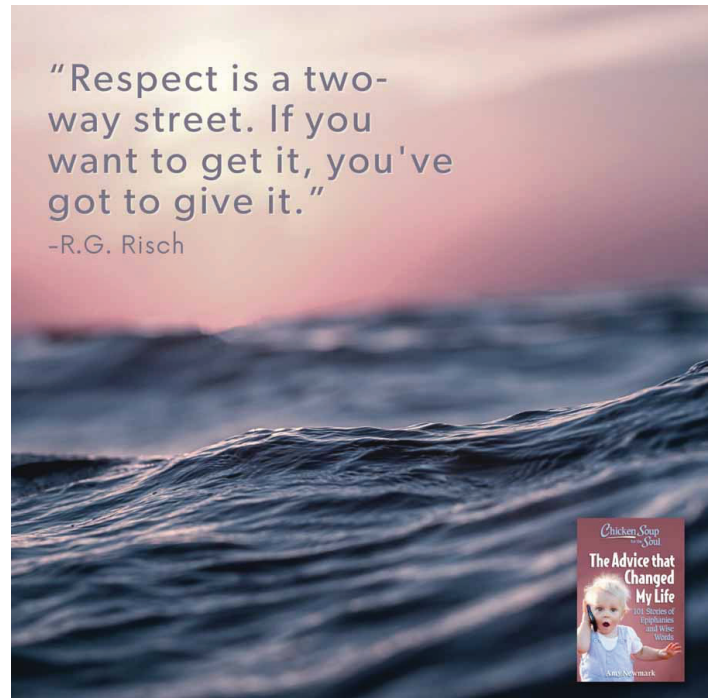


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Groton Community Calendar

Thursday, June 22

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, apple juice, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.
Jr. Teener host Webster, 2 games, 5:30 p.m.; June 22: U12BB vs. Borge 12 at Aberdeen North Complex, 2 games, 5:30 p.m.; Softball hosts Mellette (U10 6:00 DH (Pink/White); U12 6:00 DH)

Friday, June 23

Senior Menu: Tuna salad croissant, pea and cheese salad, mixed fruit.
Softball at Webster (U12 6:00 DH); T-Ball Gold hosts Andover, 6 p.m.; Jr. Legion at Lake Norden, 1 game, 7 p.m.; Legion at Lake Norden, 1 game, 5 p.m.

Farm Hand Wanted

Farm hand (Groton, Brown, South Dakota): Plant, cultivate & harvest crops. Apply fertilizers & pesticides. Operate, maintain and repair farm equipment. Repair fences and farm buildings. Follow all work and food safety protocols. Req: 6 mns rel exp. Mail resume to Shawn Gengerke Farms, 12702 406th Ave., Groton, SD 57445.

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

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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The Bulletin by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

Nine people were detained over a gas explosion at a barbecue restaurant in China's northwestern Ningxia region that killed at least 31 people and injured seven others.

House Republicans censured California Rep. Adam Schiff over his leading role in the investigations of Donald Trump's alleged ties to Russia.

Texas state Sen. Angela Paxton is barred from voting in the historic impeachment trial of her husband, Attorney General Ken Paxton, that could see him removed from office permanently.

Controversial GOP Congresswoman Lauren Boebert introduced articles of impeachment against President Joe Biden, using a so-called "privileged motion" that will override the House agenda and force a vote in the coming days.

The Federal Trade Commission has accused Amazon of tricking consumers into enrolling in Amazon's Prime subscription service in a new lawsuit filed in Washington state.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Ukrainian missiles struck the Chonhar road bridge that connects Russian-occupied parts of the Kherson region with annexed Crimea, Russian-appointed officials said..

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell will testify at 10 a.m. before the Senate Banking Committee as part of the central bank's twice-yearly report to Congress on monetary policy.

The weekly initial claims report, existing home sales, and first-quarter current account figures are due at 8:20 a.m. ET.

The National Transportation Safety Board begins a two-day investigative hearing on Norfolk Southern Railway's February train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

The conservative Faith and Freedom Coalition begins its three-day Road to Majority conference focusing on faith and family values. South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, both of whom are 2024 GOP presidential candidates, will be keynote speakers.

The World Bank chief is set to announce a series of measures to help countries affected by natural disasters, including a pause in payments, as world leaders gather for a two-day summit in Paris to discuss reforming the global financial system, tackling poverty and climate change.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) will host its Rhythm & Soul Music Awards Celebration of 50 Years of Hip-Hop in Los Angeles. Dr. Dre is expected to receive the inaugural Hip-Hop Icon Award at the ceremony.

The 2023 NBA Draft begins at 8 p.m. ET. The San Antonio Spurs have the first overall pick and are expected to draft 19-year-old Victor Wembanyama from France.

House Republicans failed to undo President Joe Biden's veto of GOP-led legislation that would have canceled his plan to forgive student debt for millions of Americans.

A severe storm struck the Texas town of Matador, killing at least three people, damaging buildings, and prompting search/rescue operations. Thunderstorms and hail hit other parts of Texas and Colorado, leaving hundreds of thousands without power. The National Weather Service predicts wet weather to continue over the next few days across the central U.S.

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Two Groton Legion Post 39 Pitchers Rally Together In Shutout Victory Against Hamlin

Groton Legion Post 39 defeated Hamlin Post 6-0 on Wednesday as two pitchers combined to throw a shutout. Logan Ringgingberg induced a groundout from Carter Jutting to finish off the game.

Groton Legion Post 39 got on the board in the second inning when Caden McInerney grounded out, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 scored three runs in the third inning. Groton Legion Post 39's big bats in the inning were led by a single by Cade Larson and a groundout by Colby Dunker.

A single by Watson Grantham in the first inning was a positive for Hamlin.

Dunker led the Groton Legion Post 39 to victory on the mound. The righty lasted five and two-thirds innings, allowing four hits and zero runs while striking out eight. Ringgingberg threw one and one-third innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Parker Boerger took the loss for Hamlin. The righthander lasted four and two-thirds innings, allowing five hits and six runs while striking out five.

Larson went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Groton Legion Post 39 in hits. Groton Legion Post 39 was sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Larson had the most chances in the field with six.

Grantham led Hamlin with two hits in three at bats.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Slides Into a Blow-Out Win Over Hamlin

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion cruised to an easy victory over Hamlin 10-2 on Thursday

In the first inning, Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion got their offense started. Gavin Englund drew a walk, scoring one run.

Kellen Antonsen was the winning pitcher for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Antonsen surrendered two runs on three hits over five innings, striking out three and walking zero.

Gavin Maag took the loss for Hamlin. The righthander allowed six hits and six runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out two.

Jose Mahe started the game for Hamlin. The pitcher lasted one-third of an inning, allowing two hits and four runs

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion totaled eight hits. Logan Ringgenberg, Braxton Imrie, and Caden Mcinerney all collected multiple hits for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Mcinerney, Imrie, and Ringgenberg each managed two hits to lead Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion.

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Hamlin Post 37 / 217 **0 - 6** Groton Legion Post 39

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday June 21, 2023

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
HMLN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
GRTN	0	2	3	1	0	0	X	6	6	0

BATTING

Hamlin Post 37 / 21	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
W Grantham (SS,...	3	0	2	0	0	0
R Prouty (3B, SS)	3	0	0	0	0	0
P Boerger (P, 2B)	2	0	1	0	1	0
G Maag (C)	2	0	0	0	1	2
T Smith (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
T Everson (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	2
J Williams (CF)	3	0	1	0	0	1
C Jutting (LF)	3	0	0	0	0	2
J Mahe	2	0	0	0	0	2
K Hauck (2B, 3B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	25	0	4	0	2	9

TB: W Grantham 2, P Boerger, J Williams, **HBP:** T Everson, **LOB:** 7

PITCHING

Hamlin Post 37 / 21	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
P Boerger	4.2	5	6	2	5	5	0
W Grantham	1.1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	6.0	6	6	2	5	5	0

L: P Boerger, **P-S:** W Grantham 16-11, P Boerger 106-56, **WP:** P Boerger 4, **BF:** W Grantham 5, P Boerger 26

Groton Legion Post 39	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
C Simon (CF)	4	1	1	0	0	2
R Groeblichhoff (...)	2	1	0	1	1	0
B Althoff	2	1	0	0	1	0
T Larson (1B)	1	1	0	0	2	1
L Ringgingberg (L...	3	0	0	0	0	1
C Larson (C)	3	1	2	1	0	0
C Simon (C)	0	0	0	0	0	0
C Dunker (P, LF)	3	1	1	1	0	0
B Imrie (2B)	3	0	1	0	0	0
C McInerney (RF)	3	0	0	1	0	1
K Hoover (3B)	2	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	26	6	6	4	5	5

2B: K Hoover, C Dunker, **TB:** C Larson 2, K Hoover 2, B Imrie, C Dunker 2, C Simon, **SB:** R Groeblichhoff, K Hoover, B Althoff, C Simon 2, **LOB:** 7

Groton Legion Post 39	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
C Dunker	5.2	4	0	0	2	8	0
L Ringgingb...	1.1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	7.0	4	0	0	2	9	0

W: C Dunker, **P-S:** L Ringgingberg 12-8, C Dunker 97-65, **WP:** C Dunker, **HBP:** C Dunker, **BF:** L Ringgingberg 4, C Dunker 24



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

After Noem's criticism, legislators and regents discuss solutions for higher ed

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 21, 2023 6:40 PM

Another tuition freeze is at the top of the South Dakota Board of Regents' legislative wish list for next year — but that's at the same time the state expects a return to normal revenue numbers.

That emerged Wednesday from a roundtable discussion among the regents and some legislators at Dakota State University in Madison. The discussion came nearly a month after Gov. Kristi Noem issued a lengthy letter criticizing the state university system and challenging the regents to do better.

The Legislature has taken advantage of the hundreds of millions of surplus dollars the state has seen in the last few years to issue three years of tuition freezes at the state's universities while also approving 7% increases for education funding during the last legislative session in its \$7.4 billion budget — the largest budget in state history.

Some legislators and economic forecasters are doubtful that the state will continue running such large surpluses.

"I think those days are probably over," said House of Representatives Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Pierre.

Mortenson told regents the Legislature will "hopefully be able to give inflationary increases" to education next year, adding that "we don't get the sense it'll be hundreds of millions of excess revenue anymore."

Tuition freezes play a key role in maintaining the affordability of higher education in the state and enticing out-of-state students to pursue higher education in South Dakota, regents told legislators.

And tuition freezes can play a part in addressing the system's graduation rate, which is a statistic Noem highlighted in her public letter to the regents last month. Roughly 47% of students enrolled at state public universities are graduating, Noem said, based on data from the U.S. Department of Education College Scoreboard. Board of Regents data, meanwhile, shows an average graduation rate among state institutions of 59%.

Noem challenged the board to raise graduation rates to 65% by 2028. She also encouraged the board to make college more affordable, though she did not suggest solutions in the letter.

Mortenson said there's room for improvement on graduation rates, but the rate has increased from 54% to 59% in the last 10 years.

Regents President Time Rave said it would be easier to raise graduation rates if the state increased its entrance requirements, such as ACT scores, but that wouldn't serve the mission of higher education.

"I feel good about where we're at," Rave said.

Noem's letter also touched on reviewing funding sources to "ensure there is no money coming into our education system from China," banning drag shows on campuses and requiring government classes for graduation.

While the roundtable didn't touch on those concerns, the legislators did ask if political activism "seeping into universities" is a problem in South Dakota, which Noem also alleged in her letter.

The short answer, Rave said, is no. Student Regent Brock Brown, a law student at the University of South Dakota, gave legislators an example of how diverse, vigorous and respectful debates were used in a class. "Never once did I think my voice was stifled as a conservative in the classroom," Brown said.

About three in every four South Dakota children who attend an in-state university stay in the state after

graduation, Senate Majority Leader Casey Crabtree said. Those young adults will fill workforce needs in a state that has over 25,000 job openings and reports the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

"We know your success is our state's success," Crabtree said, "and more importantly our kids' success."

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

Regulators dismiss complaint against grain intermediary, citing lack of jurisdiction

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JUNE 21, 2023 6:39 PM

A state regulatory hearing Wednesday in Pierre that was aimed at a grain company ended up with the Public Utilities Commission disagreeing with its own staff.

In a unanimous decision, the commission ruled that its staff's complaint against a grain buying-and-selling intermediary was not permissible due to the commission's lack of authority over interstate commerce.

"Therefore, it can't be regulated," Banghart Properties attorney Robert Conrad argued. "State does not have the authority to do that."

The dismissal came after a debate about the Public Utilities Commission's jurisdiction, and about the company's grain purchasing practices.

Gettysburg-based Banghart Properties is not a typical buyer of grain. Rather than buying it and storing it in a grain bin, the company acts as an intermediary between farmers and end users – ideally getting farmers a better deal than what they can find themselves.

State-issued grain-buying licenses come with some limitations intended to ensure companies can deliver on their contracts. Commission staff alleged that Banghart Properties exceeded the limits of its license by purchasing more than \$5 million worth of grain in a single year. That triggered an investigation into the company's transactions and a cease-and-desist on doing business in the state while the commission considered the fate of the company's license.

The commission unanimously voted to re-issue Banghart Properties' license Wednesday with some stipulations to ensure compliance, including quarterly financial updates to regulators.

Disagreement with staff

Cody Chambliss, manager of the grain regulatory department of the Public Utilities Commission, said the decision raises questions about what exactly his department has authority over.

"I have a lot of questions and a lot of things to sort through," Chambliss said, adding "it's pretty frustrating" that he and his staff had to go through all the work to bring forth the complaint "only to get to this point."

The commission staff argued that despite Banghart Properties having engaged in grain purchases outside of South Dakota, those sales should be subject to regulation by the department.

However, the three elected commissioners unanimously sided with the company, emphasizing that the regulatory body's mandate concerns intrastate activities and does not extend to interstate commerce.

Commissioner Chris Nelson said his prior experience as the uniform commercial code supervisor in the Secretary of State's Office informed his position.

"Now, I'm not saying staff was in the wrong for bringing this complaint forward," Nelson said. "But we don't regulate interstate commerce."

Banghart Properties has already been penalized for its activities in Nebraska, where the Public Service Commission levied a \$290,000 civil penalty against the company for acting as a grain dealer without a license.

Banghart Properties welcomed the South Dakota regulators' decision. The company has not been able to buy and sell grain in the state since January.

Company official Jeremey Frost told South Dakota Searchlight that the proceedings were hurting Bang-

hart's bottom line.

"We have had contracts walk away in the meantime because they need to know if we are going to be able to buy or sell to them," Frost said. "Damage is done."

Lawsuits pending

Meanwhile, Banghart Properties is also dealing with a pending lawsuit related to its business practices. Banghart, owned by Frost's mother, used to be called Fearless Grain Marketing and was owned by Frost. In mid-2019, Fearless Grain Marketing entered into a contract with Indigo Ag, of Massachusetts. Indigo Ag offers a digital platform doing the grain buying and selling that Frost already does. Fearless Grain Marketing was contracted to convince producers to use Indigo's platform.

Indigo claims that Frost "ignored contractual limitations as a Grain Marketing Advisor and committed Indigo to transactions without Indigo authorization," and "fraudulently induced Indigo to enter into contracts as buyer of commodities based upon knowingly or recklessly false statements of fact regarding the existence or availability of grain that did not in fact exist or was not available for the contract described."

Frost denies the allegations and has made counterclaims, alleging the company owes him money for his services.

Indigo alleges Frost defamed the company and "sent a highly defamatory email to at least one grower with substantial contracts with Indigo, stating falsely that Indigo was or could be subject to a fraud claim or Ponzi scheme claim." Indigo further alleges, "Growers threatened to, and in some cases did, default on contracts, as a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct, with the defaults damaging Indigo and potentially costing Indigo substantial sums."

Frost said in court documents that his relationships with farmers and purchasers have been jeopardized by Indigo: "Prior to its unfortunate association with Indigo, FGM enjoyed great success in advising its agricultural clients on market conditions and serving as a broker intermediary to source and sell grains."

That case is being heard in federal court in Tennessee, where Indigo Ag has an office. After it was filed, Frost terminated Fearless Grain Marketing and his mom started Banghart Properties.

In a separate case in South Dakota federal court, JES Farms Partnership, which says in court documents that it signed on to work with Indigo Ag through Frost, is suing Indigo and claiming the company hasn't paid for grain that JES sold through the Indigo platform.

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.

Federal public lands rule would be yanked under bill passed by U.S. House panel

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JUNE 21, 2023 5:18 PM

The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee on a party-line 20-16 vote Wednesday approved a bill to force the Bureau of Land Management to drop its proposed rule that would allow the agency to lease parcels of land for conservation.

The committee vote allows the bill, written by Utah Republican John Curtis, to get a vote from the full House. The Republican-controlled chamber may pass the measure, but it stands little chance of being approved by the Senate or being signed by President Joe Biden.

The two-line measure would require the BLM to withdraw a rule the agency proposed in March, and block the BLM from issuing a substantially similar rule in the future.

The most polarizing part of the proposed rule would allow the BLM to allot conservation leases, similar to the leases the agency issues for oil and gas development, mining or grazing on federal lands.

Republicans have said the proposed rule would undermine the BLM's multiple-use mandate, and "lock

up" lands that could be used for livestock grazing and other purposes.

"With millions of Americans relying on BLM land to sustain their way of life, this kind of immediate action is urgently needed," House Natural Resources Chair Bruce Westerman, an Arkansas Republican, said Wednesday.

Democrats say that conservation is an allowed use, and the proposed rule would elevate it to the same level as extractive uses.

The proposed rule "is a necessary and long-overdue update to the framework of public lands management," the panel's ranking Democrat, Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, said Wednesday.

"Despite claims from my Republican colleagues, it does not prioritize conservation over other multiple uses. It finally puts conservation on equal footing with oil and gas development, livestock grazing and mining," he said.

No future rule

Democrats on Wednesday raised objections to the clause in the bill that would block the BLM from issuing a similar rule in the future.

U.S. Rep. Susie Lee, a Nevada Democrat, proposed an amendment to strike that language from the bill. "The term 'any substantially similar rule' to me is incredibly problematic because of the vagueness," Lee said.

Westerman and Curtis responded that they understood Lee's concern but opposed her amendment. The language was meant to stop the Biden administration from proposing the same rule right after the bill is enacted, Westerman said.

That amendment failed on a 16-20 party-line vote.

At a legislative hearing last week when Republican Govs. Kristi Noem of South Dakota and Mark Gordon of Wyoming voiced their disapproval of the proposed rule, Westerman conceded the bill would likely not become law.

But he said he would seek a provision in the annual spending bill that funds the U.S. Interior Department to block any money from being spent to support the rule. He said Wednesday that if the proposed rule becomes final, Republicans will likely propose a resolution under the Congressional Review Act to reverse it, though it would likely also meet with a veto from Biden even if it was passed by both chambers.

The BLM last week extended the public comment period for the proposal to 90 days, moving the deadline to July 3. The agency had received nearly 150,000 comments on the rule as of Wednesday.

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

Echoing history, reliance upon travel rises for abortion care post-Dobbs

Restricted access adds logistical, emotional and financial burdens for patients, advocates say

BY: KELCIE MOSELEY-MORRIS - JUNE 21, 2023 12:25 PM

When the U.S. Supreme Court issued its Dobbs decision one year ago, people of childbearing age in states across the country suddenly faced what seemed like a new prospect — having to travel hundreds or even thousands of miles from home to get an abortion.

But historians say it is merely continuing a long tradition of pregnant people seeking out the sometimes lifesaving care they need wherever it can be found, and other people helping them along the way.

