian missiles and all 20 drones launched against Ukrainian targets were shot down.

Military targets and public infrastructure in Dnipro, Ukraine's fourth-largest city in the center of the country, were singled out for Russian attacks, which injured eight people, officials said. The Dnipro fire department was affected, and 12 houses, shops, and a kindergarten were damaged, according to Governor Serhii Lysak.

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

Nikki Haley and Tim Scott started as allies in South Carolina. Now they're rivals for president.

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — As she introduced South Carolina's next senator, then-Gov. Nikki Haley said her decision to appoint Tim Scott was "pretty simple."

"This man loves South Carolina," Haley said of Scott, a congressman at the time. "He is very aware that what he does and every vote he makes affects South Carolina and affects our country. And so it was with that, that I knew he was the right person."

Scott was just as effusive, praising Haley as someone who governed with "conviction" and "integrity." He pledged to "get on the team with Nikki Haley to make sure that all of America continues to hear the great things about South Carolina."

Haley and Scott are forever linked by that announcement at the South Carolina Statehouse on a winter

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day in 2012, cementing their status as rising stars in a Republican Party frustrated by Barack Obama's reelection just a month earlier. But nearly a dozen years later, they find themselves running against each other for the GOP presidential nomination. Haley launched her campaign in February, and Scott formally announced his on Monday.

Both carry historic potential, with Haley aiming to become the first woman and first person of Indian descent to win the presidency. Scott would be the first Black Republican president. But much of the race's early attention has focused on former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who could announce his own bid as early as this week.

As the GOP field begins to take shape, the Haley-Scott faceoff is putting some of their mutual supporters in the critical early voting state of South Carolina in a conundrum as they weigh which candidate to support.

One of those longtime donors and backers is Mikee Johnson, a South Carolina businessman who has known Haley since high school and serves on the board of her Original Six Foundation, which provides after-school programming and literacy resources for children in rural South Carolina school districts. But like many Republicans across the state, Johnson has also been a friend and ally of Scott, for whom he is serving as national finance co-chair in the presidential race.

"I really admire all the things Nikki's done, her friendship's important to me, but at this point, I think his style is more what I would like to see our leaders — not just our president — aspire to getting things done in the style and approach that he goes about it," Johnson said.

Another is David Wilkins, who was South Carolina's state House speaker when Haley was in the Legislature, later chairing her gubernatorial transition team and now serving alongside her on the board of Clemson University. Saying he has the "greatest respect" for Scott, whom he has supported in his Senate bids, Wilkins — who also served as ambassador to Canada under President George W. Bush — said his bond is stronger with Haley.

"He's an outstanding senator, and we're very proud of him here in South Carolina," Wilkins said, of Scott. "I just have a very strong friendship with her. It's not choosing one person over another. It's just going with the person that I believe in, that I'm dear friends with, somebody I've known for 20 years."

The intertwined relationships of those who have supported both Haley and Scott mirror the politicians themselves, whose shared political history dates back further than the pivotal Senate appointment. The two worked alongside each other for a single term in the state House of Representatives, after Scott joined Haley in the chamber following the 2008 election.

That next session, they both signed onto a number of resolutions and bills, including a constitutional amendment — ultimately approved by the state's voters — guaranteeing workers the right to voting by secret ballot on union representation.

They also teamed up, along with a number of co-sponsors, on other less successful bills, including measures to audit state education funds, endow "rights of due process and equal protection" at fertilization and a "truth in spending" measure for all state and local government entities. Other measures that didn't pass would have made several statewide positions like the agriculture commissioner, secretary of state and education superintendent appointed, not elected, positions.

In 2010, Scott briefly ran for lieutenant governor, ultimately abandoning that pursuit to seek the 1st District seat being vacated by retiring Rep. Henry Brown. At that time, South Carolina's governor and lieutenant governor were elected separately; had Scott stayed in that race and won it, he and Haley would have served together as South Carolina's top officeholders.

But two years later, when Jim DeMint abruptly announced his resignation from the Senate, the paths of Haley and Scott crossed yet again. Rob Godfrey, a longtime Haley adviser who served for a time as her chief spokesperson, said the governor's process was deliberate, making a short list that included Scott, Rep. Trey Gowdy and former first lady Jenny Sanford, ex-wife of former Gov. Mark Sanford, who was Haley's predecessor.

Also on the short list was former Attorney General Henry McMaster, one of Haley's 2010 rivals who went on to become one of her biggest backers and eventual successor. Catherine Templeton, a labor lawyer who Haley appointed to lead the state's labor and then public health agencies, was under consideration as well.

"She took every one of those candidates and their background and their credentials and what they offered the state seriously during this process, and at the end of the day determined that there was one person who was best suited to take on the job and carry on the legacy of Sen. DeMint but also blaze his own trail," Godfrey said.

In picking Scott, Haley said she wanted to appoint someone she felt could retain the seat in subsequent elections, and who was in the same ideological vein as DeMint.

"It's not how much political experience you have, it's about the fight," Haley said at the time. "It's about the philosophical beliefs. It's about knowing what you're sent to Washington to do."

Scott more than proved Haley correct, winning a 2014 special election to fill the remaining two years of DeMint's term, then winning a full one of his own two years later. Last fall, Scott won reelection by more than 20 percentage points, a Senate race he had long said would be his last.

"Absolutely, she was thinking into the future," said Chad Connelly, who was state GOP chair at the time.

That future is now, as Haley and Scott compete against each other for the nation's highest office. A day after Haley's announcement, Scott embarked on a "listening tour." Haley has declined to comment about Scott when asked by The Associated Press.

"I have such great respect for Nikki Haley," Scott said in a recent interview, adding he hadn't spoken with Haley before launching his exploratory committee. "She is a strong, powerful force for good."

He also dismissed any awkwardness in running against the Republican who appointed him to the Senate, and with whom he would be in direct competition in vying for the very voters that had elected them both statewide.

"You put your uniform on, you shake hands, and you go on the field. You fight for good. You fight to win the game," Scott said. "You take your uniform off, you shake hands and you continue down the road."

"We were friends before," he added. "We'll be friends after."

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This story was first published April 20, 2023, and was republished May 22, 2023, after Scott's announcement that he is running for president.

Championing famous and forgotten Asian Americans, this artist uses cookies as her canvas

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

Artist Jasmine Cho makes exquisite portraits that champion famous and forgotten Asian Americans. Her canvas?

"Cookies, I've always said, are the perfect platform for education, activism and healing because they are one of the most disarming, inviting and surprising mediums," said Cho, who is also a baker.

She believes her art comes in part from a sense of not belonging that she felt growing up. May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, but Cho's cookies bring attention to AAPIs every month.

The Korean American self-described "cookie activist" has gained fans over the last several years for her finely detailed cookie faces. Actors Awkwafina, Daniel Dae Kim and Tamlyn Tomita are among those who've gushed about receiving the cookie treatment.

The city of Pittsburgh, where she has lived since 2009, even issued a "Jasmine Cho Day" proclamation in 2020.

In 2016, Cho was contentedly making cute character cookies for her online bakery, Yummyholic, when she turned flour, sugar, butter and other ingredients into cookie likenesses of a friend for a birthday party. The cookies quickly grabbed social media attention. Others wanted them done too.

"I suddenly have this platform or this medium that everyone is paying attention to," Cho said. "It felt like a sort of superpower."

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She had an “aha moment” of how to use her great power with greater responsibility.

The 39-year-old, who grew up in Southern California and New Mexico, always took notice when Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders weren't present in a movie, TV show or history book. It contributed to her questioning her own sense of belonging in America.

“That was always a pain point for me growing up,” said Cho, who recently completed a master's degree in art therapy. “So, I kind of always had this question: ‘I wonder if I could use this point of joy for me to address this pain point?’ And cookies was the answer.”

A few months after making those first cookie faces, Cho held her first portrait gallery show. She made cookies of Asian American Pittsburgh natives like actor Ming-Na Wen and Leah Lizarondo, the founder of 412 Food Rescue, which decreases food waste in over 25 cities in the U.S. and Canada by distributing unsold food to people in need.

Lizarondo remembers how surprised she was to find Cho had cookie-fied her. For the Filipino American, the tribute was definitely not a waste of food.

“I shared it as widely as I could as I was so proud to be among the people she did cookie portraits of,” Lizarondo said by email.

While cookies and cake tributes might come off as silly, Lizarondo saw something different in Cho's art.

“It is such an accessible way to catalyze conversation,” said Lizarondo.

A one-woman crew, Cho needs between four and six hours for one portrait. She draws the cookie face by hand, fills it in with icing and then lets it dry.

Her “art-ivism” has taken her interesting places. In 2019, she wrote and illustrated a children's book, “Role Models Who Look Like Me.” In the last few years, she has made over 20 virtual and in-person appearances at universities, elementary schools and conferences. If she isn't giving a speech, she's leading a cookie-decorating workshop.

The biggest thrill is when young Asian Americans, particularly females, feel inspired.

“They tell me things like, ‘I learned more in your 15-minute talk than I have in my whole class that's about Asian American history,’ or something like that,” Cho said.

At a time when demanding to see Asian American history included in school curricula can get you branded as “woke,” even Cho's seemingly innocuous cookies can be a target. Ahead of a university visit last February, someone Cho thought was a student journalist asked to talk to her. Cho later learned that person wasn't a student but part of a far-right group. The school decided to increase security for the event — something that stunned her.

“It's just cookies,” Cho said. “But, not to diminish the intent of what I'm actually using the cookies to do... Unfortunately, even something like cookies could be seen as a threat because of what they symbolize.”

They're definitely not just cookies. They can evoke poignant moments.

Cho made a cookie portrait of Betty Ong, an American Airlines flight attendant who died on 9/11. Ong was credited as the first person to raise the alarm about the terrorists' hijacking, passing along crucial information from a phone on the ill-fated plane. One of her nieces spotted Cho's creation on Instagram and contacted her.

“For a family member to reach out and just thank me for sharing her story in the way that I did ... reminding me of the tenderness that comes with this work, the importance of it,” Cho said. “I don't ever want to upset a family member in any way. I've been very grateful that those who I have heard from understand my intention.”

Cho estimates she has between 50 and 70 of the cookie portraits now boxed up in storage. Some she dreams of giving to the subject (Michelle Yeoh, if you're reading this.). Others she would love to display, as well as publish a picture book of them.

Even with praise from families, celebrities and Instagram, Cho still has moments when she can be dismissive of her own work. “I'll be like, ‘I'm just making cookies. What am I really doing?’”

But then she feels re-energized when encountering audiences who have never heard of figures like civil rights activist Grace Lee Boggs or diver Sammy Lee, the first Asian American man to earn Olympic gold.

"Part of what keeps me going is one day, I do hope that my work maybe becomes irrelevant because everyone has access to this history and awareness of it."

Tang, who reported from Phoenix, is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at @ttangAP.

What it would mean for the global economy if the US defaults on its debt

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — If the debt crisis roiling Washington were eventually to send the United States crashing into recession, America's economy would hardly sink alone.

The repercussions of a first-ever default on the federal debt would quickly reverberate around the world. Orders for Chinese factories that sell electronics to the United States could dry up. Swiss investors who own U.S. Treasuries would suffer losses. Sri Lankan companies could no longer deploy dollars as an alternative to their own dodgy currency.

"No corner of the global economy will be spared" if the U.S. government defaulted and the crisis weren't resolved quickly, said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics.

Zandi and two colleagues at Moody's have concluded that even if the debt limit were breached for no more than week, the U.S. economy would weaken so much, so fast, as to wipe out roughly 1.5 million jobs.

And if a government default were to last much longer — well into the summer — the consequences would be far more dire, Zandi and his colleagues found in their analysis: U.S. economic growth would sink, 7.8 million American jobs would vanish, borrowing rates would jump, the unemployment rate would soar from the current 3.4% to 8% and a stock-market plunge would erase \$10 trillion in household wealth.

Of course, it might not come to that. The White House and House Republicans, seeking a breakthrough, concluded a round of debt-limit negotiations Sunday, with plans to resume talks Monday. The Republicans have threatened to let the government default on its debts by refusing to raise the statutory limit on what it can borrow unless President Joe Biden and the Democrats accept sharp spending cuts and other concessions.

US DEBT, LONG VIEWED AS ULTRA-SAFE

Feeding the anxiety is the fact that so much financial activity hinges on confidence that America will always pay its financial obligations. Its debt, long viewed as an ultra-safe asset, is a foundation of global commerce, built on decades of trust in the United States. A default could shatter the \$24 trillion market for Treasury debt, cause financial markets to freeze up and ignite an international crisis.

"A debt default would be a cataclysmic event, with an unpredictable but probably dramatic fallout on U.S. and global financial markets," said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

The threat has emerged just as the world economy is contending with a panoply of threats — from surging inflation and interest rates to the ongoing repercussions of Russia's invasion of Ukraine to the tightening grip of authoritarian regimes. On top of all that, many countries have grown skeptical of America's outsized role in global finance.