In the Midwest, Dr. Josephine Gabler operated an abortion clinic that served tens of thousands of people in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin between 1930 and 1940. Patricia Maginnis kept a list of trusted physicians in Mexico, Japan and Sweden through the 1950s and '60s where people could be referred from

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California for safe abortion care.

The Clergy Consultation Service, made up of 3,000 religious figures across 38 states, helped 7,500 women find abortions from 1967 until 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Roe and legalized the procedure nationwide.

Today, with 14 states that have implemented near-total bans on abortion, one organization called Elevated Access has recruited more than 1,200 volunteer pilots to privately fly those in need of an abortion to states where it is accessible.

Since the Dobbs ruling, states with abortion access have experienced an increase in out-of-state patient volume. In Illinois, nearly one-third of Planned Parenthood patients came from other states, compared to an average 6% prior to Dobbs. Similarly, clinics in Colorado reported out-of-state patients doubled from 14% in 2021 to 28% in 2022, with a large share coming from Texas, which has a strict abortion ban. At least one state, Idaho, has passed legislation aimed at restricting out-of-state travel for an abortion for minors who don't have parental permission, but it's unclear how that law will be enforced. Other states with bans have not successfully implemented any laws aimed at restricting travel.

"This is part of a long history of people seeking out ways to end their pregnancies and to get abortions, or 'get their menstruation back,' as they called it then, that often included travel," said Leslie Reagan, a historian who wrote "When Abortion Was a Crime" and scholarly articles about women traveling for abortion throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. "They could be coming by train, driving, or taking a bus, depending on what time period we're talking about and their circumstances."

Groups across America ran underground networks that kept organized lists of trusted physicians who would provide abortion care. Sometimes those physicians operated covertly in communities within the U.S., but often they were located across the border in Mexico, or across oceans in Puerto Rico, Europe and Japan.

Overseas, people have also traveled where abortion was illegal. Irish citizens traveled to the United Kingdom for abortion care for many decades, and still do for pregnancies beyond 12 weeks' gestation. Canadians traveled to U.S. cities like New York City and Chicago and Washington state prior to legalization in 1988. Between 2001 and 2017, Dutch Dr. Rebecca Gomperts used ships to ferry women from cities in Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Guatemala and Mexico to international waters, where they could terminate their pregnancies legally aboard the ship and then return home.

"Sometimes people can't control when they're going to get pregnant, or if the timing is right, or you're going to get kicked out of school," Reagan said. "And really what I saw was not only were women doing it, they had a lot of support. There's really a lot of moral support for this even though the laws might say it's illegal."

Volunteer pilot raised \$15,000 to buy small seaplane

A Midwestern pilot who goes by Mike Bonanza started Elevated Access three days before the leaked draft opinion overturning Roe was released on May 1, 2022. He volunteered for the Midwest Access Coalition, an abortion access fund in Chicago, and his background as a pilot led him to put the two together to help more people. The organization also flies those who need gender-affirming care, which is quickly becoming a larger need. As of June 1, 21 states have banned gender-affirming care for minors, including all 14 states with abortion bans.

One of Elevated Access' volunteer pilots is Adrian, who asked only to be identified by his first name, as all Elevated Access volunteers and staffers do to protect themselves from harassment and potential legal scrutiny. But he is one of the most outspoken individuals affiliated with the organization, and one of the only people who willingly shows his face on social media — his TikTok account has more than 115,000 followers.

"I stopped counting donations (to Elevated Access) once we crossed over \$150,000," he said.

When asked why he volunteers, Adrian speaks plainly about his mother, who was raped by an older man when she was 13 years old. Her parents, he said, were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Utah and did not allow her to seek an abortion. She was forced to give birth to Adrian and his identical twin brother at the age of 14.

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For the first eight years of their lives, Adrian and his brother lived with his grandparents, until his mother returned and took the boys to Georgia to live on a military base with her and a man she was dating. From that time until he left home, Adrian and his brother frequently experienced food insecurity and other abuse.

Now that he is married and living in Wisconsin, Adrian said he doesn't have a relationship with his mother, stepfather or his brother, who has also struggled with substance abuse.

"A lot of people will say, 'Oh well, my god, he's doing so much for his mom,'" he said. "No, it's not about my mom. Yes, my mom is an individual that perfectly embodies the individual that should have access to reproductive health care. It doesn't mean I like her."

His plane is a model from the 1980s, and one of less than 50 left in operation around the country. He opted for an amphibious plane for its versatility, especially after rumors that states with strict abortion laws such as Texas might try to interfere with people trying to leave the state for the procedure. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, about 2.1 million of Wisconsin's 5.7 million people live in coastal areas of the state, or nearly 37%, and he could taxi through the water right up to their docks if needed.

Although Elevated Access has many volunteer pilots, Adrian said they need more who own their own planes.

"That's our biggest hurdle, is actually pilots with planes," he said.

Word of mouth spreads easily in the internet age

Some of the circumstances surrounding abortion access today are easier to navigate now than they were prior to 1973, according to historians. Katrina Kimport, a researcher at the Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health at the University of California, San Francisco, said travel has historically been limited to those with the means and resources to do it. Wealthier people had the financial backing as well as more connections who could help lead them to the right people. In the internet age, information is readily available to many more people, she said, and there is often more financial support for those who can't afford it.

Christabelle Sethna, a professor at the University of Ottawa who wrote a book called "Abortion Across Borders," said the information network that exists today is an essential difference from history.

"In the past it was sort of underground, whispered information; you'd have to ask a whole number of people and maybe one would come through for you with the name of a doctor," Sethna said. "It was much more disparate in the past, and now it's much more organized because of the internet and the vast reach of the internet."

That includes being able to access abortion medication through websites, Sethna said, which is another option that wasn't available in the past. Another significant difference is that the procedure is legal at various stages of pregnancy in 36 states rather than banned nationwide, as it was between the late 1890s and 1973.

Despite those changes, Kimport said her research shows there are still many logistical, emotional and financial burdens placed on those forced to travel because of a lack of access in their own state. She pointed out that prior to the Dobbs ruling, abortion after 24 weeks was still heavily restricted, which provided a preview of what pregnant people are experiencing now at a much broader scale.

"Putting aside the cost of the procedure, travel itself is an additional cost," Kimport said. "There's also the logistical burden of having to seek out child care or pet care, time off work, getting reservations. Some people don't have credit cards, some don't have a car. This is a time and resource and organizational burden."

Emotional costs are difficult to measure, she said, but are some of the most heightened effects, especially for someone leaving a rural area and traveling to an urban area if they have never traveled before.

"Even for people who have experience in travel, going to an unknown place can be extremely stressful and unsettling," Kimport said.

Abortion access funds rely on each other to cobble together funds for travel

While Elevated Access is responsible for the pilots and the actual flights, it is partner organizations large and small that refer clients to them and help arrange lodging and other logistics, often providing additional

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financial support for meals and other expenses.

One of those partners is New River Abortion Access Fund, which started in 2019 in rural Virginia, where it can take hours to drive to the nearest clinic. Sophie Drew, interim director of the fund, said barriers to access already existed prior to the Dobbs ruling, but at a much smaller scale. The initial budget for the fund was about \$600 per week, she said, with maybe five calls for help during that week.

Now, the fund averages \$20,000 per week with 60 to 70 calls on average in one week.

Gianna G., an intake coordinator for New River, said that might sound like enough funding, but with an average cost of \$300 to \$500 for first-trimester abortion care and as much as \$20,000 for abortions later in pregnancy, abortion funds around the country rely on each other to cobble together enough dollars from donations each week to help all of their callers.

"Right now, we just don't have the money we need in order to make this sustainable," they said. "I think a lot of people support abortion care, but they don't know the monetary need behind it."

The vast majority of those who call New River seeking help can travel by car where they need to go, Drew said, but there are still instances when a flight is the best option.

Gianna G. said much of their job is identifying barriers, like someone who doesn't have a car or driver's license, or doesn't have a support person who can come with them for a long car ride.

Both commended Elevated Access, and said the fact that the flights don't come at additional cost, including for a support person, is incredibly helpful.

"We've gotten feedback from some callers about their experience and it's been exclusively positive," Drew said. "Even if someone was nervous about flying. Elevated Access has been a great support both logistically and emotionally."

Researchers: Stigma from community adds to stress

The stigma surrounding abortion remains, presenting an added burden, according to Kimport's research. She interviewed 30 women who traveled for abortion prior to the Dobbs decision about their experiences and said many of them felt forced to disclose their situation to people before they were ready or lied because they had to explain their absences.

Being away from support networks, including children, family, pets, neighbors and friends is another difficulty, she said.

Those who have to travel for an abortion, especially if it is by plane, are often in more advanced stages of pregnancy, Kimport said. Sometimes that is because a lethal fetal anomaly was discovered and sometimes it's because the person did not know of the pregnancy until it was advanced — or, in today's environment, an appointment could take weeks to obtain, depending on the demand at available clinics.

Whatever the reason, Kimport said those late-term abortion seekers face added emotional, physical and logistical burdens, since the procedure itself is more intense and requires more time to recover.

"People with third-trimester abortions had to travel because their state said that care was not allowed, and they talked about how that particular fact made things additionally emotionally stressful," Kimport said. "One woman said she felt cast out from her community, that the law was saying what she was doing was deviant and she felt stigmatized."

One benefit of Elevated Access and its volunteer pilots, according to the organization's leadership, is that it offers a private method of flying to a destination. Kimport said those who have traveled for later-term abortions are more visibly pregnant and have to interact with strangers who will compliment and congratulate them and offer unsolicited advice. For someone whose wanted pregnancy went wrong, she said, that can be devastating.

'We shouldn't get used to it being complicated'

At the moment, as is in the case in so many states, the reproductive rights landscape in Wisconsin is complicated. The state is currently operating under a criminal abortion ban that went into effect in 1849, banning all abortions except to save the pregnant person's life. But it's unknown if a law that dated can still be enforced, particularly since Roe was in effect for 50 years in between. The law passed to comply with Roe allowed abortions at any stage of pregnancy.

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The question of enforceability is currently under consideration in one of Wisconsin's circuit courts, after Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul filed a lawsuit against the three district attorneys who would prosecute cases in the counties with abortion clinics.

"Whichever party loses, I anticipate they would file a notice of appeal to the court of appeals and then it would go up to the (Wisconsin) Supreme Court," said Michelle Velasquez, director of legal advocacy and services for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. "But the circuit court's decision is an important first step to potentially restoring abortion access."

The state's governor is also a Democrat, but Republicans have a majority in both chambers of the legislature, creating a split, stalemated government. Unlike other states that are using citizen ballot initiatives to try to codify abortion access, Wisconsin only allows the legislature to propose ballot referendums.

Even before Roe fell, access to abortion was restrictive. Only three of the state's 72 counties had a health center that offered abortion care, and using telehealth for abortion medication was prohibited by law. To obtain mifepristone and misoprostol, the two-drug regimen used to terminate early pregnancies, an individual is required to complete two in-person visits with the same physician present.

But Wisconsin is an island in the upper Midwest in terms of access — its border states, including Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois and Iowa all continue to allow abortions.

By plane, Adrian can fly from Wisconsin's eastern peninsula to a Minnesota clinic in about 45 minutes, but it would take someone living on the peninsula four hours to make the drive.

"That's kind of how ridiculous this is," he said. "I couldn't imagine what it feels like to be told, 'No, you can't get the care you need.' It's also going to permanently rearrange your body, and you're never going to be the same all because some a— h— assaulted you or some tech bro didn't want to wear a condom."

Although the people working to connect pregnant people with abortion care are passionate about the work, New River's Interim Director Sophie Drew said she hopes having to drive for hours or take a private flight to get an abortion doesn't become normalized. In her ideal world, none of these resources would need to exist.

"People should be able to access abortion in their communities without all these hoops to jump through," she said. "That's the main thing I wish people knew, is that it can be a complicated process, and we shouldn't get used to it being complicated."

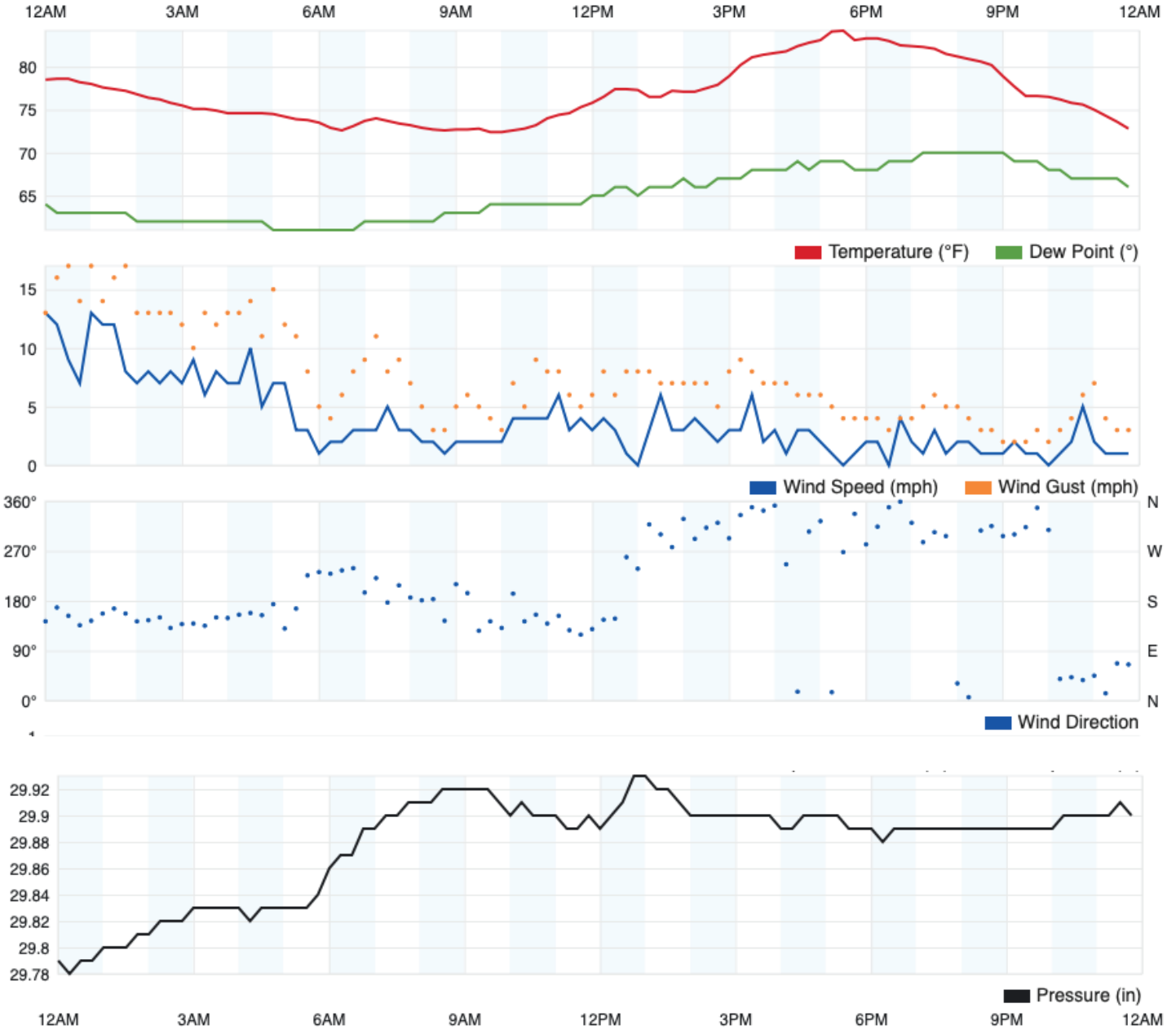
When Roe was overturned, Adrian posted a video to promote Elevated Access and recruit more pilots. His presence as "cheesepilot" on TikTok is how the leadership at Elevated Access found him and asked for his help in May 2022. The organization had barely started in April, and only had a few volunteers. He made a quick video on a break from his job as a pilot for a regional airline and came back several hours later to nearly 500,000 views and hundreds of people asking how to donate. The seaplane he bought last year was made possible with a \$15,000 down payment raised by his TikTok followers.

Kelcie Moseley-Morris is an award-winning journalist who has covered many topics across Idaho since 2011. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Idaho and a master's degree in public administration from Boise State University. Moseley-Morris started her journalism career at the Moscow-Pullman Daily News, followed by the Lewiston Tribune and the Idaho Press.

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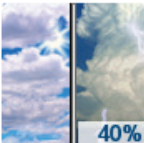


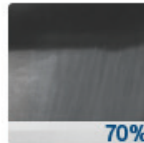
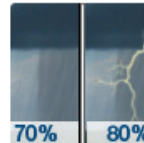


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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
 40%	 50%	 40% 60%	 70%	 70% 80%	 60%	 40%
Partly Sunny then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely then T-storms	T-storms Likely and Breezy	Chance Showers and Breezy
High: 87 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 78 °F

On and Off Thunderstorm Chances for the Remainder of the Week and into the Weekend

*Scattered thunderstorms today

*Friday night into Saturday is the best chance for widespread storms.

*Some storms may be severe Friday night with large hail, damaging winds, and locally heavy rainfall.

Forecast

Today



75-85°

Friday



70-80°

Saturday



70-80°



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
6/22/2023 4:24 AM

A frontal boundary will slowly drift eastward today, bringing scattered showers and thunderstorms across northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Additional showers and thunderstorms will be possible Friday and through the weekend. Thunderstorms Friday night may become strong to severe with large hail, damaging winds, and locally rainfall possible.

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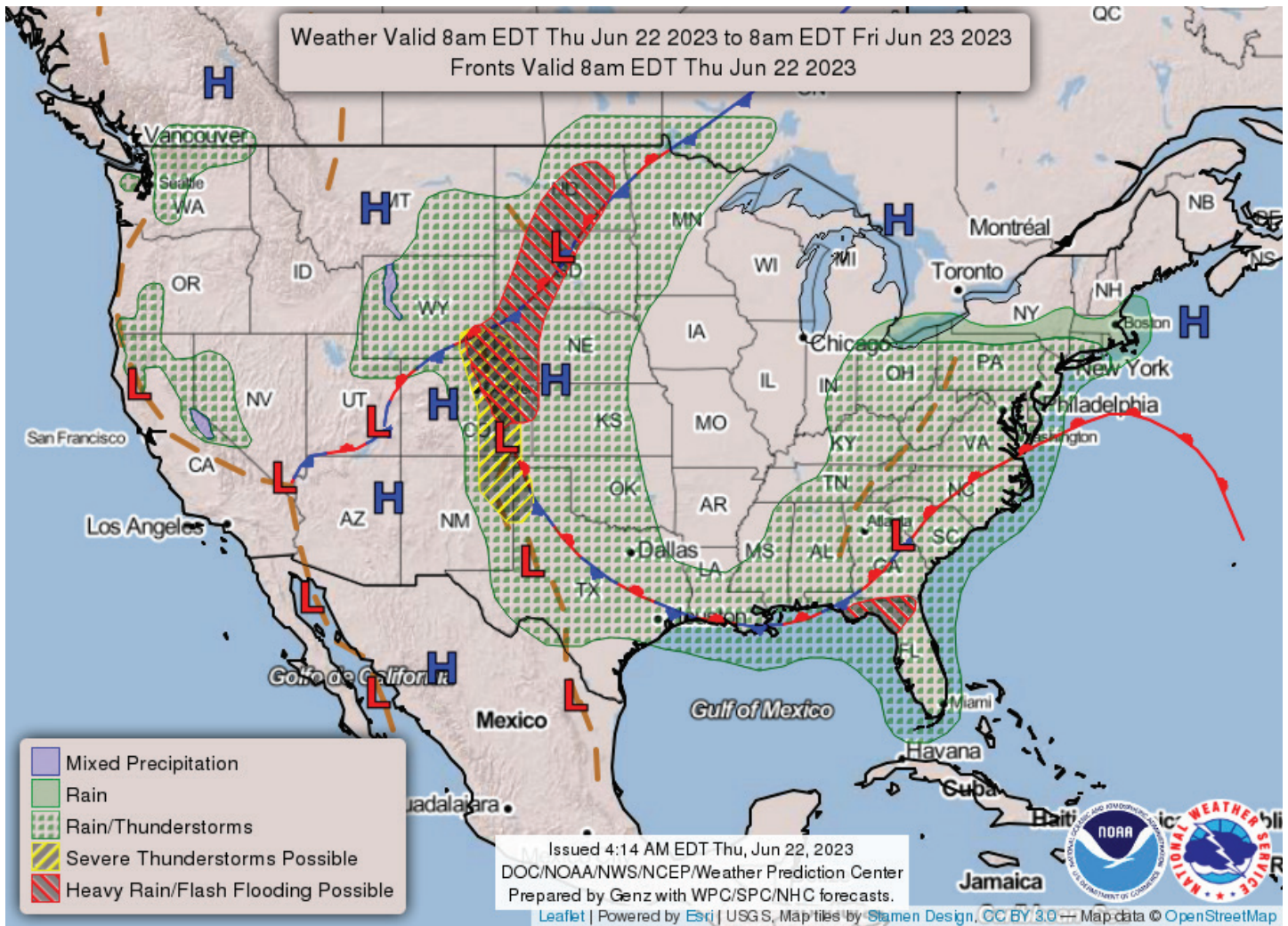
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 5:19 PM
Low Temp: 72 °F at 9:49 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 12:26 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 44 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 102 in 1922
Record Low: 39 in 1905
Average High: 82
Average Low: 57
Average Precip in June.: 2.69
Precip to date in June.: 0.51
Average Precip to date: 9.94
Precip Year to Date: 8.42
Sunset Tonight: 9:26:33 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:42:35 AM



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Today in Weather History

June 22, 1916: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 4 miles east of Willow Lakes to east of Vienna, in Clark County. A farmhouse was picked up and thrown into a granary. A boy was smothered to death by grains as a barn collapsed on him, one mile south of Vienna.

June 22, 1919: The second deadliest tornado in Minnesota's history occurred on this day. 59 people were killed as an estimated F5 tornado ripped through the town of Fergus Falls, Minnesota. 400 buildings were destroyed. A blank check was found over 60 miles away, and lumber was carried 10 miles. Of the 59 victims, 35 were guests of the Grand Hotel.

June 22, 1996: From the morning through the late afternoon hours, several supercell thunderstorms moved southeast along a strong warm front from eastern Corson County to southwest Deuel County. These storms produced several tornados, large hail, very heavy rains, and damaging winds. Hail up to the size of baseballs and winds gusting to 70 mph damaged and destroyed thousands of acres of crops, broke windows in homes, buildings, and vehicles. Many roofs were damaged, and trees were downed from near Mobridge to Redfield to Toronto. The most extensive crop, building, and tree damage occurred around the areas of Redfield, Vienna, Naples, Hazel, Bryant, Henry, Lake Norden, Castlewood, Estelline, and Toronto all south of Highway 212. The hail swaths of destruction were as much as 10 miles wide in places. Some farmers said you could not tell what was planted because the crops were destroyed. Hail piles of one to two feet were reported in some areas. Also, most of the area from Redfield to Toronto received one to three inches of rain which caused some flooding problems.

1928: A farmer near Greensburg, KS looked up into the heart of a tornado. He described its walls as "rotating clouds lit with constant flashes of lightning and a strong gassy odor with a screaming, hissing sound."

1947 - Twelve inches of rain fell in forty-two minutes at Holt, MO, establishing a world rainfall record. That record was tied on January 24-25, 1956, at the Kilauea Sugar Plantation in Hawaii, as their state record was established with 38 inches of rain in 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1972 - Hurricane Agnes deluged Pennsylvania and New York State with torrential rains resulting in the most costly flood in U.S. history. In the Middle Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania, 24 hour rainfall amounts were generally 8 to 12 inches, with up to 19 inches in extreme southwestern Schuylkill County. At Wilkes-Barre, PA, the dike was breached destroying much of the town. Flooding resulted in 117 deaths and 3.1 billion dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1981 - A young woman from Lubbock, TX, was struck by lightning. The bolt of lightning struck just above her right shoulder near her neck, and passed right to left through her body, tearing her warm-ups, causing her tennis shoes to explode, and lifting her two feet into the air. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in southern Texas produced wind gusts to 116 mph near Quemado. Thunderstorms in New York State produced 5.01 inches of rain in 24 hours at Buffalo, an all-time record for that location, and produced an inch of rain at Bath, PA. The temperature at Fairbanks AK soared to 92 degrees, establishing a record for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Sixty-five cities in twenty-four states reported record high temperatures for the date. Tucson AZ reported an all-time record high of 114 degrees, surpassing the previous record of 112 degrees established a day earlier. Highs of 98 degrees at Pittsburgh, PA, and 100 degrees at Baltimore, MD, tied records for the month of June. (The National Weather Summary)

2003: A hailstone measuring 7.0 inches in diameter with a circumference of 18.75 inches and weighing 1.33 pounds falls in Aurora, Nebraska. The National Weather Service reports this is the second largest hailstone ever documented in the U.S. by weight, and the largest by size at that time. The world's largest hailstone NOW was produced from storms in South Dakota; 8" in diameter and 1.9375 lbs. on July 23, 2010.

2007: The first officially documented F5 tornado in Canada struck the town of Elie, Manitoba population 500 people. Video of the storm showed a heavy van being whirled through the air. The storm also tossed an almost entire house several hundred yards through the air before it disintegrated. The tornado traveled across the landscape for about 35 minutes covering 3.4 miles and leaving a damage path 984 feet wide. Wind speeds in the tornado were later estimated at 260-316 mph. Fortunately, no fatalities or serious injuries were reported.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

CARING FOR "THE BABE"

Babe Ruth is one of the legends of baseball. He set many records and is remembered for many accomplishments - especially for hitting 714 home runs in his career. His final game, sadly, was a tremendous disappointment to him. His unhealthy lifestyle and age were taking its toll, and he was playing poorly. First, he committed an error when fielding a ground ball. Then, he struck out several times. And because of his poor play, the Cincinnati Reds took a five-run lead. The people began to "boo" him loudly when he came to the plate in the final inning.

Suddenly, a little boy ran from the stands, threw his arms around his legs, and started to cry. The deep affection of the little boy melted the hearts of the crowd. First, they became quiet and then they started to cheer, "The Babe. The Babe!" In spite of it all, they still loved "the Babe!"

God's love is like that. "In spite" of all of our sins and shortcomings, our errors and missed opportunities to honor Him, the Lord deeply loves us. His love contradicts the world's understanding of love because His love is not self-centered. He loves us "unconditionally!"

This love, this God-love, is a love that we do not understand or deserve. It is "giving" love that began with Him, is seen in the life of Jesus and the work of Christ, and must be reflected in our lives. Unless we show that love to others, they will not understand God's love.

Prayer: Help us, Savior, to love others as much as You love us. Help us to be alert to the needs of others, and then help and serve them as Your Son, our Savior did. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7



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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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.20.23

6 37 39 45 46 21

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$320,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 6
DRAW: Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

2 13 20 35 48 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$4,450,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 21
DRAW: Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

2 5 28 30 37 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 36 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

1 3 11 20 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$112,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 36
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

15 18 23 45 48 10

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 5
DRAW: Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

5 11 33 35 63 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$427,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 5
DRAW: Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

EPA boosts use of biofuels but holds steady for corn-based ethanol production

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Wednesday increased the amount of biofuels that must be blended into the nation's fuel supplies over the next three years, but held production totals steady for corn-based ethanol, disappointing the biofuel industry and farm advocates.

A plan finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency sets biofuel blending volumes at 20.94 billion gallons in 2023, 21.54 billion gallons in 2024 and 22.33 billion gallons in 2025. The totals under the federal Renewable Fuel Standard are higher than levels set for 2022 and earlier years, but include just 15 billion gallons of corn-based ethanol in all three years.

Most gasoline sold in the U.S. contains 10% ethanol, and the fuel is a key part of the economy in Iowa, Nebraska and other Midwest states.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan said the final rule would reduce reliance on foreign sources of oil by up to 140,000 barrels per day and support continued growth of biofuels that produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions than traditional gasoline or diesel.

Ethanol and other renewable fuels "play a critical role in diversifying our country's energy mix and combatting climate change, all while providing good paying jobs and economic benefits to communities across the country," Regan said in a statement. "Today's final rule reflects our efforts to ensure stability of the program for years to come, strengthen the rural economy ... and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions" that contribute to global warming.

The final figures represent a decline from a proposal announced last year and drew immediate criticism from the biofuels industry.

"EPA's decision to lower its ambitions for conventional biofuels runs counter to the direction set by Congress and will needlessly slow progress toward this administration's climate goals," said Emily Skor, CEO of Growth Energy, an ethanol industry group.

"The bioethanol industry has more than adequate supply to meet" an expected increase in demand, Skor added. "Choosing not to put that supply to good use in decarbonizing the transportation sector runs counter to this administration's previously-stated commitments and undermines the goal of reaching net-zero (greenhouse gas emissions) by 2050."

Michael McAdams, president of the Advanced Biofuels Association, called the EPA plan "a missed opportunity to invest in and expand the adoption of low-carbon advanced biofuels" such as algae, switchgrass, cellulosic ethanol or landfill waste.

"By choosing not to reflect the available and growing supply of advanced biofuels in this three-year rule, the EPA is overlooking a chance to reduce 7 trillion pounds of CO2 from our atmosphere," McAdams said, referring to planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions. "This rule reneges on the Biden administration's proclaimed vision for carbon reduction."

Environmental groups also were disappointed, saying the EPA's continued push for ethanol and other biofuels push will hamper U.S. climate efforts rather than bolster them.

"Our future will not be propelled by corn – though you might think otherwise based on the Renewable Fuel Standard set by the EPA," said Dan Lashof, U.S. director of the World Resources Institute, a global nonprofit.

Biofuels were long thought to be a climate solution, Lashof said, "but today we know that converting crops to fuel is a disaster for the planet. It increases emissions, raises food prices and is a terrible use of prime farmland."

About 40% of corn produced in the U.S. is used to make ethanol, a figure Lashof called "an incredible waste."

The federal government “should be supporting farmers to adopt climate-smart agriculture practices that produce food, store carbon and conserve biodiversity – not incentivize them to use their land to produce fuels that make the climate crisis worse,” he said.

Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the Center for Biological Diversity, another environmental group, called the renewable fuel program “a colossal boondoggle” in which “millions of acres (of farmland) are being pointlessly sacrificed just to grow corn to fuel gas-guzzling SUVs.”

Bipartisan support for ethanol in Congress and under successive presidential administrations “has given fodder to those who want to delay the transition to real climate and transportation solutions, including a rapid shift to electric vehicles,” Hartl said.

The proposal announced Wednesday includes new incentives to encourage use of biogas from farms and landfills, and renewable biomass such as wood. It’s the first time the EPA has set biofuel targets on its own instead of using numbers from Congress.

McAdams, of the biofuels association, said his group provided EPA with independent studies that found there are sufficient feedstocks available, accounting for food, to support a bigger increase in renewable volumes.

“It is disappointing that the Biden administration’s EPA chose not to recognize the projected growth of the biomass-based diesel pool in this rule, despite the groundbreaking carbon reductions being delivered by renewable diesel plants coming online today,” he said.

Maine House advances proposal to let federal laws apply to tribes in the state

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — The Maine House approved a bill Wednesday that would let Native Americans in Maine benefit from federal laws despite a state land claims settlement.

The bill received bipartisan support, and the 100-47 vote would be enough to overcome a possible veto from Democratic Gov. Janet Mills. The Senate takes up the bill next.

Tribes in the state are governed by the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980, which stipulates they’re bound by state law, treating tribal reservations much like municipalities and generally barring federal laws that undermine state law. That sets them apart from the other 570 federally recognized tribes.

That settlement for the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot and Maliseet, along with a 1991 agreement for the Mi’kmaq, put the tribes in Maine on a different path from others elsewhere in the country.

“Let’s take a small step, placing the Wabanaki tribes on the same footing as the other 570 federally recognized tribes across the country,” said Republican Rep. Mark Babin, R-Fort Fairfield, speaking in support of the bill.

The bill stops short of full sovereignty sought by the tribes. But it takes a step in that direction by letting most federal laws benefiting other tribes apply to Wabanaki tribes in Maine. Certain federal laws, like those governing casinos, are specifically carved out of the proposal.

Rep. Aaron Dana, who is the Passamaquoddy tribal representative, cited a specific example to show how the current system is failing: After pipes froze at a health clinic during a cold snap, his tribe was not able to seek direct aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency like others could have done in the same situation.

“The immediate and the critical impact this could have for the Wabanaki is why I say this could be the single most important bill in recent history,” Dana said.

Critics expressed concerns the law could cause conflicts and lawsuits. The governor’s chief legal counsel urged the tribes to work with the administration instead of adopting a bill that could create new problems.

Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined
Yankton Press & Dakotan. June 20, 2023.

Editorial: Jobless Rates And Labor-Pool Solutions

South Dakota and Nebraska — along with New Hampshire — currently share the distinction of having the lowest unemployment levels in the nation, each with a jobless rate of 1.9%.

As has been the case of late, this number is a double-edged sword.

The low jobless rate gives politicians a chance to pump themselves up, because low unemployment just looks and feels good. And certainly, something approaching full employment is a good thing.

On the other hand, there are more jobs in South Dakota and Nebraska (and, no doubt, New Hampshire) than there are available workers, and that creates a real problem. It can put retail businesses in a tight spot in terms of staffing, and it can potentially hinder manufacturers looking to expand but unable to do so because the workers simply aren't there to fill the new slots to meet the new targets.

There are several theoretical solutions, perhaps the most high-profile (and politically controversial) of which is promoting more immigration to expand the work force.

Another, more patient approach can be seen in Yankton, where potential new employees are gradually being developed.

For instance, manufacturers have worked with RTEC to train new employees in such skills as welding with hopes that it will eventually help fill some of the holes in the local workforce. In the process, it's giving these people skills that will help them advance in technical fields.

There was also the efforts of the Yankton Manufacturing Academy (YMA) and the Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) Training Camp programs, which held their combined graduations recently at RTEC.

Here again, the intent is to draw more people into (as the names suggest) the manufacturing and nursing fields. In these cases, the programs introduce high school students to these areas in which they have an interest in entering.

Gwen Maag, an instructor with Avera Education, ran the CNA training camp and knows just how badly these people are needed.

"CNAs are in high demand. We need people with boots on the ground," she said during the recent graduation ceremony. "The Department of Labor says the CNA field will see an 18% growth by 2024. We don't have enough people to do that. We don't have enough workers in health care."

Meanwhile, the Manufacturing Academy seeks to introduce students to industrial fields.

"Our goal is to open (the students') eyes and steer the kids in that direction," RTEC director Monte Gulick said. "We need trained staff (in all fields)."

These outreach efforts are only a small part of the answer to the much bigger problems in terms of the local and national labor pool, but these efforts are a start. They sow the seeds of potential, and that could lead to partial solutions down the line. That can potentially benefit the Yankton area for years to come.

Madison Daily Leader. June 20, 2023.

Editorial: Contract with Army Cyber is a great achievement

Dakota State University has signed an educational partnership with the U.S. Army Cyber Command. While we've gotten used to DSU signing notable agreements with many agencies of the federal government, this particular one can be considered a remarkable achievement.

Most people, especially older Americans, still think of wars in terms of in-person battles. World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf wars were all combinations of air, sea and ground battles. But the Russia/Ukraine war, as well as others, have involved substantial cyber operations.

The battles could start months or years before a shot is fired. In the future, wars may not even involve bullets, bombs, missiles or other ammunition. Cyber attacks could disable a country or organization. Cyber defense could protect a country from surrendering to another.

Many of us still think of wars in terms of geographic boundaries, but future wars could very well be fought

against ideologies or groups that aren't defined by a sovereign country, like the Taliban.

Today's cyber warfare is really an extension of centuries-old combat. Combatants always wanted to knock out capabilities, such as electricity plants or airports. But instead of bombing them, the attacks could be over the internet. Propaganda battles – once fought by dropping leaflets from airplanes – could now be fought over social media or other methods of communication.

The goal of this particular agreement is to develop new technologies and transfer technologies from civilian to military use so that U.S. soldiers have as many technology capabilities as possible, Lt. General Maria Barrett said. Training and education will evolve rapidly: as a new cyber attack is invented, a new cyber defense will be developed to counteract it. And the cycle starts over.

We offer our congratulations to DSU and all those involved in this agreement and thank them for their service to America.

END

India's Modi is getting a state visit with Biden, but the glitz is shadowed by human rights concerns

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are marking the state visit of the Indian leader on Thursday by launching new partnerships in defense, semiconductor manufacturing and more sectors as the leaders look to strengthen their countries' crucial — albeit complicated — relationship.

But as Biden fetes Modi, human rights advocates and some U.S. lawmakers are questioning the Democratic president's decision to offer the high honor to a leader whose nine-year tenure over the world's biggest democracy has been marked by a backslide in political, religious and press freedoms.

Biden administration officials say honoring Modi, the leader of the conservative Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, is Diplomacy 101. The U.S.-India relationship will be vital in coming decades as both sides navigate an ascendant China and enormous challenges posed by climate change, artificial intelligence, supply chain resilience and other issues.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Biden will raise his concerns but will avoid lecturing the prime minister during their formal talks.

"The question of where politics and the question of democratic institutions go in India is going to be determined within India by Indians. It's not going to be determined by the United States," Sullivan said. "So what we can do is our part, and our part is to speak out on behalf of universal values."

Among the major announcements to be made Thursday is an agreement that will allow U.S.-based General Electric to partner with India-based Hindustan Aeronautics to produce jet engines for Indian aircraft in India and the sale of U.S.-made armed MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones, according to senior Biden administration officials. The officials briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity to preview the major agreements ahead of their formal announcement.

The Biden administration also is unveiling plans aimed at bolstering India's semiconductor industry. U.S.-based Micron Technology has agreed to build a \$2.75 billion semiconductor assembly and test facility in India, with Micron spending \$800 million and India funding the rest. U.S.-based Applied Materials is announcing it will launch a new semiconductor center for commercialization and innovation in India, and Lam Research, another semiconductor manufacturing equipment company, will start a training program for 60,000 Indian engineers.

On the space front, India will sign on to the the Artemis Accords, a blueprint for space exploration cooperation among nations participating in NASA's lunar exploration plans. NASA and the Indian Space Research Organization also agreed to make a joint mission to the International Space Station next year.

The State Department will also announce plans to open consulates in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad, while India will reopen its consulate in Seattle.

Despite the major deals, the visit will be shadowed by concerns laid out by rights activists and lawmakers that question Modi's commitment to democratic principles.

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Modi has faced criticism over legislation amending the country's citizenship law that fast-tracks naturalization for some migrants but excludes Muslims, a rise in violence against Muslims and other religious minorities by Hindu nationalists, and the recent conviction of India's top opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi, for mocking Modi's surname.

In 2005, the U.S. revoked Modi's visa to the U.S., citing concerns that, as chief minister of Gujarat, he did not act to stop communal violence during 2002 anti-Muslim riots that left more than 1,000 people dead. An investigation approved by the Indian Supreme Court later absolved Modi, but the stain of the dark moment has lingered.

Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota have said they will boycott Modi's address on Thursday before a joint meeting of Congress. And a group of more than 70 lawmakers wrote Biden this week calling on him to use his meeting with Modi to raise concerns about the erosion of religious, press and political freedoms.

"It is an important country to me, and we must call out some of the real issues that are threatening the viability of of democracy in all of our countries," said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., who was born in India and helped organize the lawmakers' letter. "If India continues to backslide, I think it will affect our ability to have a really strong relationship with the country."

Biden and Modi have also had differences over Russia's war in Ukraine. India abstained from voting on U.N. resolutions condemning Russia and refused to join the global coalition against Russia. Since the start of the war, the Modi government has also dramatically increased its purchase of Russian oil.

White House officials note that there are signs of change in India's relationship with Russia, which has long been New Delhi's biggest defense supplier.

India is moving away from Russian military equipment, looking more to the U.S., Israel, the United Kingdom and other nations. Modi recently met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and has spoken out about his worries about the potential use of nuclear weapons by Russia.

State visits typically are reserved for America's closest allies, but they also have been used in the past as a carrot to try to strengthen relationships with countries with which the United States has had complicated relationships.

President Barack Obama honored Chinese Presidents Hu Jintao in 2011 and Xi Jinping in 2015.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter hosted Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the shah of Iran, and his wife for a state visit. That visit came about 15 months before the shah was overthrown in Iran's Islamic Revolution.

Violent clashes between pro- and anti-shah demonstrators broke out just south of the White House, leading police to deploy tear gas as an official ceremony was underway on the South Lawn. The stinging tear gas wafted to the welcoming ceremony.

Carter later apologized to the shah for the "air pollution."

Modi's busy itinerary on Thursday includes an Oval Office meeting with Biden, his address to Congress and a lavish White House state dinner hosted by Biden and first lady Jill Biden.

Modi, who hasn't taken part in a formal press conference in years, has agreed to participate in one with Biden, according to the White House. Typically, state visits include a news conference in which the leaders take questions from two members of the U.S. press and two from the visiting press corps.

Modi is to be honored at a State Department luncheon on Friday hosted by Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of State Antony Blinken. He also is scheduled to address members of the Indian diaspora before departing Washington.

"President Biden is invested in making sure we get this partnership between these two countries, between these two peoples, right," Sullivan said, adding that this could "deliver benefits to both of our peoples and to the world as a whole in the decades to come."

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro and Fatima Hussein contributed to this report.

Search for the missing Titanic submersible nears the critical 96-hour mark for oxygen supply

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

The search for the missing submersible on an expedition to view the wreckage of the Titanic neared the critical 96-hour mark Thursday when breathable air is expected to run out, reaching a vital moment in the intense effort to save the five people aboard.

The Titan submersible was estimated to have about a four-day supply of breathable air when it launched Sunday morning in the North Atlantic. That puts the deadline to find and rescue the sub at roughly between 6 a.m. EDT (1000 GMT) and 8 a.m. EDT (1200 GMT), based on information the U.S. Coast Guard and company behind the expedition have provided.

Experts emphasized that is an imprecise estimate and could be extended if passengers have taken measures to conserve breathable air. And it's not known if they survived since the sub disappeared Sunday morning.

Frank Owen, a submarine search-and-rescue expert, said the oxygen supply figure is a useful "target" for searchers, but is only based on a "nominal amount of consumption." Owen said the diver on board the Titan would likely be advising passengers to "do anything to reduce your metabolic levels so that you can actually extend this."

Broadcasters around the world started newscasts at the critical hour with news of the submersible. The Saudi-owned satellite channel Al Arabiya showed a clock on air counting down to their estimate of when the air could potentially run out.

Rescuers have rushed more ships and vessels to the site of the disappearance, hoping underwater sounds they detected for a second straight day might help narrow their search in the urgent, international mission. They have expanded the coverage area to thousands of miles — twice the size of Connecticut and in waters 2 1/2 miles (4 kilometers) deep.

The Titan was reported overdue Sunday afternoon about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland, as it was on its way to where the iconic ocean liner sank more than a century ago. OceanGate Expeditions, an undersea exploration company that is leading the trip, has been chronicling the Titanic's decay and the underwater ecosystem around it via yearly voyages since 2021.

By Thursday morning, hope was running out that anyone on board the vessel would be found alive.

Many obstacles still remain: from pinpointing the vessel's location, to reaching it with rescue equipment, to bringing it to the surface — assuming it's still intact. And all that has to happen before the passengers' oxygen supply runs out.

Captain Jamie Frederick of the First Coast Guard District said authorities were still holding out hope of saving the five passengers onboard.

"This is a search-and-rescue mission, 100%," he said Wednesday.

The area of the North Atlantic where the Titan vanished Sunday is also prone to fog and stormy conditions, making it an extremely challenging environment to conduct a search-and-rescue mission, said Donald Murphy, an oceanographer who served as chief scientist of the Coast Guard's International Ice Patrol.

Meanwhile, newly uncovered allegations suggest there had been significant warnings made about vessel safety during the submersible's development.

Frederick said while the sounds that have been detected offered a chance to narrow the search, their exact location and source hadn't yet been determined.

"We don't know what they are, to be frank," he said.

Retired Navy Capt. Carl Hartsfield, now the director of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Systems Laboratory, said the sounds have been described as "banging noises," but he warned that search crews "have to put the whole picture together in context and they have to eliminate potential manmade sources other than the Titan."

The report was encouraging to some experts because submarine crews unable to communicate with the surface are taught to bang on their submersible's hull to be detected by sonar.

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The U.S. Navy said in a statement Wednesday that it was sending a specialized salvage system that's capable of hoisting "large, bulky and heavy undersea objects such as aircraft or small vessels."

The Titan weighs 20,000 pounds (9,071 kilograms). The U.S. Navy's Flyaway Deep Ocean Salvage System is designed to lift up to 60,000 pounds (27,216 kilograms), the Navy said on its website.

Lost aboard the vessel are pilot Stockton Rush, the CEO of OceanGate, a British adventurer, two members of a Pakistani business family and a Titanic expert.

At least 46 people successfully traveled on OceanGate's submersible to the Titanic wreck site in 2021 and 2022, according to letters the company filed with a U.S. District Court in Norfolk, Virginia, that oversees matters involving the Titanic shipwreck.

One of the company's first customers characterized a dive he made to the site two years ago as a "kamikaze operation."

"Imagine a metal tube a few meters long with a sheet of metal for a floor. You can't stand. You can't kneel. Everyone is sitting close to or on top of each other," said Arthur Loibl, a retired businessman and adventurer from Germany. "You can't be claustrophobic."

During the 2.5-hour descent and ascent, the lights were turned off to conserve energy, he said, with the only illumination coming from a fluorescent glow stick.

The dive was repeatedly delayed to fix a problem with the battery and the balancing weights. In total, the voyage took 10.5 hours.

OceanGate has been criticized for the use of a simple commercially available video game controller to steer the Titan. But the company has said that many of the vessel's parts are off-the-shelf because they have proved to be dependable.

"It's meant for a 16-year-old to throw it around" and is "super durable," Rush told the CBC in an interview last year while he demonstrated by throwing the controller around the Titan's tiny cabin. He said a couple of spares are kept on board "just in case."

The submersible had seven backup systems to return to the surface, including sandbags and lead pipes that drop off and an inflatable balloon.

Jeff Karson, a professor emeritus of earth and environmental sciences at Syracuse University, said the temperature is just above freezing, and the vessel is too deep for human divers to get to it. The best chance to reach the submersible could be to use a remotely operated robot on a fiber optic cable, he said.

"I am sure it is horrible down there," Karson said. "It is like being in a snow cave and hypothermia is a real danger."

The passengers lost on the Titan are British adventurer Hamish Harding; Pakistani nationals Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, whose eponymous firm invests across the country; and French explorer and Titanic expert Paul-Henry Nargeolet.

Retired Navy Vice Admiral Robert Murrett, who is now deputy director of the Institute for Security Policy and Law at Syracuse University, said the disappearance underscores the dangers associated with operating in deep water and the recreational exploration of the sea and space.

"I think some people believe that because modern technology is so good, that you can do things like this and not have accidents, but that's just not the case," he said.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia; Munir Ahmed in Islamabad and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

Cooking gas explosion kills 31 people at a barbecue restaurant in northwestern China

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Cooking gas caused a massive explosion at a barbecue restaurant in northwestern China, killing 31 people and injuring seven others during national celebrations on the eve of a long holiday weekend, authorities said Thursday.

The blast tore through the restaurant at around 8:40 p.m. Wednesday on a busy street in Yinchuan, the capital of the traditionally Muslim Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, as people gathered ahead of the Dragon Boat Festival, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The explosion left many people unconscious and they needed to be carried out of the shop, according to the online news site The Paper, which quoted a member of the search and rescue team. Victims included elderly people and high school students, it said.

An hour before the explosion, employees noticed the smell of cooking gas and discovered that a gas tank valve was broken, according to Xinhua. The blast occurred while an employee was replacing the valve.

Chinese President Xi Jinping demanded urgent medical care for the injured and a safety overhaul after the explosion, Xinhua said. He urged efforts to quickly determine the cause of the accident and hold people accountable under the law.

Xi also said all regions and related departments should address “all types of risks and hidden dangers” and launch campaigns to promote workplace safety.

Nine people have been detained by authorities, including the owner of the restaurant, shareholders and employees. Their assets have also been frozen, according to Xinhua.

The blast happened at an outlet of Fuyang Barbecue, a chain restaurant in Yinchuan popular for its grilled skewers and stir-fried dishes, The Paper said. The two-floor restaurant could seat 20 people on the ground floor and offered private dining rooms on the second floor where customers could also sing karaoke.

A video on social media platform Douyin showed rescuers on ladders trying to reach victims on the second floor. People who appeared to have minor injuries waited for help at the side of the road. Other videos showed at least six fire trucks at the scene and some onlookers weeping.

A staff member at the emergency clinic at the General Hospital of Ningxia Medical University confirmed that some victims were being treated there but declined to give further information.

The Paper cited a woman identified only by her surname, Chen, as saying she had been about 50 meters (160 feet) from the restaurant when she heard the explosion. She described seeing two waiters emerge from the restaurant, one of whom collapsed immediately, while thick smoke billowed and a strong smell of cooking gas permeated the area.

The central government’s Ministry of Emergency Management said on social media that search and rescue work at the restaurant was completed early Thursday morning and investigators were working to determine the cause of the blast.

The Dragon Boat Festival is a holiday devoted to eating rice dumplings and racing boats propelled by teams of paddlers. While the majority of Yinchuan’s population is Han Chinese, a third are Hui people, or Chinese Muslims.

Industrial accidents of this type are a regular occurrence in China, usually attributed to poor government supervision, corruption, cost-cutting measures by employers and little safety training for employees.

At least nine people were killed in an explosion at a Chinese petrochemical plant, and three others died in a helicopter crash during the country’s May Day holiday.

In February, 53 miners were killed in the collapse of a massive open-pit coal mine in the northern region of Inner Mongolia, leading to numerous arrests, and four people were detained over a fire at an industrial trading company in central China in November that killed 38 people.

The central government has pledged stronger safety measures since an explosion in 2015 at a chemical warehouse in the northern port city of Tianjin killed 173 people, most of them firefighters and police officers. In that case, a number of local officials were accused of having taken bribes to ignore safety violations.

AP video producer Penny Wang in Bangkok contributed to this report.

Moscow court rules US journalist Evan Gershkovich must stay in detention until late August

MOSCOW (AP) — A Moscow court on Thursday rejected an appeal by Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and upheld an earlier ruling that he should remain in jail on espionage charges until late August.

The 31-year-old U.S. citizen was arrested in late March while on a reporting trip. A Moscow court agreed last month to keep him in custody until Aug. 30. Defense lawyers had challenged the decision.

Gershkovich, wearing a black T-shirt and light blue jeans, looked tense and paced around inside a glass defendant's cage while waiting for the hearing to begin at the Moscow City Court. Before the hearing began, other journalists in the courtroom were asked to leave and the proceedings took place behind closed doors.

Gershkovich's parents and U.S. ambassador to Russia Lynne Tracy attended the hearing. Speaking to reporters afterward, Tracy said that "Evan continues to show remarkable strength and resilience in these very difficult circumstances."

Gershkovich and his employer have denied he spied in Russia. The U.S. government has declared him to be wrongfully detained and demanded his immediate release.

His arrest in the city of Yekaterinburg rattled journalists in Russia, where authorities have not detailed what, if any, evidence they have gathered to support the espionage charges.

Gershkovich is being held at Moscow's Lefortovo prison, which is notorious for its harsh conditions. U.S. Embassy officials were allowed to visit him once, but Russian authorities rejected two other requests to see him.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters on Thursday that the ministry is considering another visit request from the embassy.

Stock market today: Global shares decline after Fed chair inflation comments

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares were mostly lower Thursday following a retreat on Wall Street after the Federal Reserve chair indicated he believes inflation still isn't under control.

Benchmarks in Europe slid in early trading as the central banks of Switzerland and Norway raised their benchmark interest rates to counter inflation, while the Bank of England was expected to do so.

The British central bank is fighting to quash stubbornly high inflation that has failed to retreat from its peak as quickly as expected. The consensus among analysts was that it will raise its main interest rate by a quarter-percentage point — hitting a new 15-year high of 4.75%. But some worried it might opt for a bigger half-point increase, heaping pain on people with loans, especially the 1.4 million or so households in the U.K. that will have to refinance their mortgages over the rest of the year.

France's CAC 40 shed 1.2% in early trading to 7,174.46, while Germany's DAX fell 0.7% to 15,907.25. Britain's FTSE 100 slipped 0.8% to 7,495.94. The future for the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.1% while the contract for the S&P 500 was 0.2% lower.

In Asian trading, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 fell 0.9% to finish at 33,264.88. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined 1.6% to 7,195.50. South Korea's Kospi gained 0.4% to 2,593.70. Markets were closed in Hong Kong and Shanghai for the Dragon Boat Festival, a national holiday.

That provided traders there a break from jitters about possible renewed tensions in the U.S.-China relationship after President Joe Biden referred to Chinese President Xi Jinping as a dictator. That pushed "back against the idea that the U.S.-China relationship could be warming with Secretary of State Antony

Blinken's visit," Yeap Jun Rong, market analyst at IG said in a commentary.

During Blinken's Beijing visit earlier this week, both sides agreed to stabilize ruptured ties. But Blinken said China was not ready to resume military-to-military contacts.

Fitch Ratings said in its June Global Economic Outlook that the global growth outlook for next year has deteriorated, given the prospects of higher interest rates around the world.

"Global growth is showing near-term resilience but with core inflation remaining stubbornly high, central banks will have to continue tightening policy in the coming months," it said.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell told lawmakers Wednesday that "the process of getting inflation back down to 2% has a long way to go." He said again that a couple more rate increases may be on the way, though the speed of the hikes is likely to slow after moving at a furious speed since early 2022.

He likened it to slowing from 75 miles per hour on a highway to 50 and then even slower as the destination nears.

High rates have already helped cause three high-profile failures in the U.S. banking system. The banking industry remains under pressure, even after the federal government acted quickly to provide support.

In energy trading Thursday, benchmark U.S. crude fell 47 cents to \$72.06 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 49 cents to \$76.63 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 141.97 Japanese yen from 141.81 yen. The euro cost \$1.0993, little changed from \$1.0990.

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

Tornadoes tear through northern Texas town, killing 3 people and causing widespread damage

MATADOR, Texas (AP) — A line of severe storms produced multiple tornadoes Wednesday evening on the Rolling Plains in Texas, killing at least three people and causing significant damage around the northern town of Matador.

The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal reported that the storms also produced softball-size hail and wind gusts topping 100 mph (161 kph) in other communities including Jayton, which also was under a tornado warning as the line moved southeast Wednesday night, according to the National Weather Service in Lubbock.

Matador Mayor Pat Smith said at least three people had been killed, that others may be injured and that there was "a whole lot of damage," The New York Times reported.

There were widespread power outages across the Rolling Plains, including more than 700 customers without power in the Jayton area, according to South Plains Electric Cooperative.

The worst damage appeared to be in Matador — a town of about 570 people 70 miles (112 kilometers) northeast of Lubbock in Motley County.

Wednesday's tornado outbreak came six days after a tornado left three people dead and more than 100 injured in Perryton in the northern Texas Panhandle.

The National Weather Service in Lubbock reported just after 8 p.m. Wednesday that law enforcement confirmed a tornado located just north of Matador.

Shortly after 9:30 p.m., William Iwasko, a senior forecaster with the National Weather Service in Lubbock, said there had been three confirmed tornadoes in the line of storms, but it appeared the one in Matador was the only that caused significant damage.

Reports from storm chasers and meteorologists on social media showed considerable damage around Matador, with damaged homes, utility lines, trees and infrastructure.

Lubbock Fire Rescue confirmed to the Avalanche-Journal that it was sending a crew to assist with the damage and recovery.

"I gave the order for Heavy Rescue 1 to respond to the town of Matador to assist in freeing trapped residents from collapsed structures," LFR Chief Shaun Fogerson said.

University Medical Center in Lubbock confirmed it was sending its AMBUS mobile medical unit to Matador. A new tornado warning was issued for Dickens and King counties through 10 p.m. as the line of storms continued traveling southeast, according to statement from the weather service on Twitter.

Up, up and away — flying taxis look to France's city of revolution to unleash change on the skies

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

LE BOURGET, France (AP) — Just a dot on the horizon at first, the bug-like and surprisingly quiet electrically-powered craft buzzes over Paris and its traffic snarls, treating its doubtless awestruck passenger to privileged vistas of the Eiffel Tower and the city's signature zinc-grey rooftops before landing him or her with a gentle downward hover. And thus, if all goes to plan, could a new page in aviation history be written.

After years of dreamy and not always credible talk of skies filled with flying, non-polluting electric taxis, the aviation industry is preparing to deliver a future that it says is now just around the corner.

Capitalizing on its moment in the global spotlight, the Paris region is planning for a small fleet of electric flying taxis to operate on multiple routes when it hosts the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games next summer. Unless aviation regulators in China beat Paris to the punch by green-lighting a pilotless taxi for two passengers under development there, the French capital's prospective operator — Volocopter of Germany — could be the first to fly taxis commercially if European regulators give their OK.

Volocopter CEO Dirk Hoke, a former top executive at aerospace giant Airbus, has a VVIP in mind as his hoped-for first Parisian passenger — none other than French President Emmanuel Macron.

"That would be super amazing," Hoke said, speaking this week at the Paris Air Show, where he and other developers of electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft — or eVTOLs for short — competed with industry heavyweights for attention.

"He believes in the innovation of urban air mobility," Hoke said of Macron. "That would be a strong sign for Europe to see the president flying."

But with Macron aboard or not, those pioneering first flights would still be just small steps for the nascent industry that has giant leaps to make before flying taxis are muscling out competitors on the ground.

The limited power of battery technology restricts the range and number of paying passengers they can carry, so eVTOL hops are likely to be short and not cheap at the outset.

And while the vision of simply beating city traffic by zooming over it is enticing, it also is dependent on advances in airspace management. Manufacturers of eVTOLs aim in the coming decade to unfurl fleets in cities and on more niche routes for luxury passengers, including the French Riviera. But they need technological leaps so flying taxis don't crash into each other and all the other things already congesting the skies or expected to take to them in very large numbers — including millions of drones.

Starting first on existing helicopter routes, "we'll continue to scale up using AI, using machine-learning to make sure that our airspace can handle it," said Billy Nolen of Archer Aviation Inc. It aims to start flying between downtown Manhattan and Newark's Liberty Airport in 2025. That's normally a 1-hour train or old-fashioned taxi ride that Archer says its sleek, electric 4-passenger prototype could cover in under 10 minutes.