In the past, American political leaders generally managed to step away from the brink and raise the debt limit before it was too late. Congress has raised, revised or extended the borrowing cap 78 times since 1960, most recently in 2021.

Yet the problem has worsened. Partisan divisions in Congress have widened while the debt has grown after years of rising spending and deep tax cuts. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned that the government could default as soon as June 1 if lawmakers don't raise or suspend the ceiling.

'SHOCKWAVES THROUGH THE SYSTEM'

"If the trustworthiness of (Treasuries) would become impaired for any reason, it would send shockwaves

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through the system ... and have immense consequences for global growth," said Maurice Obstfeld, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund.

Treasuries are widely used as collateral for loans, as a buffer against bank losses, as a haven in times of high uncertainty and as a place for central banks to park foreign exchange reserves.

Given their perceived safety, the U.S. government's debts — Treasury bills, bonds and notes — carry a risk weighting of zero in international bank regulations. Foreign governments and private investors hold nearly \$7.6 trillion of the debt — roughly 31% of the Treasuries in financial markets.

Because the dollar's dominance has made it the de facto global currency since World War II, it's relatively easy for the United States to borrow and finance an ever-growing pile of government debt.

But high demand for dollars also tends to make them more valuable than other currencies, and that imposes a cost: A strong dollar makes American goods pricier relative to their foreign rivals, leaving U.S. exporters at a competitive disadvantage. That's one reason why the United States has run trade deficits every year since 1975.

CENTRAL BANKS' STOCKPILES OF DOLLARS

Of all the foreign exchange reserves held by the world's central banks, U.S. dollars account for 58%. No. 2 is the euro: 20%. China's yuan makes up under 3%, according to the IMF.

Researchers at the Federal Reserve have calculated that from 1999 to 2019, 96% of trade in the Americas was invoiced in U.S. dollars. So was 74% of trade in Asia. Elsewhere outside of Europe, where the euro dominates, dollars accounted for 79% of trade.

So reliable is America's currency that merchants in some unstable economies demand payment in dollars, instead of their own country's currency. Consider Sri Lanka, battered by inflation and a dizzying drop in the local currency. Earlier this year, shippers refused to release 1,000 containers of urgently needed food unless they were paid in dollars. The shipments piled up at the docks in Colombo because the importers weren't able to obtain dollars to pay the suppliers.

"Without (dollars), we can't do any transaction," said Nihal Seneviratne, a spokesman for Essential Food Importers and Traders Association. "When we import, we have to use hard currency — mostly the U.S. dollars."

Likewise, many shops and restaurants in Lebanon, where inflation has raged and the currency has plunged, are demanding payment in dollars. In 2000, Ecuador responded to an economic crisis by replacing its own currency, the sucre, with dollars — a process called "dollarization" — and has stuck with it.

THE GO-TO HAVEN FOR INVESTORS

Even when a crisis originates in the United States, the dollar is invariably the go-to haven for investors. That's what happened in late 2008, when the collapse of the U.S. real estate market toppled hundreds of banks and financial firms, including once-mighty Lehman Brothers: The dollar's value shot up.

"Even though we were the problem — we, the United States — there was still a flight to quality," said Clay Lowery, who oversees research at the Institute of International Finance, a banking trade group. "The dollar is king."

If the United States were to pierce the debt limit without resolving the dispute and the Treasury defaulted on its payments, Zandi suggests that the dollar would once again rise, at least initially, "because of the uncertainty and the fear. Global investors just wouldn't know where to go except to where they always go when there's a crisis and that's to the United States."

But the Treasury market would likely be paralyzed. Investors might shift money instead into U.S. money market funds or the bonds of top-flight U.S. corporations. Eventually, Zandi says, growing doubts would shrink the dollar's value and keep it down.

GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY IF DEBT CAP IS BREACHED

In a debt-ceiling crisis, Lowery, who was an assistant Treasury secretary during the 2008 crisis, imagines that the United States would continue to make interest payments to bondholders. And it would try to pay its other obligations — to contractors and retirees, for example — in the order that those bills became

due and as money became available.

For bills that were due on June 3, for example, the government might pay on June 5. A bit of relief would come around June 15. That's when government revenue would pour in as many taxpayers make estimated tax payments for the second quarter.

The government would likely be sued by those who weren't getting paid — "anybody who lives off veterans' benefits or Social Security," Lowery said. And ratings agencies would likely downgrade U.S. debt, even if the Treasury continued to pay interest to bondholders.

The dollar, though it remains dominant globally, has lost some ground in recent years as more banks, businesses and investors have turned to the euro and, to a lesser extent, China's yuan. Other countries tend to resent how swings in the dollar's value can hurt their own currencies and economies.

A rising dollar can trigger crises abroad by drawing investment out of other countries and raising their cost of repaying dollar-denominated loans. The United States' eagerness to use the dollar's clout to impose financial sanctions against rivals and adversaries is also viewed uneasily by some other countries.

So far, though, no clear alternatives have emerged. The euro lags far behind the dollar. Even more so does China's yuan; it's hamstrung by Beijing's refusal to let its currency trade freely in global markets.

But the debt ceiling drama is sure to heighten questions about the enormous financial power of the United States and the dollar.

"The global economy is in a pretty fragile place right now," Obstfeld said. "So throwing into that mix a crisis over the creditworthiness of U.S. obligations is incredibly irresponsible."

AP Writer Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo, Sri Lanka, contributed to this report.

With all the politics and maneuvering, how is life in Florida changing for its residents?

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON undefined

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — "Don't say gay." Regulation of books and classroom discussion. Teachers, parents and school librarians all navigating new and uncertain ground. LGBTQ+ rights under attack. A very public spat between state government and Disney. And at the center of it all is a governor who has emerged as a rival of former President Donald Trump and likely has his eyes set on the White House.

This is Florida at this moment in history, in mid-2023.

For many of those who live in Florida, recent months have brought some changes — many linked to Gov. Ron DeSantis. Here, longtime Florida-based Associated Press journalist Brendan Farrington, who has covered the state's politics since 1997, reflects on the changes for different groups and puts them into the context of the cultural and political landscape.

HOW LIFE IS CHANGING FOR ...

YOUR AVERAGE FLORIDIAN:

For your average Floridian, cost of living concerns have become an issue and really are not being addressed as vocally as most folks would have hoped.

Rents are going sky-high. Property insurance, whether you live near the coast or not, is becoming less available and less affordable.

Inflation obviously has played a role, but a lot of the discussion has been steered away from those issues affecting everyday Floridians into more of an "us against them" on cultural issues or abortion and discussions of race.