Nolen was formerly acting head of the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. regulator that during his time at the agency was already working with NASA on technology to safely separate flying taxis. Just as Paris is using its Olympic Games to test flying taxis, Nolen said the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics offer another target for the industry to aim for and show that it can fly passengers in growing numbers safely, cleanly and affordably.

"We'll have hundreds, if not thousands, of eVTOLs by the time you get to 2028," he said in an interview with The Associated Press at the Paris show.

The "very small" hoped-for experiment with Volocopter for the Paris Games is "great stuff. We take our hats off to them," he added. "But by the time we get to 2028 and beyond ... you will see full-scale deploy-

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flood-affected areas. Many of the hardest-hit districts were already among the most impoverished and vulnerable places in Pakistan. What little people had was washed away, forcing them to start their lives over again.

This journey through Pakistan looks at how the unprecedented flooding of 2022 affected everyday life - and future generations.

RESTORING WATER

The high altitudes and sharp peaks of the Hindu Kush Mountains mean that heavy rains barrel down through the northwest province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. That's good because the waters quickly drain to lower lying areas. But it's bad because of the damage they wreak along the way.

Last summer's raging floods were so powerful that some rivers changed course. They wrecked more than 800 drinking water supply systems across nearly half of the province's 34 districts, damaging pipelines, supply mains, storage tanks and wells.

The impact on residents living by stagnant water and forced to rely on contaminated water for drinking was seen around two weeks after the flooding. Health care teams started receiving thousands of patients with diseases like dengue, malaria, acute diarrhea, cholera and skin infections.

Villagers often had to walk several kilometers to find water. With access more difficult, water consumption dropped drastically, from 30 liters (8 gallons) per person per day before the floods to as low as 10 liters (2.6 gallons) after, according to the UK-based charity WaterAid.

The use of unprotected water sources and poor sanitation were the primary causes of morbidity in some areas, it said, especially among infants and children. Damage to health facilities and disruptions to vaccination campaigns compounded the crisis.

Rizwan Khan, 48, said last August was a nightmare for him and his family. He lost his home, belongings and crops. He was moved to a camp in the town of Charsadda, but it didn't offer enough medical services. It wasn't long before he and others were suffering stomach illnesses, skin infections and fevers.

WaterAid said the scale and scope of the 2022 floods would have challenged any government's capacity in every field. But over the past year, residents with the help of local government have succeeded in repairing most of the wells and water supply systems, and the situation has improved in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

But last year's floods won't be the last or the worst disaster the province could face in the future.

The province is "burdened with an alarming and diverse portfolio" of potential weather and water disasters because of its geography, said Taimur Khan, spokesman for the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has eight major rivers running through it, as well as mountain ranges, hills, flat green plains and arid plateaus. That makes it vulnerable to earthquakes, landslides, flash flooding, glacial lake outburst floods and melting glaciers.

Climate change, global warming and shifting monsoon patterns increase the frequency and impact of such disasters.

Authorities are taking some steps to prepare. They have installed an early warning system on seven of the major rivers to monitor water levels, and a monsoon contingency plan is being put in place to minimize loss of life and damage to property. Embankments were strengthened last year ahead of the flooding, helping to avert a bigger disaster, and riverbanks breached by floods have been repaired and reinforced.

LUCKY BREAK FOR AGRICULTURE

It wasn't the flooding that nearly killed 80-year-old Razia Bibi and her family, it was the hunger.

They used to donate wheat to needy people, but the floods washed away the wheat they'd stored for the whole year in their home in Rojhan, Rajanpur district. Then they had to wait for weeks, scrounging for food, before food supplies arrived from the government and aid groups.

"The government did not give us enough rations and no relief team could reach our village because of a dam breaking," she said. A \$175 cash give-out from the government helped ease their ordeal, she said, adding that it was thanks to God that none of her family became sick.

Last year's images of vast stretches of farmland underwater in Punjab province raised alarm over potential massive food shortages. Punjab is Pakistan's biggest agricultural producer and its most populated

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province. Millions of acres of crops nationwide were destroyed by the waters, and a major international aid agency warned that the loss could be felt for years.

In the end, Punjab was spared, largely by luck rather than preparation. Authorities installed pumps that got rid of some of the standing water on farmland, but most of the waters drained on their own, some flowing down into Sindh province, some spreading into deserted, open areas.

Waters receded in time for Punjab farmers to do the October sowing season and the result was a bumper crop. In fact, the crop was boosted because the floods also brought with them good quality soil, a blessing in disguise, and enabled expanded planting in usually barren areas.

Still, the relief came after months of real food scarcity that followed the floods – and that risks being repeated in future disasters.

Across Punjab, stores of grain were wiped out along with at least a half-million acres of crops and orchards. Irrigation channels and roads connected farms to markets were wrecked. At the peak of the crisis, food prices rose sharply, as did those of everyday items like tea and sugar, which doubled. Vegetables were scarce.

The government scrambled to help the agricultural industry, a key driver of national growth and a major employer, through the distribution of seeds and fertilizer.

But infrastructure like roads and bridges remain unrepaired in the Punjab, which contributes more than half of the national GDP.

Ghulam Nabi, 42, lost everything when the floods swept through his town of Fazilpur. At first, he, his wife and five children moved into a school that had been turned into a public shelter for the homeless. But when it became overcrowded, they moved to a tent.

“Me and my pregnant wife were just living on water with no food available to us. It wasn’t even enough for our four children,” he said. “Living anywhere after being displaced is not easy. I pray that no one faces this situation.”

LEFT WITHOUT SCHOOLS

Situated downstream from Pakistan’s other provinces, Sindh suffered a heavy blow from last year’s flooding and has been slow to recover. One impact that residents fear will be long-lasting is the destruction of the province’s schools.

Around half of Sindh’s 40,356 schools were either fully or partially damaged, affecting 2.3 million of its 4.5 million students, according to local education official Abdul Qadeer Ansari. One reason for the scale of the damage was the age of the school buildings, between 25 to 30 years old, he said. Another is that they weren’t climate resistant or built to withstand flooding, despite the province suffering from some of the most extreme weather conditions in Pakistan.

So far, only around 2,000 schools are being rebuilt, with hefty contributions from the Chinese government and the Asian Development Bank. Ansari estimates reconstruction will take at least two years, with the new schools intended to be climate resistant.

In the village of Maskran Brohi, 115 students take classes in a temporary learning center in a tent. The 72-square-meter tent has no electricity, so it has neither lights nor fans. There are also no toilets and no clean water.

The only teacher, Zarina Bibi, worries what the summer will bring, when temperatures can reach 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit), and the heat inside the tent will become unbearable.

UNICEF has supplied some books, but most students must make do with old books – if they have them. Many lost their books in the deluge.

At first after the floods, Bibi held classes under the shade of a tree. She doesn’t see most of the 87 kids she taught before the flooding_families scattered when the floods came_and rain flattened the roof and walls of the single-room primary school she used to teach in. Her only colleague quit last January, months before the monsoon season, in protest at the lack of facilities.

Even before the floods, primary education in Sindh was below par, said Noorul Huda Shah, an activist and writer. Government schools could only accommodate around half of the province’s school-age children, and there was already a high dropout rate among girls after grade 5 as middle schools couldn’t take all

students. Now after the damage, it's even worse.

"The long-term impact of this loss on future generations is a critical concern," Shah said.

STARVED FOR ENERGY

Pakistan's biggest province is also its most energy-starved.

Much of Baluchistan's population relies on solar panels, not because of their green credentials but because they are the only way to power fans, lights and cell phones.

Outside cities like Quetta and Gwadar, there is almost no central electricity. The largely rural population is scattered over the mountainous landscape, crippled by an entrenched feudal system, under-development and neglect by the local and central government.

They faced losing what little they had in last year's flooding. Last year was the wettest in Baluchistan since 1961, and August alone saw a 590% jump in its average rainfall for that month. Even those fortunate enough to have access to central electricity suffered as the floods destroyed 81 grid stations and downed power lines.

Many who lost their homes also lost their solar panels, and local authorities haven't distributed replacements. Flood survivors living in temporary shelters repeatedly cited a lack of electricity or light as a major concern, the U.N.'s migration agency said in a report late last year, months after the rains stopped. It affected people's safety, privacy, and comfort. Some of those interviewed for the report said electricity had never existed in their area.

"Even now, more than 4.5 million people (nationwide) are forced to drink dirty water while the limited supply of electricity and gas in these areas has increased the feeling of deprivation or neglect," said Syed Waqas Jafri, the secretary-general of Pakistani charity Al-Khidmat Foundation.

Some made rescuing their solar panel a priority as they fled their homes in the face of the rising floods, wading with their panel through stagnant water.

Muhammad Ibrahim, a 32-year-old father of five, managed to save his panel from his roof. Still homeless a year later, he uses it in the tent camp where he lives in Sohbat Pur district.

"It is so hot. We use solar panels to run fans to get some cool air," he said. "Otherwise living in these tents is not possible."

He doesn't feel prepared for the next major flood. "We're scared of what will happen. But if it comes, we will run far away."

Munir Ahmed, Riaz Khan, Babar Dogar, Abdul Sattar and Adil Jawad contributed to this report from various locations in Pakistan.

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.

Britain marks the Windrush anniversary with the story of its Caribbean community still being written

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Seventy-five years ago, a ship landed at Tilbury Dock near London, carrying more than 800 passengers from the Caribbean to new lives in Britain.

The arrival of the Empire Windrush on June 22, 1948, became a symbol of the post-war migration that transformed the U.K. and its culture. The term "Windrush generation" has come to stand for hundreds of thousands of people who arrived in the U.K. between the late 1940s and early 1970s, especially those from former British colonies in the Caribbean.

Windrush Day is being marked on Thursday with scores of community and official events, including a reception hosted by King Charles III. Charles commissioned portraits of 10 Windrush passengers for the royal collection as a reflection of "the immeasurable difference that they, their children and their grand-

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children have made to this country.”

There also is a national church service, a Windrush flag flying over Parliament and a set of commemorative stamps from the Royal Mail.

Behind the anniversary celebrations lies a complex story that is still unfolding.

WHO WAS ABOARD THE SHIP?

The Empire Windrush carried people from Jamaica, Trinidad and other Caribbean islands who were invited by the British government to help rebuild the war-shattered nation. Many had fought against the Nazis in World War II; they came to work as nurses, railway workers and in other key jobs.

Many settled in working-class neighborhoods, including the Brixton and Notting Hill areas of London. The new arrivals were welcomed by some but faced widespread discrimination in employment and housing.

In 1958, racially motivated attacks on Black residents in Notting Hill sparked days of rioting. The Notting Hill Carnival — now one of Europe’s biggest street parties — was founded soon after to celebrate Caribbean culture and to bring communities together.

A decade later, Conservative politician Enoch Powell made an infamous speech predicting “rivers of blood” as a result of mass immigration. The speech helped spark a surge of protest and resistance by Britons of color.

HOW DID THE WINDRUSH GENERATION FARE IN BRITAIN?

Members of the Windrush generation and their descendants, from the Caribbean and other parts of the former British Empire, have had a colossal impact on British culture.

People like poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, DJ Don Letts and members of ska bands like The Specials fused Caribbean musical influences and urban youth rebellion in the 1970s and 80s. Their influence helped seed new styles of music including grime, a distinctly London form of rap.

In other art forms, major figures include Turner Prize-winning artist Chris Ofili, “12 Years a Slave” filmmaker Steve McQueen, and writers Andrea Levy, Bernardine Evaristo and Nobel literature laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah.

WHAT’S THE WINDRUSH SCANDAL?

Commonwealth immigrants who came to Britain before 1973 had an automatic right to settle in the U.K. But decades later, thousands fell victim to the Conservative government’s aim of making Britain a “hostile environment” for illegal immigration.

In 2018, British news outlets revealed that people who had lived legally in Britain for decades had been denied housing, jobs or medical treatment because they could not prove their status. Many documents, including passenger cards from the Empire Windrush, had been destroyed by the authorities.

Dozens were detained or deported to countries they had not visited for decades.

After an outcry, the British government apologized to the Windrush generation, set up a commission to investigate what went wrong and established a compensation program.

WHAT DOES WINDRUSH MEAN TODAY?

Windrush today has multiple meanings. Onyekachi Wambu, editor of “Empire Windrush,” an anthology of Black British writing, said it wasn’t until several decades after 1948 that the word Windrush began to mean “something bigger than the people who came on the ship.”

“We began to talk about ‘Windrush’ and it became kind of institutionalized,” he said at a recent panel discussion. “There is now also an element of it that means scandal and betrayal.”

Many people caught up in the Windrush scandal say they are struggling to get compensation from a bureaucratic and inefficient government program. The government has declined to act on several of the recommendations of an independent review.

The current Conservative government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is observing Windrush Day while legislating to criminalize and deport asylum-seekers arriving in Britain in small boats — a situation that stirs uncomfortable parallels for some.

Black Britons continue to have more poverty and worse health than their white compatriots, a gap bleakly exposed by higher death rates in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Britain is wrestling with how to deal with its imperial past, a debate spurred on when Black Lives Matter protesters pulled down a statue of 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston in the English city of Bristol in 2020.

"Britain has come a long way on race in the 75 years since the Windrush arrived, but with much further to go to complete that journey to inclusion," Sunder Katwala of think tank British Future said in a recent report on the anniversary.

Ambitious Saudi plans to ramp up Hajj could face challenges from climate change

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

MECCA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Saudi Arabia has ambitious plans to welcome millions more pilgrims to Islam's holiest sites. But as climate change heats up an already scorching region, the annual Hajj pilgrimage — much of which takes place outdoors in the desert — could prove even more daunting.

The increased number of pilgrims, with the associated surge in international air travel and infrastructure expansion, also raises sustainability concerns, even as the oil giant pursues the goal of getting half its energy from renewable resources by 2030.

Next week, Saudi Arabia hosts the first Hajj pilgrimage without the restrictions imposed during the coronavirus pandemic. Some 2.5 million people took part in the pilgrimage in 2019, and around 2 million are expected this year.

Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's wide-ranging plan to overhaul the kingdom's economy, known as Vision 2030, 30 million pilgrims would take part in the Hajj and Umrah — a smaller, year-round pilgrimage. That would be an increase of more than 10 million from pre-pandemic levels.

It will require a vast expansion of hotels and other infrastructure in Mecca and Medina, ancient cities already largely obliterated by high-rises and shopping malls. The additional pilgrims will require more long-distance flights, more buses and cars, more water and electricity.

The Associated Press reached out to several Saudi officials with detailed questions but received no response. It's unclear what, if any, studies the government has done on the environmental impact of the pilgrimage or whether that figures into its plans. And well-intentioned measures, like a high-speed railway network, aren't enough to remove polluting traffic in and around the holy city.

The trains whip through the arid landscape at top speeds of 300 km/h (186 mph), carrying pilgrims in air-conditioned comfort from Jeddah to Mecca. But they stop several kilometers away from the Grand Mosque, meaning pilgrims must either walk at least an hour or take a bus or car to the holy site. The \$19 one-way price from Jeddah's airport to Mecca may also be out of reach for pilgrims on lower incomes.

The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, and all Muslims who are able to are required to undertake it at least once in their lives. For pilgrims, retracing the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad is a profound religious experience that wipes away sins, deepens one's faith and unifies Muslims the world over.

The Saudi royal family's legitimacy is largely rooted in its custodianship of Islam's holiest sites and its ability to host one of the largest annual religious gatherings on the planet.

Experts have found that the Hajj both contributes to climate change and will be affected by it in the coming decades as one of the hottest places on Earth gets even warmer.

A study of the 2018 Hajj by experts from Victoria University in Melbourne estimated that the five-day pilgrimage produced over 1.8 million tons of greenhouse gases, roughly the amount New York City emits every two weeks. The biggest contributor was aviation, accounting for 87% of emissions.

Abdullah Abonomi, a Saudi researcher and one of the authors of the study, said Saudi authorities have embraced sustainability as part of Vision 2030, which calls for preserving natural resources in order to attract pilgrims, tourists and businesses.

"Everything has changed," he said, pointing to the establishment of national centers to coordinate sustainable policies, the creation of an environmental police force to crack down on violations and the integration of sustainability into university courses on tourism.

ment across major cities throughout the world.”

Yet even on the cusp of what the industry portrays as a revolutionary new era kicking off in the city that spawned the French Revolution of 1789, some aviation analysts aren’t buying into visions of eVTOLs becoming readily affordable, ubiquitous and convenient alternatives to ride-hailing in the not-too-distant future.

And even among eVTOL developers who bullishly talked up their industry’s prospects at the Paris show, some predicted that rivals will run dry of funding before they bring prototypes to market.

Morgan Stanley analysts estimate the industry could be worth \$1 trillion by 2040 and \$9 trillion by 2050 with advances in battery and propulsion technology. Almost all of that will come after 2035, analysts say, because of the difficulty of getting new aircraft certified by U.S. and European regulators.

“The idea of mass urban transit remains a charming fantasy of the 1950s,” said Richard Aboulafia of AeroDynamic Advisory, an aerospace consultancy.

“The real problem is still that mere mortals like you and I don’t get routine or exclusive access to \$4 million vehicles. You and I can take air taxis right now. It’s called a helicopter.”

Still, electric taxis taking to Paris’ skies as Olympians are going faster, higher and stronger could have the power to surprise — pleasantly so, Volocopter hopes.

One of the five planned Olympic routes would land in the heart of the city on a floating platform on the spruced-up River Seine. Developers point out that ride-hailing apps and E-scooters also used to strike many customers as outlandish. And as with those technologies, some are betting that early adopters of flying taxis will prompt others to try them, too.

“It will be a total new experience for the people,” said Hoke, Volocopter’s CEO. “But twenty years later someone looks back at what changed based on that and then they call it a revolution. And I think we are at the edge of the next revolution.”

AP Airline Writer David Koenig contributed from Dallas.

More AP coverage of the Paris Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

After devastating floods in Pakistan, some have recovered but many are struggling a year later

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Last summer’s flooding in Pakistan killed at least 1,700 people, destroyed millions of homes, wiped out swaths of farmland, and caused billions of dollars in economic losses. All in a matter of months. At one point, a third of the country was underwater. Pakistani leaders and many scientists worldwide blame climate change for the unusually early and heavy monsoon rains.

A year on, the country hasn’t fully recovered. The aftermath runs the length of the country; survivors living in makeshift huts where their homes used to be, millions of children out of school, damaged infrastructure waiting to be repaired.

Pakistan’s national disaster authority said most people have returned to their towns or villages, but its flood records stop in November 2022. Almost 8 million people were displaced at the height of the crisis. But there is no information on how many people remain homeless or live in temporary shelters. Aid agencies and charities provide up-to-date pictures of life, saying millions remain deprived of clean drinking water and that child malnutrition rates have increased in flood-affected areas.

And the impact of recent heavy rainfall augurs ill for Pakistan should there be more flooding this year. Torrents have caused rivers to overflow, flash floods, fatalities, infrastructure damage, landslides, livestock loss, ruined crops, and property damage in parts of the country.

UNICEF estimates around 20 million people, including 9 million children, still need humanitarian aid in

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"If you ask four years ago about sustainability ... no one understands what sustainability is," he said. "But today, everything is going to be better. And I know we are late, but better late than never."

In the past, he says, cars and buses packed with pilgrims filled the streets around Mecca, belching exhaust into the air, but expansion of the Grand Mosque has led to bigger courtyards and increased pedestrianisation in most of the routes leading to the holy site.