Guns are another thing. Under a new law, anyone who can legally own a gun can also carry it concealed without a permit. Now you need a permit in order to carry a gun and go through training and a background check to carry a concealed weapon. That will no longer have to happen beginning July 1.

There also seems to be an uptick in hate-related incidents. Somebody projected anti-Semitic messages

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on the Jacksonville Jaguars' stadium last season and there have been self-proclaimed Nazis waving flags and signs at events.

And, again, abortion. In April 2022, Florida passed a law setting a ban on abortion after 15 weeks, two months before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and passed a stricter one enforcing that ban after six weeks this year. It's clear reproductive rights are taking a hit in Florida.

TEACHERS:

With the "Don't Say Gay" bill — opponents call it this because it bans discussion on sexuality in schools with students — the argument for the people who support the legislation say it doesn't mention the word *gay*, that it's simply to protect children from material that parents should have more of a say in.

But because of vague language, some people are wondering whether they can mention LGBTQ+ issues at all. A student may ask, "Why does so and so have two mommies?" Some teachers feel they can't even address the question without ramifications.

The bill also has left some teachers feeling they can't even represent who they are in the classroom. If they're gay, transgender or bisexual, they've been left to conclude they can't have or say anything indicating that. This includes hiding items such as photographs of partners and gay pride emblems.

Some people say it's better not to say anything than to risk violating the mandates coming down from the state Department of Education.

PARENTS:

It empowers parents who agree with DeSantis' philosophy and ideology on education. But parents who welcome this discussion feel like, "What about us? What happened to our right to have our children taught about these things?" Parents with LGBTQ+ children feel they're being denied access to health care, and subsequently their children will be put at risk for depression or suicide.

It's almost symbolic of a lot of what DeSantis has put forward. It divides people of different ideologies and empowers people who agree with him to speak out more. It empowers parents who — for religious or moral or whatever reasons — do not want their kids to be told about sexuality, particularly gender transition or about other gay students.

And those parents who welcome these policies with open arms are becoming more engaged in school boards. DeSantis, more so than any other governor, has promoted school board races, encouraged people to run, helped candidates who share his ideology, and encouraged parents to complain to school boards. It's put a lot more tension on the schools. And it's dividing people among ideologies. A Sarasota school board member recently walked out of a meeting after the Republican chairwoman allowed a parent to personally attack him for being gay.

SCHOOL LIBRARIANS:

School books must be approved by school librarians. And that's raised questions about schools that don't currently have a "media specialist" — someone trained to work with staff on approving library and classroom material. It allows investigations of books to happen more easily, which forces people to justify why the books should be in schools over the complaints of people who want them banned.

There are still a lot of questions about the vague language used, such as whether a book can include an LGBTQ+ character even if there is no sexual content. It's causing schools to be a bit more cautious, perhaps even more than needed, in an effort to conform to the governor's wishes.

LGBTQ+ RESIDENTS:

It's caused some steps back in LGBTQ+ rights. I think people feel more endangered — that they can be the subject of hate attacks — and by having the government get involved in these issues, people who are homophobic may feel like they can act out more often.

I've talked to a lot of LGBTQ+ lawmakers and activists who feel they are not being treated like whole people, and that the government is trying to suppress who they really are. In some cases, it reminds people of the anti-gay movement in the 1970s. But now, instead of fighting for rights, they are defending rights.

THE THOUSANDS OF DISNEY EMPLOYEES IN CENTRAL FLORIDA:

I don't know how it affects Disney employees' day-to-day rights. I'm sure they're taking a keen interest

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in the feud going on between DeSantis and their employer right now.

I don't think Disney is going anywhere. North Carolina has floated the idea of trying to lure them. Some people have discussed that and wondered, "What if Disney moves?" But it is a huge company with such a huge footprint in central Florida, that it's highly unlikely you'll see this get to the point where Disney says, "No, we don't want to be in Florida."

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS:

Democrats once dominated politics in the state of Florida.

For decades, their party was in control. They controlled the Legislature and the governor's office most years. Even when the Republicans were elected to the governor's office, they had a Democratic Legislature to deal with until Jeb Bush seemed to bring new life to the state Republican Party, despite losing his first election in 1994. By the time he won in 1998, Republicans had a legislative majority and built on that year after year after year.

Republicans now have a supermajority in the Legislature. They now hold all statewide offices and have more registered voters than Democrats. And the power of the party is playing to its strengths and voter engagement and messaging.

Democrats seem to be frustrated in Tallahassee because they have no power to stop legislation without the numbers to prevent bills from moving forward. They're now relegated mostly to messaging, trying to work with colleagues on the other side of the aisle to tweak legislation and make what they call bad bills a little bit better.

But generally, they know they can't do anything. Republicans are having a field day and, basically, doing whatever they want. DeSantis has exerted more control over the Legislature than any governor I've seen.

DESANTIS HIMSELF:

Gov. DeSantis won by a larger margin than any Republican has won the state of Florida. And he's used that as a mandate that the state supports him and his policy and ideology.

So it's made him more powerful in Florida. It's made him more emboldened. And the agenda that he has passed fits very well for a GOP presidential primary.

A lot of the issues that he's taken on, he's doing so to play just as much in places like Iowa and South Carolina as he is in Florida. He's used the word woke more times in the past year than probably the four years previous. That's been a big change for him.

He's been doing his book tour and traveling. His name recognition has skyrocketed nationally outside of Florida. But with that, he's increasingly coming under fire from fellow Republicans, especially Trump.

Other candidates and potential hopefuls such as Mike Pence and Nikki Haley have criticized him for attacking Disney, which they say is attacking businesses and isn't the Republican thing to do. In turn, DeSantis has had to defend himself more. While he isn't a candidate yet — that's expected very soon — he's essentially campaigning while traveling to Iowa, New Hampshire and other key primary states.

Meta fined record \$1.3 billion and ordered to stop sending European user data to US

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — The European Union slapped Meta with a record \$1.3 billion privacy fine Monday and ordered it to stop transferring users' personal information across the Atlantic by October, the latest salvo in a decadelong case sparked by U.S. cybersnooping fears.

The penalty of 1.2 billion euros is the biggest since the EU's strict data privacy regime took effect five years ago, surpassing Amazon's 746 million euro fine in 2021 for data protection violations.

Meta, which had previously warned that services for its users in Europe could be cut off, vowed to appeal and ask courts to immediately put the decision on hold.

The company said "there is no immediate disruption to Facebook in Europe." The decision applies to user data like names, email and IP addresses, messages, viewing history, geolocation data and other informa-

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tion that Meta — and other tech giants like Google — use for targeted online ads.

“This decision is flawed, unjustified and sets a dangerous precedent for the countless other companies transferring data between the EU and U.S.,” Nick Clegg, Meta’s president of global affairs, and chief legal officer Jennifer Newstead said in a statement.

It’s yet another twist in a legal battle that began in 2013 when Austrian lawyer and privacy activist Max Schrems filed a complaint about Facebook’s handling of his data following former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden’s revelations of electronic surveillance by U.S. security agencies. That included the disclosure that Facebook gave the agencies access to the personal data of Europeans.

The saga has highlighted the clash between Washington and Brussels over the differences between Europe’s strict view on data privacy and the comparatively lax regime in the U.S., which lacks a federal privacy law. The EU has been a global leader in reining in the power of Big Tech with a series of regulations forcing them police their platforms more strictly and protect users’ personal information.

An agreement covering EU-U.S. data transfers known as the Privacy Shield was struck down in 2020 by the EU’s top court, which said it didn’t do enough to protect residents from the U.S. government’s electronic prying. Monday’s decision confirmed that another tool to govern data transfers — stock legal contracts — was also invalid.

Brussels and Washington signed a deal last year on a reworked Privacy Shield that Meta could use, but the pact is awaiting a decision from European officials on whether it adequately protects data privacy.

EU institutions have been reviewing the agreement, and the bloc’s lawmakers this month called for improvements, saying the safeguards aren’t strong enough.

The Ireland’s Data Protection Commission handed down the fine as Meta’s lead privacy regulator in the 27-nation bloc because the Silicon Valley tech giant’s European headquarters is based in Dublin.

The Irish watchdog said it gave Meta five months to stop sending European user data to the U.S. and six months to bring its data operations into compliance “by ceasing the unlawful processing, including storage, in the U.S.” of European users’ personal data transferred in violation of the bloc’s privacy rules.

In other words, Meta has to erase all that data, which could be a bigger problem than the fine, said Johnny Ryan, senior fellow at the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, a nonprofit rights group that has worked on digital and data issues.

“This order to delete data is really a headache for Meta,” Ryan said. If the company has to scrub data for hundreds of millions of European Union users going back 10 years, “it is very hard to see how it will be able to comply with that order.”

If a new transatlantic privacy agreement does take effect before the deadlines, “our services can continue as they do today without any disruption or impact on users,” Meta said.

Schrems predicted that Meta has “no real chance” of getting the decision materially overturned. And a new privacy pact might not mean the end of Meta’s troubles, because there’s a good chance it could be tossed out by the EU’s top court, he said.

“Meta plans to rely on the new deal for transfers going forward, but this is likely not a permanent fix,” Schrems said in a statement. “Unless U.S. surveillance laws gets fixed, Meta will likely have to keep EU data in the EU.”

Schrems said a possible solution could be a “federated” social network, where European data stays in Meta’s data centers in Europe, “unless users for example chat with a U.S. friend.”

Meta warned in its latest earnings report that without a legal basis for data transfers, it will be forced to stop offering its products and services in Europe, “which would materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations.”

The social media company might have to carry out a costly and complex revamp of its operations if it’s ultimately forced to stop the transfers. Meta has a fleet of 21 data centers, according to its website, but 17 of them are in the United States. Three others are in the European nations of Denmark, Ireland and Sweden. Another is in Singapore.

Other social media giants are facing pressure over their data practices. TikTok has tried to soothe Western fears about the Chinese-owned short video sharing app’s potential cybersecurity risks with a \$1.5 billion

project to store U.S. user data on Oracle servers.

In the Amazon, Brazilian ecologists try new approach against deforestation and poverty

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE undefined

CARAUARI, Brazil (AP) — In a remote corner of the Amazon, Brazilian ecologists are trying to succeed where a lack of governance has proved disastrous. They're managing a stretch of land in a way that welcomes both local people and scientists to engage in preserving the world's largest tropical forest.

The goal is ambitious, counter the forces that have destroyed 10% of the forest in less than four decades and create something that can be replicated in other parts of the Amazon.

It began with a four-month expedition along the Juruá River in 2016. Researchers visited some 100 communities that at first sight looked similar: rows of wooden homes on stilts along the water. But they were struck by contrasts in the living conditions.

To understand what they saw, it's important to know that 29% of the Amazon, an area roughly three times the size of California, is either public land with no special protection, or public land for which no public information exists, according to a study by the Amazon Institute of People and the Environment.

These areas have been shown to be more vulnerable to deforestation. Land robbers drive traditional communities off the land and then clear it, hoping the government will recognize them as owners, which usually happens.

"It's very unequal. Inside protected areas, there are many positive things happening, but outside, they seemed to be 40 years behind," João Vitor Campos-Silva, a tropical socio-ecologist, told The Associated Press.

The researchers were aware that the part of the river known as Medio Juruá, near the city of Carauari, has remarkable social organization and people manage its fish and forest products, such as acai, sustainably. The land designation here is "extractive reserves," public lands where residents are allowed to fish and harvest some crops.

But outside these reserves, in many places, people take orders from self-appointed landowners, Campos-Silva said. Entire communities are denied access to lakes, even to fish to feed their families. People don't own the land, and they don't know who does.

"We started thinking that it might be interesting to design a conservation model based on a basin scale," where communities could harvest forest produce and fish and protect the forest, instead of moving to the city or resorting to illegal activities, such as unlicensed logging and overfishing.

So they created the non-profit Juruá Institute and purchased a 13 km (8 miles) rainforest property along the Juruá River. It includes about 20 lakes, some with good potential for raising prized pirarucu, the world's largest freshwater scale fish, which can reach up to 200 kilos (440 pounds).

The goal, Campos-Silva said, is to promote high-quality science, grounded in working together with the region's people.

In the vicinity of the Institute's land there are 12 communities of former rubber-tappers. Brazilians call them "ribeirinhos," or river people, as distinguished from Indigenous residents.

In the past, the chance to make a living from rubber trees drew their grandparents to the Amazon. Nowadays the main revenue comes from pirarucu. Controlling that fishery has proved to be sustainable, reviving a species that was in decline and generating income without the need to clear the forest, with all that means for loss of biodiversity.

The Amazon rainforest, covering an area twice the size of India, also holds tremendous stores of carbon and is a crucial buffer against climate change. Driven by land-robbers, deforestation surged to a 15-year high in recent years while Jair Bolsonaro, who left office in January, was president. Destruction in the eastern Amazon has been so extensive that it has become a carbon source, rather than a carbon sink.