Still, human bottlenecks have replaced traffic, and garbage swirls in clouds of heat. For travel around Mina and Arafat, two crucial Hajj locations, cars and buses remain the two most widespread forms of transport. The journey by foot, in sweltering temperatures, is arduous but can prove faster than four wheels.

In its Hajj ambitions, Saudi Arabia faces managing huge numbers of pilgrims in a rapidly warming world.

During the rituals, pilgrims often walk for hours outside, scale a desert hill known as the Mountain of Mercy, where the prophet is said to have delivered his last sermon, and cast stones at pillars representing the devil in a desert plain. They pack into the Grand Mosque in Mecca to circumambulate the Kaaba. On top of the exertions, the Hajj population skews to the elderly, who are more vulnerable to heat.

On an evening this week around sunset in Mecca, temperatures hovered around 37 degrees Celsius (98 degrees Fahrenheit). The crowds made it feel hotter, stifling any airflow. In a bustling basement supermarket near the Grand Mosque, pilgrims bought handheld fans that spray water on the face and every kind of umbrella.

A 2019 study by experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that even if the world succeeds in mitigating the worst effects of climate change, the Hajj would be held in temperatures exceeding an "extreme danger threshold" from 2047 to 2052 and from 2079 to 2086.

Islam follows a lunar calendar, so the Hajj falls around 11 days earlier each year. In 2030, the Hajj will occur in April, and over the next several years it will fall in the winter, when temperatures are milder.

In recent years, Saudi authorities have installed large awnings and misters around holy sites to cool pilgrims. As temperatures climb, authorities will likely need to step up such measures or introduce new strategies like limiting pilgrim numbers in higher-heat years, the heat stress study concluded.

"People who want to do Hajj should get the opportunity to do it," said Elfatih Eltahir, one of the study's authors. "Global warming is going to make it a little bit more difficult — for some years, for some individuals."

Muslim activists have launched grassroots initiatives aimed at a "green Hajj," encouraging pilgrims to only make the journey once, to avoid single-use plastics and to offset carbon emissions by planting trees.

The Hajj "can be green and sustainable if there are smart policies and technology to lower the ecological footprint," said Odeh Jayyousi, a professor at the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain who researches sustainability and innovation.

The use of biodegradable plastics, reusable tents, and renewable energy would cut down on greenhouse gases, he said. Artificial intelligence could be brought to bear on logistics, streamlining travel and ensuring that planes and busses are full and do not spend too much time idling.

"The young generation are mindful of the trade-offs and the need to change consumption patterns," Jayyousi said. "Hajj can offer a platform for displaying the best green practices to global audiences."

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.

Wizards trading Porzingis to Celtics in 3-team deal with Smart headed to Grizzlies, AP sources say

By NOAH TRISTER and KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writers

The Washington Wizards have agreed to trade center Kristaps Porzingis to the Boston Celtics as part of a three-team trade that also includes Marcus Smart heading to the Memphis Grizzlies, two people with knowledge of the deal said Thursday morning.

The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the agreements hadn't been announced. The trade comes with Porzingis accepting his player option for next season.

The deal also includes the Grizzlies acquiring Smart, the 2022 Defensive Player of the Year, from Boston in exchange for first-round draft picks in 2023 and 2024. ESPN reported the Wizards are also receiving guard Tyus Jones from Memphis, and forwards Mike Muscala and Danilo Gallinari and a second-round pick this year from Boston.

The Celtics add the 7-foot-3 Porzingis after they lost in seven games to Miami in the Eastern Conference finals. Porzingis is coming off a solid season in Washington in which he averaged a career-high 23.2 points per game along with 8.4 rebounds. Most importantly, he stayed healthy enough to play in 66 games, his most since 2016-17 when he was with the New York Knicks.

Porzingis' departure completes a swift breakup of Washington's core after the Wizards agreed to trade Bradley Beal to Phoenix, and Kyle Kuzma declined his option. Washington has missed the playoffs the past two seasons and is now clearly in a rebuilding mode under new team president Michael Winger.

Smart has played in Boston all nine of his NBA seasons, was its longest-tenured player and one of the strongest presences in the locker room. He also ranks fourth on the franchise's career lists for 3-pointers (911) and assists (2,700). His departure leaves the Celtics with Derrick White and reigning Sixth Man of the Year Malcolm Brogdon as the top two candidates to replace Smart.

Smart brings much needed experience to a young Memphis team that needs help at point guard following the announcement of Ja Morant's 25-game suspension for next season. Smart also brings postseason experience to the Grizzlies, who haven't been able to win one playoff series despite finishing second in the West the past two seasons.

The Celtics reached the NBA Finals in 2022, but were unable to make it back this season despite their talented tandem of Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown.

Boston becomes Porzingis' fourth NBA team. Drafted in 2015 by New York with the fourth overall pick, he played three seasons with the Knicks before being traded to Dallas before the deadline in 2019 — when he was recovering from knee surgery. The Wizards acquired him from Dallas 16 months ago.

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Hondurans see little hope for nation's prisons as details of cold-blooded massacre emerge

By MARLON GONZÁLEZ Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Authorities in Honduras began to hand over to relatives the hacked, burned corpses of 46 women killed in the worst riot at a women's prison in recent memory.

Some of the bodies were so badly burned they need genetic testing or dental studies to identify, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras' national police investigation agency.

The picture that began to emerge of Tuesday's violence at the women's prison in Tamara, Honduras was one of a carefully planned massacre of supposed rival gang members by inmates belonging to the notorious Barrio 18 street gang.

The carnage has led to calls for change to the country's prison system and even talk of whether Honduras should emulate the drastic zero-tolerance, no-privileges prisons set up in neighboring El Salvador by President Nayib Bukele.

While El Salvador's crackdown on gangs has given rise to rights violations, it has also proved immensely popular in a country long terrorized by street gangs.

"One of the grave dangers is the Bukele-ization of security problem in this country, with everything that would imply," said Honduran human rights expert Joaquin Mejia.

Nobody debates that Honduras' prisons are in a shameful state. In Tuesday's riot, incarcerated members of the notorious Barrio 18 gang slaughtered 46 other women inmates by spraying them with gunfire, hack-

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ing them with machetes and then locking survivors in their cells and dousing them with flammable liquid.

Chillingly, the gang members were able to arm themselves with pistols and machetes, brush past guards and attack. They even carried locks to shut their victims inside, apparently to burn them to death.

Jessica Sánchez, an activist with the Civil Society Group, a human rights organization, said "we believe that this massacre was carried out on orders from a criminal network, and I am sure it was known beforehand, and nothing was done."

Miguel Martínez, a security ministry spokesman, said the attack was taped by security cameras up to the moment the gang members destroyed them in what he called a planned attack.

"You can see the moment in which the women overcome the guards, leaving them helpless, and take their keys," Martínez said.

President Xiomara Castro said the riot at the prison in Tamara northwest of Tegucigalpa was "planned by maras (street gangs) with the knowledge and acquiescence of security authorities."

Castro fired Security Minister Ramón Sabillón, and replaced him with Gustavo Sánchez, who had been serving as head of the National Police.

She ordered that all of the country's 21 prisons be placed for one year under the control of the military police, who will be asked to train 2,000 new guards.

But she didn't announce any immediate plan to improve the conditions in prison, which are characterized by overcrowding, crumbling facilities and poorly trained guards. Security is so lax that inmates often run their own cellblocks, selling prohibited goods and extorting money from other inmates.

Many doubted the answer lies in adopting the kind of brutally regimented prisons that El Salvador has built.

"Building more prisons in Honduras isn't necessary. Why? Why build more prisons that turn into slaughterhouses for people, when the government has no control over them?" said Roberto Cruz, 54, who runs a small retail outlet in the capital.

"What is needed are professional people to run the prisons," Cruz said, acknowledging that "it is a big, complex problem that needs an urgent solution."

Most don't trust the government to get it right.

"We demand an international investigation that can really look at the issue of prisons and women" in prison, said Sánchez.

For now, the cold facts of Tuesday's massacre are emerging: 18 pistols, an assault rifle, two machine pistols and two grenades were found in the prison after the riot. All were smuggled into the facility.

Then there was the shocking fact that — as in many Latin American jails — some of the inmates' children were living with their mothers in the prison at the time of the attack.

"Some of the women were living with their children in detention. These children are now left behind and highly vulnerable. I am deeply concerned about their well-being and safety," said Garry Conille, the regional director for UNICEF, the U.N. children's fund.

It was not known whether any children witnessed the attack.

The riot's death toll surpassed that of a fire at a female detention center in Guatemala in 2017, when girls at a shelter for troubled youths set fire to mattresses to protest rapes and other mistreatment. The smoke and fire killed 41 girls.

The worst prison disaster in a century also occurred in Honduras, in 2012, at the Comayagua men's penitentiary, where 361 male inmates died in a fire possibly caused by a match, cigarette or some other open flame.

Federal judge strikes down Florida's ban on Medicaid funding for transgender treatment

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge on Wednesday struck down Florida rules championed by Gov. Ron DeSantis restricting Medicaid coverage for gender dysphoria treatments for potentially thousands of transgender people.

"Gender identity is real" and the state has admitted it, U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle wrote in a 54-page ruling.

He said a Florida health code rule and a new state law violated federal laws on Medicaid, equal protection and the Affordable Care Act's prohibition of sex discrimination.

They are "invalid to the extent they categorically ban Medicaid payment for puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for the treatment of gender dysphoria," Hinkle wrote.

The judge said Florida had chosen to block payment for some treatments "for political reasons" using a biased and unscientific process and that "pushing individuals away from their transgender identity is not a legitimate state interest."

An email seeking comment from the DeSantis' office wasn't immediately returned.

Hinkle's harsh language echoed that in his ruling two weeks ago over a law that bans transgender minors from receiving puberty blockers. Hinkle, who was appointed by Democratic President Bill Clinton, issued a preliminary injunction so that three children could continue receiving treatment.

The DeSantis administration and the Republican-controlled Legislature had banned gender-affirming treatments for children and a law that DeSantis signed in May made it difficult — even impossible — for many transgender adults to get treatment.

The latest ruling involved a lawsuit filed last year on behalf of two adults and two minors, but advocacy groups estimate that some 9,000 transgender people in Florida use Medicaid to fund their treatments.

Hinkle also addressed the issue of whether gender-affirming treatments were medically necessary and noted that transgender people have higher rates of anxiety, depression and suicide than the general population.

Transgender medical care for minors is increasingly under attack — Florida is among 19 states that have enacted laws restricting or banning treatment. But it has been available in the United States for more than a decade and is endorsed by major medical associations.

Gender issues in general have increasingly become culture war flashpoints in the United States, ranging from brawls over the celebration of Pride Month to attempts to bar transgender youths from taking part in women's sports.

GOP's Boebert wanted to impeach Biden, but House Speaker McCarthy had other plans

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — A surprise effort by hard-right House Republicans to impeach President Joe Biden has been sidelined for now, but the ability of GOP Rep. Lauren Boebert to force the issue to a House vote demonstrates the ever-escalating challenge Speaker Kevin McCarthy faces in controlling his Republican majority.

The impeachment resolution, which charges Biden with "high crimes and misdemeanors" over his handling of the U.S. border with Mexico, angered GOP colleagues who were caught off guard by the unscripted move. Even though it was not expected to pass Thursday, the vote would have been politically tough for GOP lawmakers and a potentially embarrassing spectacle for McCarthy, splitting his party.

Instead, McCarthy negotiated a deal with Boebert, the Colorado Republican, to send the Biden impeachment resolution for review to the Judiciary and Homeland Security committees, fending off a vote for some time.

"I think it's best for everybody," McCarthy told reporters late Wednesday.

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But in a sign of the right flank's determination to push ahead, Boebert said that if the committees slow-roll action, she'll bring her resolution back to the floor "every day for the rest of my time here in Congress," forcing a House vote on Biden's impeachment.

The tense, 24-hour episode underscores the hold the House conservative flank exerts over McCarthy, forcing the speaker to accommodate hard-right priorities if he wants to stay in power. And it shows the power of a single lawmaker to use the rules of the House to force a snap vote on such weighty measures as a presidential impeachment.

It's the same method another hard-right conservative, Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla., used Wednesday to force a separate vote to censure Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff over his investigations into Donald Trump's ties to Russia.

"There's going to be no end to this," Schiff told The Associated Press and others at the Capitol.

"Kevin McCarthy has no control over his conference," Schiff said. "The race to the extreme is now running the House of Representatives and of course it's doing terrible damage to the institution."

Conservatives are lining up other such votes — to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, to censure Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson, who was the chairman of the committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol — as they rush ahead with their agenda.

It's all part of the right flank's broader effort to steer control of the House away from the traditional centers of power, including the speaker's office.

"This is what we were talking about," said Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, a leader in the conservative efforts to block McCarthy's rise to speaker as they brokered greater say in the House process.

Behind closed doors Wednesday, McCarthy encouraged lawmakers to consider the traditional process for bringing such consequential legislation forward. He noted that House committees are probing Biden and his family, and McCarthy signaled that Boebert's sudden move to file the impeachment measure was not part of that process.

The morning meeting was the most "somber" yet, said one Republican lawmaker, who was granted anonymity to discuss the closed-door session.

"It's a tough vote," said Republican Rep. Barry Loudermilk of Georgia, who said he was sure he would be hearing from voters back home who want to impeach Biden.

"I can't vote for the impeachment at this point because there's been no investigation," he said. "Everybody has to be given due process."

Rank-and-file Republicans were angry at being forced into the position of having to vote on a resolution to impeach Biden even though they had not gone through the traditional process of an impeachment inquiry. They resented a single lawmaker jumping the queue of priorities.

In one fiery exchange overheard on the House floor, hard-right Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene laid into Boebert for taking the Biden impeachment on her own. Greene has her own articles of impeachment against the president.

Greene confirmed the exchange later and said of Boebert, "She has a great skill and talent for making most people here not like her."

Boebert declined to comment about the conversation, only saying it's "not middle school."

"I wish the anger that's been directed towards Ms. Boebert was directed towards the president and his policies," said Rep. Bob Good, R-Va., a member of the Freedom Caucus.

Hoping to quell the uprising, McCarthy's team worked furiously behind the scenes to engineer the possible solution. McCarthy met privately with Boebert. Then he met with Republicans on the House Rules Committee, which called a hasty session to set a procedural action in motion.

The full House is expected to vote Thursday on the agreement to send Boebert's Biden impeachment resolution to the Homeland Security and Judiciary committees.

Gaetz noted that when Democrats had control of the House they went through failed Trump impeachment efforts by renegade lawmakers before the majority backed the effort and the former president ultimately was impeached.

"That did help the Democrats build momentum, so maybe this is our version of that," said Gaetz.

Trump was impeached twice — on corruption and obstruction charges over withholding military aid to Ukraine while seeking political dirt on Biden, and later on charges of inciting the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol trying to overturn Biden's election. Both times, Trump was acquitted by the Senate.

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri and Stephen Groves contributed to this report.

Is it chicken? Here's how the first bite of 'cell-cultivated' meat tastes

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

When I told friends and family I was reporting on the first chicken meat grown from animal cells, their first comment was "Eww." Their second comment was: "How does it taste?"

The short answer (you've probably heard this sentence before in other contexts): Tastes like chicken.

The longer answer, which folds in the "Eww" response, is more nuanced. Yes, it's strange to think of eating a totally new kind of meat — chicken that doesn't come from a chicken, meat that will be sold as "cell-cultivated" chicken after the U.S. Agriculture Department on Wednesday gave the green light to two California firms, Upside Foods and Good Meat.

But it's also interesting (and exciting!) to taste test the first offerings of a new era in meat production, which aims to eliminate harm to billions of animals slaughtered for food — and to dramatically reduce the environmental effects of grazing, growing feed for those animals and dealing with their animal waste.

FACING UP TO THE 'MEAT PARADOX'

I'm a lifelong meat eater. I'm also a victim of the "meat paradox," a term scientists use to describe the psychological conflict that occurs in people who like to eat meat but don't like to contemplate the animals that died providing it.

As someone who has reported on food-borne illness outbreaks and slaughterhouse safety, I'm keenly aware that the chicken on my dinner plate probably suffered to get there. And that fact makes me uneasy if I dwell on it too much.

So I was open to trying a different kind of meat — and also curious to see if it would taste like the real thing.

I've tried plant-based options like the Beyond Meat sausage and the Impossible Burger and liked them, even though I didn't think they were perfect substitutes. To be honest, the Beyond Meat sausage tasted good, but a little mealy. And the Impossible Burger was dry, although I may have cooked it too long. In both cases, I enjoyed the taste of the products but was still aware that I wasn't actually eating pork or beef.

What about the artificiality of it all? It didn't bother me that this new cultivated meat is made from cells that grow to epic proportions in big steel vats, only to be shaped and formed — "extruded" is the somewhat unfortunate verb that came to mind — into familiar cutlets, filets and nuggets that would look right at home on the dinner table.

But as with all food, in the end it would come down to taste. And in this case, to the larger question behind it: Is this new material in fact chicken, or is it an impostor?

TIME FOR THE ALL-IMPORTANT MOUTH TEST

In January, I traveled to the Upside Foods manufacturing plant in Emeryville, California. There, chef Jess Weaver sauteed a cultivated chicken breast in a white wine butter sauce with tomatoes, capers and green onions.

The aroma was enticing, just like any filet cooked in butter would be. And the taste was light and delicate with a tender texture, just like any chicken breast I'd make at home — if, that is, I were a chef trained at the Culinary Institute of America.

Last week, I visited the Alameda, California, plant where Good Meat is poised to begin production of its chicken products. Chef Zach Tyndall was ready with a smoked chicken salad with mayonnaise, golden raisins and walnuts. He followed it with a chicken "thigh" dish — darker meat served on a bed of potato puree with a mushroom-vegetable demi-glace, golden beets and tiny purple cauliflower florets.

The taste was richer than a chicken breast, more like the dark meat of a thigh. And the texture was both tender and chewy, like a well-cooked chicken thigh should be.

That, says Tyndall, is the whole point.

"It needs to be as lifelike as possible for it to catch on," he said.

While "lifelike" is an interesting word, from my side of the fork I think this will catch on. There are still huge hurdles — how to scale up manufacturing and pare back costs, experts say, and the lingering question of whether chicken without the bird is, in fact, chicken — but if you're basing it on authentic taste, I'll leave you with this:

Please pass the "chicken."

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A year after fall of Roe, 25 million women live in states with abortion bans or tighter restrictions

By GEOFF MULVIHILL, KIMBERLEE KRUESI and CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press

One year ago Saturday, the U.S. Supreme Court rescinded a five-decade-old right to abortion, prompting a seismic shift in debates about politics, values, freedom and fairness.

Twenty-five million women of childbearing age now live in states where the law makes abortions harder to get than they were before the ruling.

Decisions about the law are largely in the hands of state lawmakers and courts. Most Republican-led states have restricted abortion. Fourteen ban abortion in most cases at any point in pregnancy. Twenty Democratic-leaning states have protected access to abortion.

Here's a look at what's changed since the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization ruling.

LAWS HAVE BEEN ENACTED IN 25 STATES TO BAN OR RESTRICT ABORTION ACCESS

Last summer, as women and medical providers began to navigate a landscape without legal protection for abortion, Nancy Davis' doctors advised her to terminate her pregnancy. The fetus she was carrying had no skull and was expected to die soon after birth.

But doctors in Louisiana, where Davis lived, would not provide the abortion due to a new law banning it throughout pregnancy in most cases.

Davis became one of the women whose stories, told on news sites and network news, in newspapers and blogs, illustrated the shifting ground doctors and their patients tried to navigate.

At the same time, abortion opponents who worked for decades to abolish a practice they see as murder cheered the Supreme Court's Dobbs ruling. Anti-abortion groups said the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion nationwide was undemocratic because it prevented states from enacting bans.

"The Dobbs decision was a democratic victory for life that generations fought for," said E.V. Osment, a spokeswoman for Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, a major anti-abortion group.

While some states scrambled to pass new restrictions, others already had enacted laws that were designed to take effect if the court overturned Roe.

More than 25 million women ages 15 to 44, or about 2 in 5 nationally, now live in states where there are more restrictions on abortion access than there were before Dobbs. More than 5.5 million more live in states where restrictions have been adopted but are on hold pending court challenges. Bans on abortion no later than 12 weeks into pregnancy are on the books in nearly every state in the Southeast — though some are not in effect.

Many laws that make exceptions for medical emergencies do not clearly define those situations. After Davis went public with her challenges last year, Louisiana lawmakers debated whether doctors in the state were right to deny her an abortion under a law that has exceptions for "medically futile" pregnancies and when there's a substantial risk of death or impairment for the woman. But the Legislature made no

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changes to clarify the law.

Davis is among a number of women who ended up traveling out of state to have a legal surgical abortion. She got help from a fund that raises money for women to travel for such purposes.

With her fiancé by her side, Davis flew to New York in September, when she was about four months pregnant. The whole experience was heartbreaking, she said.

"A mother's love starts as soon as she knows she's pregnant. That attachment starts instantly," she said. "It was days I couldn't sleep. It was days I couldn't eat."

ABORTION ACCESS HAS BEEN PROTECTED IN 20 STATES

As some states restricted abortion, others locked in access. Clinics moved across state lines, added staff and lengthened hours to accommodate women leaving their home states to end their pregnancies.

In 25 states, abortion remains generally legal up to at least 24 weeks of pregnancy. In 20 of those states, protections have been solidified through constitutional amendments or laws. Officials in many of those states, including California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Mexico and New York, have explicitly invited women from places where the procedure is banned.

Women have flocked to states with legal access.

CHOICES Center for Reproductive Health had for decades treated patients in Memphis, Tennessee, some seeking abortions. After Tennessee's abortion ban kicked in last year, the clinic opened a second outpost that's about a three-hour drive away, in Carbondale, Illinois, a state that has positioned itself as an oasis for abortion access.

"I would say 80% or more of our patients continue to come from the communities that CHOICES has always taken care of," said CEO Jennifer Pepper, who said the Illinois clinic sees on average 350 patients a month. "They're coming from Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and even Texas, but now they're having to travel much farther."

Kansas is one of the closest places to obtain abortions for people in parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. A new clinic opened in Kansas City, Kansas, four days before Dobbs. Within weeks, the clinic was overwhelmed. Even after lengthening hours, hiring staff and flying in physicians, it's been able to take only about 10% to 15% of people who have sought an abortion there.

Dr. Iman Alsaden, the Planned Parenthood medical director based in Kansas, said most patients in the Kansas clinics are now coming from elsewhere.

"You're in a really, really dire public health situation when you are looking at someone who had to jump through endless amounts of hoops just to make this work and saying they're so lucky they're able to do this," Alsaden said.

In anticipation of out-of-state patients, states such as Hawaii have passed laws to allow more health care workers, such as nurse practitioners, to provide abortions. In New Jersey, officials late last year announced a grant to train more medical professionals to perform the procedures.

THE NUMBER OF ABORTIONS IS NOT CLEAR

Because of reporting lags and gaps in data, the impact on the number of abortions provided across the U.S. is not completely clear. But the authors of #WeCount, a survey conducted for the Society of Family Planning, a nonprofit organization that promotes research and supports abortion access, say the monthly average went down after Dobbs.

The group's data finds that the number of abortions provided through clinics, hospitals and other providers in states where bans were put in place plummeted to nearly zero. The tracking effort collects monthly data, providing a snapshot of abortion trends after Roe v. Wade was overturned. It does not reflect self-managed abortions, relies on estimates in places where providers do not supply data and does not fully account for seasonal differences in pregnancies or abortions.

Still, it's the fullest national picture available for now. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data covering 2022 is not likely to be released until late 2024. Even then, the picture won't be completely clear: Not every state collects abortion data, and what is collected does not include self-managed abortions provided outside clinics, hospitals and doctor's offices.

In Louisiana, where abortion was legal until 22 weeks' gestational age before Dobbs, the state reported

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more than 7,400 abortions in 2020, the last year for which full data was available. #WeCount found there were an average of 785 a month in April and May 2022 — and fewer than 10 every month since the ban there has been in place.

There are similar trends elsewhere. In Idaho, 1,700 abortions were reported in 2020, and #WeCount found fewer than 10 a month recently. In Texas, state data shows only a handful of abortions monthly from August through January. Before restrictions there took effect in 2021, there were often more than 5,000 per month.

The #WeCount survey of abortion providers has found that the overall average number of abortions at clinics and hospitals was lower in the months after the Dobbs ruling, from July 2022 through March but that the number of abortions has risen dramatically in states that border those with no access, such as Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico and North Carolina. In Illinois, for instance, the survey tallied about 5,600 abortions in April 2022 and more than 7,900 in March 2023.

PILLS ARE AN EVEN MORE DOMINANT ABORTION METHOD

Even before the court ruled, most abortions in the U.S. were done through a two-pill regimen, not a surgical procedure. Now groups are using medication to provide access — however illegal -- in states where abortion is banned.

For example, Aid Access works with doctors overseas and in states with shield laws, which are intended to bar abortion-related investigations by other states. Those doctors prescribe the medications and Aid Access ships them. It saw requests in a sample of 30 states more than double from before a draft of the Dobbs ruling was leaked last year until it became official and bans started taking effect.

The group's Netherlands-based founder and director, Rebecca Gomperts, believes most U.S. women who want abortions are still managing to get them.

"The fact that the abortion pill is available," she said, "that makes the tragic of it much less profound."

Still, she said, those who struggle the most for access are poor and Black women.

The move from surgical to medication abortion has frustrated abortion opponents, who have taken their case to court. Some abortion opponents are calling for the abortion drug mifepristone to lose its 23-year-old approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Supreme Court has preserved access for now.

SOME STATES ARE INCREASING SUPPORT FOR MOMS AND CHILDREN

One ripple from overturning Roe in conservative states has been a new willingness to adopt measures such as improving foster care and benefits for postpartum women.

Mississippi, where the Dobbs case originated, is a key example. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves signed off on several proposals that he deemed as the "next phase" of the "pro-life agenda." This included expanding a tax credit from \$3.5 million a year to \$10 million a year for people or businesses who donate to anti-abortion centers, which provide diapers, clothing and other assistance for pregnant women and have been accused of providing misleading information to steer women away from abortion. He also approved creating an income tax credit of up to \$10,000 for adopting a child who lives in Mississippi and \$5,000 for a adopting a child from outside the state.

He also agreed to extend Medicaid health insurance coverage for lower-income women until a year after they give birth, rather than just two months.

The state's two Catholic bishops sent a letter to lawmakers and Reeves in February calling for the Medicaid expansion.

"This they felt was consistent with the intent of Dobbs," Jackson Bishop Joseph Kopacz said in an interview, "saying that it can't stop at birth."

For Shannon Bagley, the executive director of the Center for Pregnancy Choices, an anti-abortion center just outside Jackson that will benefit from the expanded tax credit, said it's offering more parenting classes and focusing on helping eligible women sign up for Medicaid, job search assistance and offering donated car seats, cribs and other baby items.

"This is a new era and we're going to have to be more and we're going to have to do more," she said.

LAWSUITS ABOUND

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In conservative Utah, a ban on abortions throughout pregnancy took effect almost immediately after the Dobbs ruling. But the next day, the state's Planned Parenthood affiliate challenged the law, saying it violated the state constitution.

A judge put the ban on hold while the case works its way through the courts.

It's one of more than 50 lawsuits filed on abortion policy since the Dobbs ruling. Lawsuits have been the foundation of the abortion debate for decades, but now the burden is on abortion-rights advocates to prove that restrictions are too harsh, rather than on anti-abortion groups to prove they are justified.

Many challenges rely on arguments about the rights to personal autonomy or religious freedom. A Texas lawsuit alleges women were denied abortions even when their lives were at risk.

Bans or restrictions are on hold in at least six states while judges sort out their long-term fate. The only states where a top court has permanently rejected restrictions since the Dobbs ruling are Iowa and South Carolina. In the latter, lawmakers later adopted a new ban, but enforcement is on hold due to a court challenge.

In Utah, lawmakers this year passed a first-in-the-nation law banning abortion clinics. But a judge put enforcement of that on hold, too, while the court case plays out.

CRIMINAL COURTS HAVE NOT BEEN BUSY WITH ABORTION CASES

There's little evidence that doctors, women, or those who help them get abortions are being prosecuted.

In Mississippi, the state attorney general's office says no charges have been brought under a new law that calls for up to 10 years in prison for anyone who provides or attempts to provide an abortion in cases where it wasn't to save the woman's life or to end a pregnancy caused by rape or incest.

Progressive prosecutors across the country, including in states with bans, have said that they would not pursue abortion-related cases, or that they would make them a low priority. One in Florida was suspended from his job for it by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis.

James Bopp Jr., general counsel to the National Right to Life committee, finds it troubling that prosecutors would not pursue abortion cases. He said it's a change from the era before Roe v. Wade, when most states restricted abortion.

"They were going to enforce the laws; there was no question they were going to do that," Bopp said. "That was their obligation."

Legislative efforts to classify abortion as homicide or murder in South Carolina, Kentucky and Louisiana also have sputtered.

"The question about punishing the pregnant person is going to become the existential question in the anti-abortion movement," said Greer Donley, an abortion law expert and associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

But Bopp said prominent anti-abortion groups like his oppose such measures. He said women who pursue abortions are "victims of the abortion culture, victims of men, particularly wealthy men."

ABORTION REMAINS A DOMINANT POLITICAL ISSUE

The political table has been reset, with Republicans entering a new election season weighing how to balance the interests of a base that wants the strictest bans possible against the desires of the broader electorate.

Polling has consistently found that most Americans think abortions should be available in at least some circumstances, including early in a pregnancy, but that most also favor restrictions later in a pregnancy. Polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research has found that the majority opposed banning abortion in the first six weeks of pregnancy, but most also favor barring abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Only six states have no limit, and abortion is rare after 21 weeks.

Last year, voters sided with abortion-rights advocates in all six states with abortion-related ballot measures, including in generally conservative Kansas and Kentucky. The issue was also a major factor in why Democrats performed better than expected in 2022 elections.

There are pushes for ballot measures to protect abortion access in several states, including Ohio.

In Indiana, South Carolina and West Virginia — all states that have adopted bans since Dobbs — the

legislative battles were not between Democrats and Republican over whether to impose restrictions but among Republicans on just how far to go.

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America believes the issue could be a boost for conservatives with the right framing. The group announced this year that it's working with Kellyanne Conway, a former Trump adviser, to "get pro-life candidates on offense in the 2024 election cycle."

PROGRESSIVES WORRY ABOUT OTHER RIGHTS

Among advocates on the left, a lot of alarm bells rang over Justice Clarence Thomas' concurring opinion in Dobbs. "We should reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents," including cases that found married people have the right to obtain contraceptives, people can engage in private, consensual sex acts and the right to same-sex marriage, Thomas wrote.

So far, measures on those areas have not gained traction. State legislation on contraceptives has aimed only to guarantee or protect access to it, and President Joe Biden last year signed a law to safeguard same-sex marriage.

Instead, Republican lawmakers in many states focused in 2023 on restricting gender-affirming care, especially for transgender minors.

Mulvihill reported from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Kruesi from Nashville and Savage from Chicago. Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi, contributed.

Texas Sen. Angela Paxton barred from voting in husband's impeachment trial

By JIM VERTUNO and PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas state Sen. Angela Paxton, the wife of Attorney General Ken Paxton, is barred from voting in the impeachment trial that could lead to her husband's permanent removal from office, the Republican-controlled Senate decided Wednesday night.

The rule settles a question that has loomed over the Texas Capitol since Ken Paxton last month became just the third sitting official to be impeached in Texas' nearly 200-year history.

Senators scheduled the trial to begin Sept. 5.

Angela Paxton, a Republican, had not said whether she would recuse from herself helping determine whether her husband of more than 30 years will be convicted over accusations that include abuse of power and accepting bribes.

That left the issue up to her fellow 30 senators, many of whom are conservative allies of Ken Paxton, who for years has maintained support among Texas Republicans despite alleged wrongdoing and scandal that has hung over him for three terms.

"The citizens of Texas can count on the Senate of Texas to have a fair and just trial," said Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the Senate's presiding officer.

Patrick had previously said in May that all 31 senators would vote in the impeachment proceedings, and while he did not mention Angela Paxton by name at the time, the possibility was widely criticized by legal scholars.

Under the rules, Angela Paxton is required to attend the proceedings but prohibited from participating in any way, including closed session or deliberations. The rules state that a spouse is "considered to have a conflict" under the Texas Constitution.

A vote to convict Ken Paxton in the Senate would require a two-thirds threshold in the chamber, which has 19 Republicans and 12 Democrats. If all Democrats vote to convict, nine Republicans would have to join them in order to remove Paxton from office.

Angela Paxton has not publicly commented on the accusations against her husband, who is also under FBI investigation and has attacked the impeachment as an attempt to disenfranchise Texas voters who elected him to a third term last year.

Paxton, who in 2020 sought to baselessly overturn President Joe Biden's victory, is suspended from of-

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fice pending the outcome of the Senate trial.

He has kept a low profile since being impeached in May by the state House and has broadly denied the accusations laid out in 20 impeachment articles. Many of the charges surround Austin real estate developer Nate Paul, a Paxton donor who was indicted in a Texas federal court this month on charges of making false statements to banks.

In Texas, the leader of the senate is the lieutenant governor, making the job one of the most powerful in any U.S. statehouse. Patrick has declined to comment on the impeachment charges, and under the rules that were overwhelmingly approved Wednesday night, senators are prohibited from publicly speaking about the case.

Other rules state that all witnesses must testify in public, and under oath, and that deliberations among senators will take place in private.

Senators spent two days behind closed doors this week discussing the rules before emerging Wednesday night with more than two dozen pages of them. The rules do not set a definitive length for the trial but allow each side 24 total hours of evidence and testimony.

The case for convicting Paxton will be led by two prominent Texas attorneys, Dick DeGuerin and Rusty Hardin, who House Republicans hired for the trial.

Patrick, who will serve as the trial's presiding officer, carries into the proceedings financial entanglements with the accused. Ken Paxton has yet to repay a \$125,000 campaign loan that Patrick gave him in 2018, when Paxton's reelection appeared vulnerable after being indicted three years earlier on securities fraud charges. Paxton has pleaded not guilty and the case has yet go to trial.

Patrick said the outstanding debt wouldn't influence his judgement.

"I have loaned money and given money to a lot of different candidates," he has said.

The impeachment charges also allude to a senator, Republican Bryan Hughes. Paxton is accused of using him to request a legal opinion that would protect Paul from losing properties in foreclosure. Another impeachment concerns Paxton's extramarital affair with a woman who was employed by Paul and has also worked for Republican Sen. Donna Campbell.

The rules do not limit their participation in the trial.

Hollywood writers at rally say they'll win as strike reaches 50 days

By KRISTA FAURIA and ANDREW DALTON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fifty days into a strike with no end in sight, about 1,000 Hollywood writers and their supporters marched and rallied in Los Angeles for a new contract with studios that includes payment guarantees and job security.

Speakers at the Writers Guild of America's WGA Strong March and Rally for a Fair Contract on Wednesday emphasized the broad support for their cause shown by other Hollywood unions — including actors in their own contract negotiations — and labor at large.

"We're all in it together, we're all fighting the same fight, for a sustainable job in the face of corporate greed," Adam Conover, a writer and a member of the guild's board and its negotiating committee, told a crowd at the end of the march at the La Brea Tar Pits. "We are going to win because they need us. Writers are the ones who stare at a blank page. We are the ones who invent the characters, tell the stories and write the jokes that their audiences love. They'd have nothing without us."

Talks with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the group representing studios in negotiations, have not resumed since breaking off hours before the writers' contract expired on May 1. The strike began a day later, with more and more productions shutting down as it has gone on.

A similar deadline now looms for actors, whose union, SAG-AFTRA, is negotiating with the AMPTP on a contract that expires June 30. Members voted overwhelmingly to authorize guild leaders to call a strike if no deal is reached.

Streaming and its ripple effects are at the center of the dispute. The guild says that even as series budgets have increased, writers' share of that money has consistently shrunk.

The AMPTP says writers' demands would require they be kept on staff and paid when there is no work for them, and that its contract proposals have been generous.

"We are here for the sake of the profession we love," writer Liz Alper said at Wednesday's rally. "The industry we work in, our audiences, our fellow sister unions in Hollywood, and all the workers across America who have been hurt and disenfranchised by Wall Street and big tech."

US approves chicken made from cultivated cells, the nation's first 'lab-grown' meat

By JONEL ALECCIA and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

For the first time, U.S. regulators on Wednesday approved the sale of chicken made from animal cells, allowing two California companies to offer "lab-grown" meat to the nation's restaurant tables and eventually, supermarket shelves.

The Agriculture Department gave the green light to Upside Foods and Good Meat, firms that had been racing to be the first in the U.S. to sell meat that doesn't come from slaughtered animals — what's now being referred to as "cell-cultivated" or "cultured" meat as it emerges from the laboratory and arrives on dinner plates.

The move launches a new era of meat production aimed at eliminating harm to animals and drastically reducing the environmental impacts of grazing, growing feed for animals and animal waste.

"Instead of all of that land and all of that water that's used to feed all of these animals that are slaughtered, we can do it in a different way," said Josh Tetrick, co-founder and chief executive of Eat Just, which operates Good Meat.

The companies received approvals for federal inspections required to sell meat and poultry in the U.S. The action came months after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration deemed that products from both companies are safe to eat. A manufacturing company called Joynn Biologics, which works with Good Meat, was also cleared to make the products.

Cultivated meat is grown in steel tanks, using cells that come from a living animal, a fertilized egg or a special bank of stored cells. In Upside's case, it comes out in large sheets that are then formed into shapes like chicken cutlets and sausages. Good Meat, which already sells cultivated meat in Singapore, the first country to allow it, turns masses of chicken cells into cutlets, nuggets, shredded meat and satays.

But don't look for this novel meat in U.S. grocery stores anytime soon. Cultivated chicken is much more expensive than meat from whole, farmed birds and cannot yet be produced on the scale of traditional meat, said Ricardo San Martin, director of the Alt:Meat Lab at University of California Berkeley.

The companies plan to serve the new food first in exclusive restaurants: Upside has partnered with a San Francisco restaurant called Bar Crenn, while Good Meat dishes will be served at a Washington, D.C., restaurant run by chef and owner Jose Andrés.

Company officials are quick to note the products are meat, not substitutes like the Impossible Burger or offerings from Beyond Meat, which are made from plant proteins and other ingredients.

Globally, more than 150 companies are focusing on meat from cells, not only chicken but pork, lamb, fish and beef, which scientists say has the biggest impact on the environment.

Upside, based in Berkeley, operates a 70,000-square-foot building in nearby Emeryville. On a recent Tuesday, visitors entered a gleaming commercial kitchen where chef Jess Weaver was sauteeing a cultivated chicken filet in a white wine butter sauce with tomatoes, capers and green onions.

The finished chicken breast product was slightly paler than the grocery store version. Otherwise it looked, cooked, smelled and tasted like any other pan-fried poultry.