To involve the riverine communities in governance, the institute set up a steering committee and launched a series of public meetings called "community of dreams," where people could prioritize the improvements

they want most.

To avoid potential gender and age biases, they worked in three groups - women, youth, and men, said Campos-Silva.

The president of the river communities' association, Fernanda de Araujo Moraes, said the main purpose is to prevent river people from moving to Amazon cities, where unemployment among low-skilled people is rampant and violence is widespread, thanks to drug-trafficking.

In her own community of Lago Serrado, where 12 families live in stilt houses, both the women and men listed 24-hour electricity as their top priority. Currently, it's only available three hours a day. The youths chose fishing training.

Moraes believes this kind of collaboration is the fastest route to progress. "We want to improve people's lives and the Institute wants the same thing," she said, seated on the floor of her house, tending to her infant daughter. The government, she said, is not always on the same page.

"This is something that doesn't exist here in the Amazon, it doesn't exist anywhere in Brazil. If it works, which it will, it will attract a lot of people's attention," said resident José Alves de Morais, in an interview by the lake just behind the community.

Morais works as a lake keeper, watching for trespassers who might take fish or cut trees. His family hopes to take part in the institute's management of pirarucu fishing, which awaits federal approval.

On the scientific front, the institute has built a houseboat and a wooden house for as many as 20 researchers to spend seasons along the Juruá River. One is studying the uakari monkey. Others are looking at what makes social arrangements successful in the region. They created a program, Forest Scientists, to train local high school students in field collection, data systematization, and how to prepare reports.

The initiative is led by Carlos Peres, an Amazon-born professor of tropical conservation ecology at the University of East Anglia, in the United Kingdom. In April this work, begun as an experiment, got some recognition from a Swiss nonprofit when he and three other scientists won the Frontiers Planet Prize, which comes with \$1.1 million. The money will be reinvested in the project, which has already received support from Synchronicity Earth, National Geographic and Rolex within Perpetual Planet Project.

The winning study used data gathered during that 2016 trip. Co-authored by Campos-Silva and others, it found communities living inside protected areas enjoy better access to health care, education, electricity, and basic sanitation, plus a more stable income, than communities in undesignated areas. They found only 5% of adults inside protected areas aspire to move to a city, compared with 58% of adults in unprotected areas.

The article argues that in tropical countries with limited resources, it is possible to achieve conservation and benefit local communities at the same time, by putting more power in their hands.

Peres, the Institute's scientific director, says it hopes to inspire solutions across the Amazon region, by integrating traditional knowledge with the science of Western models.

"We do not have all the answers," he said. "But we have the audacity to try to advance on these issues."

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

New Mexican Spanish, a unique American dialect, survives mostly in prayers

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

HOLMAN, N.M. (AP) — On a spring Saturday afternoon, two "hermanos" knelt to pray in the chapel of their Catholic brotherhood of St. Isidore the Farmer, nestled by the pine forest outside this hamlet in a high mountain valley.

Fidel Trujillo and Leo Paul Pacheco's words resounded in New Mexican Spanish, a unique dialect that evolved through the mixing of medieval Spanish and Indigenous forms. The historic, endangered dialect

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is as central to these communities as their iconic adobe churches, and its best chance of survival might be through faith, too.

"Prayers sung or recited are our sacred heritage," said Gabriel Meléndez, a professor emeritus of American Studies with the University of New Mexico, who's also a hermano. "When prayers are said in Spanish, they're stronger. They connect us directly to people who came before us."

Preserved mostly in devotions, particularly in humble "moradas" – as the brotherhoods' chapels are called – built of mud and straw in rural communities across the northern reaches of the state, New Mexican Spanish is different from all other varieties of the language.

"Unlike most other forms of Spanish used in the U.S. today, it's not due to immigration in the last 100 years, but rooted back to the 1500s," said Israel Sanz-Sánchez, a professor of languages at West Chester University in Pennsylvania who has researched the dialect.

Spanish explorers and missionaries first reached these valleys isolated between mountains, deserts and plains at the end of the 16th century. Pushed back south by the Pueblo Native Americans, they resettled a century later – and their language evolved to incorporate not only words carried from medieval Spain but also a mixture of expressions derived from Mexican Spanish, Native forms and eventually some English after the territory became part of the United States.

Removed from the center of political and economic power for centuries, these villages preserved the dialect orally.

"You never heard English here," said Felix López of growing up in the 1950s in Truchas, a ridgetop village between Santa Fe and Taos, where this master "santero" – an artist specializing in devotional art – has been helping preserve the 1760s Holy Mission church.

But by the mid-20th century, the push to promote schooling in English led many educators to correct students who used New Mexican Spanish's idiosyncratic mix of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, said Damián Vergara Wilson, a professor of Spanish at the University of New Mexico.

He has been working on teaching Spanish not as foreign but as a heritage language that has developed into something uniquely New Mexican.

It contains some words from medieval Spanish, but it also includes pronunciations that developed in New Mexico's villages and words unique to its geographical and historical place at a crossroads of American civilizations. There are several words for turkey, for instance, including an anglicized one used in the context of Thanksgiving.

With such code-switching sometimes disparaged in education and among the public, younger generations often stick to English only or learn contemporary Spanish, especially as spoken in Mexico, with which the state shares a border. That leads many villagers to worry about being able to preserve New Mexican Spanish.

"The dialect we speak is dying out. We're the last generation that learned it as a first language," said Angelo Sandoval, 45, who serves as the "mayordomo" or caretaker of the 1830s San Antonio Church in Cordova, a village just down the valley from Truchas.

Its best chance for survival is prayer. Traditional devotions have been passed down through generations by hermanos, easily memorized because of their ballad-style rhyming. Sometimes they are transcribed into notebooks called "cuadernos." In an adobe niche in a chapel in Holman, some of the handwritten notebooks are 120 years old.

Even in larger cities, people often request prayers in New Mexican Spanish for special occasions, like rosaries for the deceased or novenas for the holidays.

In Santa Fe, the prayer to the widely venerated statue of Our Lady of Peace contains some of the original Spanish terminology, such as "Sacratísimo Hijo" for the "most holy Son," said Bernadette Lucero, director, curator and archivist for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

A nearly century-old women's folklore society -- Sociedad Folklórica de Nuevo México – also regularly practices the dialect for their hymns and nine-day "novenas" prayers to baby Jesus, Lucero added.

In the small town of Bernalillo, where the outskirts of Albuquerque fade into vast mesas, the mayordomos

of San Lorenzo also preserve the dialect in their prayers and annual celebrations.

"When we sing an old 'alabado,' we can trace who wrote that," said Santiago Montoya of the Catholic praise (in Spanish, "alabar") hymns that have been passed down through New Mexican brotherhoods.

For 23 years, Montoya and his sister have been the mayordomos of San Lorenzo, a church that was constructed in the mid-19th century with four-foot-wide adobe walls. The community fought to save it when a bigger, modern church was built next door.

But he's also a "rezador," reciting or singing the rosary – a prayer consisting of sets of Hail Marys called "decades" – which he does in the community and particularly for the deceased. He insists on using New Mexican Spanish even if the families only speak English.

"I tell them, 'I'll do three 'decades' in English, but let's teach the kids,'" Montoya said.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

UN agency: 2M killed, \$4.3 trillion in damages from extreme weather over past half-century

GENEVA (AP) — The economic damage of weather- and climate-related disasters continues to rise, even as improvements in early warning have helped reduce the human toll, the U.N. weather agency said Monday.

The World Meteorological Organization, in an updated report, tallied nearly 12,000 extreme weather, climate and water-related events over the past half-century around the globe that have killed more than 2 million people and caused economic damage of \$4.3 trillion.

The stark recap from WMO came as it opened its four-yearly congress among member countries, pressing the message that more needs to be done to improve alert systems for extreme weather events by a target date of 2027.

"Economic losses have soared. But improved early warnings and coordinated disaster management has slashed the human casualty toll over the past half a century" WMO said in a statement. The trend of rising economic damage is expected to continue.

The Geneva-based agency has repeatedly warned about the impact of man-made climate change, saying rising temperatures have increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather — including floods, hurricanes, cyclones, heat waves and drought.

WMO says early warning systems have helped reduce deaths linked to climate and other weather-related catastrophes.

Most of the economic damage between 1970 and 2021 came in the United States — totaling \$1.7 trillion — while nine in 10 deaths worldwide took place in developing countries. The economic impact, relative to gross domestic product, has been felt more in developing countries, WMO says.

WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said the cyclonic storm Mocha that swept across Myanmar and Bangladesh this month exemplified how the "most vulnerable communities unfortunately bear the brunt of weather, climate and water-related hazards."

"In the past, both Myanmar and Bangladesh suffered death tolls of tens and even hundreds of thousands of people," he said, alluding to previous catastrophes. "Thanks to early warnings and disaster management these catastrophic mortality rates are now thankfully history."

"Early warnings save lives," he said.

The findings were a part of an update to WMO's Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes, which previously had covered a nearly 50-year period through 2019.

WMO acknowledges some caveats to its report: While the number of disasters has risen, some of that may be due to improvements in reporting about extreme weather events that might have been overlooked in the past.

While the findings account for inflation, WMO cautioned that estimating the economic toll can be an

inexact science, and the reports could understate the actual damage.

Worldwide, tropical cyclones were the primary cause of reported human and economic losses.

In Africa, WMO counted more than 1,800 disasters and 733,585 deaths related to weather, climate and water extremes — including flooding and storm surges. The costliest was Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019, which ran to \$2.1 billion in damages.

Nearly 1,500 disasters hit the southwest Pacific, causing 66,951 deaths and \$185.8 billion in economic losses.

Asia faced over 3,600 disasters, costing 984,263 lives and \$1.4 trillion in economic losses — that cost mostly due to the impact of cyclones. South America had 943 disasters that resulted in 58,484 deaths and over \$115 billion in economic losses.

Over 2,100 disasters in North America, Central America and the Caribbean led to 77,454 deaths and \$2 trillion in economic losses.

Europe saw nearly 1,800 disasters that led to 166,492 deaths and \$562 billion in economic losses.

Last week, WMO forecast a 66% chance that within the next five years the Earth will face a year that averages 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than in the mid-19th century, reaching a key threshold targeted by the Paris climate accord of 2015.

This article includes a correction to indicate that tropical cyclones were the leading cause of both human and economic losses worldwide. Extreme temperatures and flooding were only the leading cause of human and economic loss, respectively, in the Europe region.

Tim Scott launches 2024 presidential bid seeking optimistic contrast with other top rivals

By MEG KINNARD and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott launched his presidential campaign on Monday, offering an optimistic and compassionate message he's hoping can serve as a contrast with the political combativeness that has dominated the early GOP primary field.

The Senate's only Black Republican, Scott kicked off the campaign in his hometown of North Charleston, on the campus of Charleston Southern University, his alma mater and a private school affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. He repeatedly mentioned his Christian faith in his kickoff speech, crying, "Amen! Amen! Amen!" and at several points elicited responses from the crowd, who sometimes chanted his name.

But Scott also offered a stark political choice, saying "our party and our nation are standing at a time for choosing: Victimhood or victory." He added that Republicans will also have to decide between "grievance or greatness."

"I choose freedom and hope and opportunity," Scott said. He went on to tell the crowd that "we need a president who persuades not just our friends and our base" but seeks "commonsense" solutions and displays "compassion for people who don't agree with us."

That was a far cry from former President Donald Trump, who has played to the GOP's most loyal supporters with repeated lies about his 2020 election loss as he campaigns for a second term in office. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who could launch his own bid as soon as this week, has pushed Florida to the right by championing contentious new restrictions on abortion and LGBTQ rights and by seeking to limit the corporate power of Disney, one of his state's most powerful business interests.

Scott, 57, planned to huddle with home-state donors Tuesday, then begin a two-day campaign swing to Iowa and New Hampshire, which go first on the GOP presidential voting calendar.

His announcement event featured an opening prayer by Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 2 Senate Republican, who said, "I think our country is ready to be inspired again." Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, South Dakota's other senator, has already announced his support for Scott.

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A number of high-profile GOP senators have backed Trump's third bid for the White House, including Scott's South Carolina colleague, Lindsey Graham. Trump nonetheless struck a conciliatory tone Monday, welcoming Scott to the race and noting that the pair worked together on his administration's signature tax cuts.

A source of strength for Scott will be his campaign bank account. He enters the 2024 race with more cash on hand than any other presidential candidate in U.S. history, with \$22 million left in his campaign account at the end of his 2022 campaign that he can transfer to his presidential coffers.

Scott also won reelection in firmly Republican South Carolina -- which has an early slot on the Republican presidential primary calendar -- by more than 20 points less than six months ago. Advisers bet that can make Scott a serious contender for an early, momentum-generating win.

But Scott is not the only South Carolina option. The state's former governor, Nikki Haley, who once served as Trump's former United Nations ambassador, is also running.

Ben LeVan, a business professor at Charleston Southern who attended Monday's event, said he hadn't decided whom to support in the GOP primary but didn't plan to back Trump.

"I really do hope that we can bring some civility back in politics," LeVan said. "That's one of the nice things about Tim Scott, and quite frankly, Nikki Haley, and some of the other candidates as well. They're more diplomatic, and that is something that I appreciate."

Like others in the GOP race, including former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and "Woke, Inc." author Vivek Ramaswamy, Scott's initial task will be finding a way to stand out in a field led by Trump and DeSantis.

One way Scott hopes to do that is his trademark political optimism. Scott often quotes Scripture at his campaign events, weaving his reliance on spiritual guidance into his speeches calling his travels before the campaign's official launch, the "Faith in America" listening tour.

Scott said Monday that America's promise means "you can go as high as our character, our grit, and our talent will take you."

The Democratic National Committee responded to Scott's announcement by dismissing the notion that Scott offers much of an alternative to Trump's policies. DNC chair Jaime Harrison, who ran unsuccessfully for Senate in South Carolina in 2020, released a statement calling the senator "a fierce advocate of the MAGA agenda," a reference to the former president's "Make America Great Again" movement.

On many issues, Scott does indeed align with mainstream GOP positions. He wants to reduce government spending and restrict abortion, saying he would sign a federal law to prohibit abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy if elected president.

But Scott has pushed the party on some policing overhaul measures since the killing of George Floyd, and he has occasionally criticized Trump's response to racial tensions. Throughout their disagreements, though, Scott has maintained a generally cordial relationship with Trump, saying in his book that the former president "listened intently" to his viewpoints on race-related issues.

When he was appointed to the Senate by then-governor Haley in 2012, Scott became the first Black senator from the South since just after the Civil War. Winning a 2014 special election to serve out the remainder of his term made him the first Black candidate to win a statewide race in South Carolina since the Reconstruction era.

He has long said his current term, which runs through 2029, would be his last.

Scott has long rejected the notion that the country is inherently racist. He's also routinely repudiated the teaching of critical race theory, an academic framework that presents the idea that the nation's institutions maintain the dominance of white people.

"Today, I'm living proof that America is the land of opportunity and not a land of oppression," he said Monday.

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of the DNC chair's first name. It is Jaime, not Jamie.

Weissert reported from Washington. Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>

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Today in History: May 23, Bonnie and Clyde shot to death

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, May 23, the 143rd day of 2023. There are 222 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 23, 1984, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop issued a report saying there was "very solid" evidence linking cigarette smoke to lung disease in non-smokers.

On this date:

In 1430, Joan of Arc was captured by the Burgundians, who sold her to the English.

In 1533, the marriage of England's King Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon was declared null and void by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer.

In 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary during World War I.

In 1934, bank robbers Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker were shot to death in a police ambush in Bienville Parish, Louisiana.

In 1937, industrialist and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, founder of the Standard Oil Co. and the Rockefeller Foundation, died in Ormond Beach, Florida, at age 97.

In 1939, the Navy submarine USS Squalus sank during a test dive off the New England coast. Thirty-two crew members and one civilian were rescued, but 26 others died; the sub was salvaged and recommissioned the USS Sailfish.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces bogged down in Anzio began a major breakout offensive.

In 1945, Nazi official Heinrich Himmler committed suicide by biting into a cyanide capsule while in British custody in Luneburg, Germany.

In 1967, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, an action that helped precipitate war between Israel and its Arab neighbors the following month.

In 1975, comedian Jackie "Moms" Mabley, 81, died in White Plains, New York.

In 2007, President George W. Bush, speaking at the U.S. Coast Guard commencement, portrayed the Iraq war as a battle between the U.S. and al-Qaida and said Osama bin Laden was setting up a terrorist cell in Iraq to strike targets in America.

In 2016, Prosecutors failed for the second time in their bid to hold Baltimore police accountable for the arrest and death of Freddie Gray, as an officer was acquitted in the racially charged case that triggered riots a year earlier.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama, in a speech to the National Defense University, defended America's controversial drone attacks as legal, effective and a necessary linchpin in an evolving U.S. counterterrorism policy, but acknowledged the targeted strikes were no "cure-all" and said he was haunted by the civilians who were unintentionally killed. The Boy Scouts of America threw open its ranks to gay Scouts but not to gay Scout leaders. LeBron James was a unanimous pick for the All-NBA team and Kobe Bryant earned his record-tying 11th first-team selection.

Five years ago: NFL owners approved a new policy allowing players to protest during the national anthem by staying in the locker room, but forbidding players from sitting or taking a knee if they're on the field. A federal judge ruled that President Donald Trump violates the First Amendment when he blocks critics on Twitter because of their political views. For the first time in the 36 seasons of TV's "Survivor," the season finale ended in a deadlock, and a tiebreaker was needed to crown Wendell Holland as the champ.

One year ago: President Joe Biden said the U.S. would intervene militarily if China were to invade Taiwan. It was one of the most forceful presidential statements in support of Taiwan's self-governing in decades. Biden also launched a trade deal with 12 Indo-Pacific nations aimed at strengthening their economies as he warned Americans worried about high inflation that it is "going to be a haul" before they feel relief. A Russian soldier who pleaded guilty to killing a civilian was sentenced by a Ukrainian court to life in prison. A Kremlin diplomat resigned, saying he had never been "so ashamed of my country."

Today's Birthdays: Actor Barbara Barrie is 92. Actor Joan Collins is 90. International Tennis Hall of Famer

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John Newcombe is 79. Actor Lauren Chapin is 78. Country singer Judy Rodman is 72. Chess grandmaster Anatoly Karpov is 72. Singer Luka Bloom is 68. New York Mets manager Buck Showalter is 67. Actor-comedian-game show host Drew Carey is 65. Actor Lea DeLaria is 65. Country singer Shelly West is 65. Author Mitch Albom is 65. Actor Linden Ashby is 63. Actor-model Karen Duffy is 62. Actor Melissa McBride is 58. Rock musician Phil Selway (Radiohead) is 56. Actor Laurel Holloman is 55. Rock musician Matt Flynn (Maroon 5) is 53. Country singer Brian McComas is 51. Actor John Pollono is 51. Singer Maxwell is 50. Singer Jewel is 49. "Jeopardy!" contestant and host Ken Jennings is 49. Actor LaMonica Garrett is 48. Actor D.J. Cotrona is 43. Actor Lane Garrison is 43. Actor-comedian Tim Robinson is 42. Actor Adam Wylie is 39. Movie writer-director Ryan Coogler is 37. Golfer Morgan Pressel is 35. Actor Alberto Frezza is 34. Folk/pop singer/songwriter Sarah Jarosz (juh-ROHZ') is 32.