"The most common response we get is, 'Oh, it tastes like chicken,'" said Amy Chen, Upside's chief operating officer.

Good Meat, based in Alameda, operates a 100,000-square-foot plant, where chef Zach Tyndall dished up a smoked chicken salad on a sunny June afternoon. He followed it with a chicken "thigh" served on a bed of potato puree with a mushroom-vegetable demi-glace and tiny purple cauliflower florets. The Good

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Meat chicken product will come pre-cooked, requiring only heating to use in a range of dishes.

Chen acknowledged that many consumers are skeptical, even squeamish, about the thought of eating chicken grown from cells.

"We call it the 'ick factor,'" she said.

The sentiment was echoed in a recent poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Half of U.S. adults said that they are unlikely to try meat grown using cells from animals. When asked to choose from a list of reasons for their reluctance, most who said they'd be unlikely to try it said "it just sounds weird." About half said they don't think it would be safe.

But once people understand how the meat is made, they're more accepting, Chen said. And once they taste it, they're usually sold.

"It is the meat that you've always known and loved," she said.

Cultivated meat begins with cells. Upside experts take cells from live animals, choosing those most likely to taste good and to reproduce quickly and consistently, forming high-quality meat, Chen said. Good Meat products are created from a master cell bank formed from a commercially available chicken cell line.

Once the cell lines are selected, they're combined with a broth-like mixture that includes the amino acids, fatty acids, sugars, salts, vitamins and other elements cells need to grow. Inside the tanks, called cultivators, the cells grow, proliferating quickly. At Upside, muscle and connective tissue cells grow together, forming large sheets. After about three weeks, the sheets of poultry cells are removed from the tanks and formed into cutlets, sausages or other foods. Good Meat cells grow into large masses, which are shaped into a range of meat products.

Both firms emphasized that initial production will be limited. The Emeryville facility can produce up to 50,000 pounds of cultivated meat products a year, though the goal is to expand to 400,000 pounds per year, Upside officials said. Good Meat officials wouldn't estimate a production goal.

By comparison, the U.S. produces about 50 billion pounds of chicken per year.

It could take a few years before consumers see the products in more restaurants and seven to 10 years before they hit the wider market, said Sebastian Bohn, who specializes in cell-based foods at CRB, a Missouri firm that designs and builds facilities for pharmaceutical, biotech and food companies.

Cost will be another sticking point. Neither Upside nor Good Meat officials would reveal the price of a single chicken cutlet, saying only that it's been reduced by orders of magnitude since the firms began offering demonstrations. Eventually, the price is expected to mirror high-end organic chicken, which sells for up to \$20 per pound.

San Martin said he's concerned that cultivated meat may wind up being an alternative to traditional meat for rich people, but will do little for the environment if it remains a niche product.

"If some high-end or affluent people want to eat this instead of a chicken, it's good," he said. "Will that mean you will feed chicken to poor people? I honestly don't see it."

Tetrick said he shares critics' concerns about the challenges of producing an affordable, novel meat product for the world. But he emphasized that traditional meat production is so damaging to the planet it requires an alternative — preferably one that doesn't require giving up meat all together.

"I miss meat," said Tetrick, who grew up in Alabama eating chicken wings and barbecue. "There should be a different way that people can enjoy chicken and beef and pork with their families."

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Modi flexes India's cultural reach on Yoga Day with backbends and corpse poses on the UN lawn

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Praising yoga as “a way of life,” Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed poses ranging from cobra to corpse alongside a multinational crowd Wednesday at the U.N. headquarters as he kicked off the public portion of his U.S. visit.

With a checkerboard of made-in-India yoga mats covering the U.N.'s spacious north lawn, Modi stopped and bowed at a statue of the assassinated Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi before saying in brief remarks that yoga was an all-ages, portable practice accessible to all faiths and cultures.

“It is a very old tradition, but like all ancient Indian traditions, it is also living and dynamic,” Modi said. “Yoga is truly universal.”

While yoga is a means to physical fitness, mental calm and emotional contentment, “it is not just about doing exercise on a mat. Yoga is a way of life,” said the year-old leader of the world's most populous nation.

For Modi, who arrived Tuesday in New York on a trip that will offer plenty of time to discuss global tensions, highlighting an ancient pursuit of inner tranquility was a savvy and symbolic choice. He has made yoga a personal practice and a diplomatic tool.

Taking his spot on a mat amid the throng of a thousand or more, the 72-year-old Modi participated over the next 35 minutes in breathing exercises, meditation, backbends and other poses — from palm tree to diamond, hare to half-camel, crocodile to stretched-up frog.

The event honored the International Day of Yoga, which Modi persuaded the U.N. to designate in 2014 as an annual observance. This year's version set a Guinness World Record, announced on-scene, for most nationalities — 135 — at a yoga lesson. It drew actor Richard Gere, singer-actor Mary Millben, New York Mayor Eric Adams, U.N. General Assembly President Csaba Kőrösi and Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, among other dignitaries. Secretary-General António Guterres, who is at a conference in Paris, sent in a video greeting.

The shouts of demonstrators across the street could be heard during the meditative utterances of “Om.” About 200 Modi supporters and 50 critics rallied, kept apart by barriers and closely watched by New York police.

The pro-Modi group cried out greetings to him and held signs with such messages as “America Welcomes Narendra Modi” and “United We Stand,” accompanied by a photo of the U.S. flag. Opponents yelled, “Modi, go back!” and waved large yellow flags referring to Khalistan, the name of the homeland that Sikh separatists seek to create in India.

First practiced by Hindu sages, yoga has become one of India's most popular cultural exports. Modi has energetically promoted it as a feel-good way of stretching the country's influence abroad.

Modi, a Hindu nationalist, presents himself as an ascetic who adheres to his religion's strictures on vegetarianism and yoga. He has posted social media videos over the years of himself practicing yoga poses and provided live visuals of him meditating in a Himalayan mountain cave after national elections in 2019.

Modi last visited the U.N. during the 2021 General Assembly, where he said that “all kinds of questions have been raised” about the world body's effectiveness on matters including climate change, the coronavirus pandemic and terrorism.

He also made a point of staking out his country's place on the global stage, noting that “every sixth person in the world is Indian.” Since then, India has surpassed China to claim the world's largest population, at 1.425 billion, and it is the world's biggest democracy.

India has long sought a permanent seat on the Security Council, the U.N.'s most powerful group. India has been elected to a two-year seat several times, most recently for 2021-22.

The prime minister flew to Washington later Wednesday afternoon and joined first lady Jill Biden for a visit to the National Science Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia. President Joe Biden also hosted Modi at the White House for dinner, including pasta and ice cream, and a musical tribute to the regions of India performed by youth dancers from the Washington, D.C.-area Studio Dhoom.

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"With this official visit, we are bringing together the world's oldest and world's largest democracies. But our relationship isn't just about governance," Jill Biden said at the National Science Foundation. "We're celebrating the families and friendships that span the globe."

At the White House, the Bidens presented Modi, a hobby photographer, with a handmade, antique American book galley from the early 20th century as the official gift to mark the visit. The president also presented Modi with a vintage American camera, accompanied by an archival facsimile print of George Eastman's patent of the first Kodak camera, and a hardcover book of American wildlife photography. The first lady gave Modi a signed, first edition copy of "Collected Poems of Robert Frost."

Modi spoke about the emphasis India has placed on education, integrating learning and training. "Our goal is to make this decade a 'tech decade' or 'tech-ade,'" the prime minister said, speaking in Hindi.

Modi will hold formal talks with Biden in the Oval Office on Thursday, take question from reporters, address a joint meeting of Congress and be honored with a White House state dinner. A State Department luncheon will be hosted by Vice President Kamala Harris, whose mother was born in India, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The U.S. has been looking to India as a key partner on matters that include checking China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. India wants to bolster military and trade connections with the United States.

Human rights advocates want Biden to press Modi on human rights issues, both international and within India. Modi has faced criticism over legislation that fast-tracks citizenship for some migrants but excludes Muslims; a rise in violence against Muslims and other religious minorities by Hindu nationalists; and the recent conviction of India's top opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi, for mocking Modi's surname. (Gandhi recently visited the U.S. himself, speaking to journalists, university students and an Indian diaspora group.)

A group of more than 70 lawmakers wrote Biden this week calling on him to raise concerns about the erosion of religious, press and political freedoms when he meets with Modi. Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Ilhan Omar on Minnesota have said they will boycott Modi's address to Congress.

The Indian government defends its record and insists that the nation's democratic principles remain rock-solid.

Associated Press journalists Edith M. Lederer and Ted Shaffrey at the United Nations, Krutika Pathi in New Delhi and Darlene Superville, Chris Megerian, Fatima Hussein and Aamer Madhani in Washington contributed to this report.

In rowdy scene, House censures Rep. Adam Schiff over Trump-Russia investigations

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted Wednesday to censure California Rep. Adam Schiff for comments he made several years ago about investigations into Donald Trump's ties to Russia, rebuking the Democrat and frequent critic of the former president along party lines.

Schiff becomes the 25th House lawmaker to be censured. He was defiant ahead of the vote, saying he will wear the formal disapproval as a "badge of honor" and charging his GOP colleagues of doing the former president's bidding.

"I will not yield," Schiff, who is running for the Senate in his home state, said during debate over the measure. "Not one inch."

When it was time for Schiff to come to the front of the chamber to be formally censured, immediately after the vote, the normally solemn ceremony turned into more of a celebratory atmosphere. Dozens of Democrats crowded to the front, clapping and cheering for Schiff and patting him on the back. They chanted "No!," "Shame!" and "Adam! Adam!"

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., read the resolution out loud, as is tradition after a censure. But he only read part of the document before leaving the chamber as Democrats heckled and interrupted him.

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"Censure all of us," one Democrat yelled.

Schiff, the former Democratic chairman of the House Intelligence Committee and the lead prosecutor in Trump's first impeachment trial, has long been a top Republican political target. Soon after taking back the majority this year, Republicans blocked him from sitting on the intelligence panel.

More than 20 Republicans voted with Democrats last week to block the censure resolution, but they changed their votes this week after the measure's sponsor, Republican Rep. Anna Paulina Luna of Florida, removed a provision that could have fined Schiff \$16 million if the House Ethics Committee determined he lied. Several of the Republicans who voted to block the resolution last week said they opposed fining a member of Congress in that manner.

The final vote on Wednesday was 213-209 along party lines, with a handful of members voting present.

The revised resolution says Schiff held positions of power during Trump's presidency and "abused this trust by saying there was evidence of collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia." Schiff was one of the most outspoken critics of the former president as both the Justice Department and the Republican-led House launched investigations into Trump's ties to Russia in 2017. Both investigations concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 presidential election but neither found evidence of a criminal conspiracy.

"Representative Schiff purposely deceived his Committee, Congress, and the American people," the resolution said.

The House has only censured two other lawmakers in the last 20 years. Republican Rep. Paul Gosar of Arizona was censured in 2021 for tweeting an animated video that depicted him striking Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., with a sword. Former Democratic Rep. Charlie Rangel of New York was censured in 2010 for serious financial and campaign misconduct.

The censure itself carries no practical effect, except to provide a historic footnote that marks a lawmaker's career. But the GOP resolution would also launch an ethics investigation into Schiff's conduct.

While Schiff did not initiate the 2017 congressional investigation into Trump's Russia ties — then-House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, a Republican who later became one of Trump's most ardent defenders, started it — Republicans arguing in favor of his censure Wednesday blamed him for what they said was the fallout of that probe, and of the separate investigation started that same year by Trump's own Justice Department.

Luna said that Schiff's comments that there was evidence against Trump "ripped apart American families across the country" and that he was "permanently destroying family relationships." Several blamed him for the more than \$30 million spent by then-special counsel Robert Mueller, who led the Justice Department probe.

Schiff said the censure resolution "would accuse me of omnipotence, the leader of some a vast Deep State conspiracy, and of course, it is nonsense."

Democrats aggressively defended their colleague. Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, who led Trump's second impeachment, called the effort an "embarrassing revenge tour on behalf of Donald Trump."

Mueller, who led the two-year Justice Department investigation, determined that Russia intervened on the campaign's behalf and that Trump's campaign welcomed the help. But Mueller's team did not find that the campaign conspired to sway the election, and the Justice Department did not recommend any criminal charges.

The House intelligence committee probe launched by Nunes similarly found that Russia intervened in the election but that there was no evidence of a criminal conspiracy. Schiff was the top Democrat on the panel at the time.

Schiff said last week that the censure resolution was "red meat" that McCarthy was throwing to his conference amid squabbles over government spending. Republicans are trying to show their fealty to Trump, Schiff said.

He said he warned the country during impeachment proceedings three years ago that Trump "would go on to do worse. And of course he did worse in the form of a violent attack on the Capitol."

After Democrats won the House majority in 2018, the House impeached Trump for abuse of power after he threatened to withhold military aid to Ukraine and urged the country's president to investigate then-

candidate Joe Biden. Schiff was the lead House prosecutor making the case for conviction to the Senate, arguing repeatedly that "right matters." The Republican-led chamber ultimately acquitted him.

Trump was impeached a second time a year later, after he had left office, for his role in the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol. The Senate again acquitted Trump.

In the censure resolution against Schiff, Luna also cited a report released in May from special counsel John Durham that found that the FBI rushed into its investigation of Trump's campaign and relied too much on raw and unconfirmed intelligence.

Durham — who testified before the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday — said investigators repeatedly relied on "confirmation bias," ignoring or rationalizing away evidence that undercut their premise of a Trump-Russia conspiracy as they pushed the probe forward. But he did not allege that political bias or partisanship were guiding factors for the FBI's actions.

In the hours before the vote, Schiff's campaign sent out a fundraising email that said Luna had introduced "yet ANOTHER resolution to censure me."

"The vote and debate will happen imminently," the email read, asking recipients to donate to help him fight back. "Once more, I have to be on the House floor to listen as MAGA Republicans push false and defamatory lies about me."

Democrats argued that the House censure resolution is an effort to distract from Trump's recent indictment on federal charges of hoarding classified documents — several of which dealt with sensitive national security matters — and attempting to conceal them. House Republicans, most of whom are loyal to Trump, say the indictment is more evidence that the government is conspiring against the former president.

"This is not a serious resolution," said Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa., but political theater to "distract from Donald Trump's history of transgressions and now indictments."

PGA Tour will appear before a Senate panel investigating its deal with Saudi backers of LIV

WASHINGTON (AP) — The PGA Tour said Wednesday that it would appear next month before a Senate subcommittee whose leader asked executives from the tour, Saudi golf interests and LIV Golf to testify as Congress investigates the business deal that upended the sport.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., announced that the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations would hold a hearing on July 11 to examine the agreement involving the PGA Tour, Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund and the European tour to pool commercial business and rights in a new company.

"Our goal is to uncover the facts about what went into the PGA Tour's deal with the Saudi Public Investment Fund and what the Saudi takeover means for the future of this cherished American institution and our national interest," Blumenthal said in a statement. "Americans deserve to know what the structure and governance of this new entity will be. Major actors in the deal are best positioned to provide this information, and they owe Congress — and the American people — answers in a public setting."

Blumenthal invited PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan, Public Investment Fund Governor Yasir Al-Rumayyan and LIV CEO Greg Norman to testify.

Monahan had sent a letter to various lawmakers June 9, three days after the PGA Tour's stunning announcement of an agreement that would end all lawsuits between the PGA Tour and the Public Investment Fund. In the letter, he said the tour was "left on our own" to fend off Saudi Arabia's bid to take over the sport with LIV Golf because of the United States' geopolitical alliance with the kingdom.

In the last year, LIV Golf lured away some of golf's biggest stars with signing bonuses of \$100 million or more, prompting the PGA Tour to respond by pouring millions into its own tournament purses.

"We look forward to appearing before the Senate subcommittee to answer their questions about the framework agreement we believe keeps the PGA Tour as the leader of professional golf's future and benefits our players, our fans and our sport," the tour said in a statement. "Already, the first phase of this framework has resulted in the end of costly litigation with LIV Golf."

"As we enter the next phase, we look forward to continuing the productive conversations we had last

night with our players, listening to their feedback and working toward negotiating a final agreement that is in their best interest and ensures that the tour leads any new venture.”

The tour said in the June 6 announcement that Al-Rumayyan would be chairman of the new company and Monahan would be the CEO. Two PGA Tour board members, Ed Herlihy and Jimmy Dunne, would join them on the executive committee.

Monahan has since stepped away from the tour for a “medical situation.” Two of his top executives are in charge of the tour’s day-to-day operations. Al-Rumayyan has said Norman was not apprised of the deal until shortly before it was announced.

The Justice Department’s antitrust division has been reviewing the golf landscape since last summer, and now it also is starting to look at the tour’s agreement with the Saudis and whether it violates federal antitrust laws. The inquiry is in its early stages.

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

Biden calling China’s leader a ‘dictator’ opens new rift just after Blinken’s tensions-easing trip

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, JOSH BOAK and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden’s remarks calling Chinese leader Xi Jinping a “dictator” and China a country with “real economic difficulties” drew fast condemnation from China on Wednesday, cracking open a new rift just after the two countries agreed to tentative steps to stabilize the relationship.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning condemned Biden’s unusually pointed comments as “extremely absurd and irresponsible.”

The clash of words comes after Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing on Monday that sought to break the ice in a relationship that has hit a historical low. While both sides saw those talks as productive, they did not result in any significant breakthroughs beyond an agreement to return to a broad agenda for cooperation and competition.

China’s quick response to Biden, a president known for seemingly off-script remarks that venture beyond his administration’s policies, raises questions whether his remarks would undo the limited progress that had been made in Blinken’s carefully engineered trip or whether the two sides would move on.

Biden’s characterization of China comes as the campaign for next year’s presidential election is already taking off, with Republicans accusing him of being weak on China.

Biden also was preparing to welcome Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington on Wednesday evening for a lavish state visit where a central theme will be a shared wariness of China.

Biden, at a fundraiser in California on Tuesday night, referred back to January and February’s two-week overflight of what the U.S. says was a Chinese spy balloon. The balloon’s surprise appearance over U.S. skies roiled relations and transfixed the American public.

Speaking to wealthy donors at the event for his 2024 reelection campaign, Biden depicted Xi as out-of-touch and embarrassed by the incident, which ended with the Air Force shooting down the balloon just off the East Coast.

“The reason why Xi Jinping got very upset in terms of when I shot that balloon down with two box cars full of spy equipment is he didn’t know it was there,” Biden told the crowd.

“No, I’m serious,” he added. “That was the great embarrassment for dictators, when they didn’t know what happened.”

Biden also played down trade competition from China, which is the world’s second-biggest economy after the United States but struggling to emerge from COVID-era financial troubles.

“By the way, I promise you, don’t worry about China. Worry about China but don’t worry about China,” Biden said. “I really mean it. China has real economic difficulties.”

Biden’s remarks came hours after his secretary of state, in an interview with MSNBC, had called for the two countries to put the balloon incident behind them, saying it was a chapter that “should be closed.”

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In Beijing on Wednesday, Mao told reporters that Biden's remarks "go totally against facts and seriously violate diplomatic protocol, and severely infringe on China's political dignity."

"It is a blatant political provocation," Mao said.

Mao also reiterated China's version of the balloon episode, saying the balloon was for meteorological research and had been accidentally blown off course.

Administration officials signaled Wednesday that Biden had no intention of walking back his comments.

Biden and Blinken have made clear "we will continue to responsibly manage this relationship, maintain open lines of communication with the PRC," Vedant Patel, a State Department spokesman, told reporters, using an abbreviation for the People's Republic of China.

"But that, of course, does not mean we will not be blunt and forthright about our differences," including differences on the global competition between democracies and autocracies, Patel said.

U.S.-China tensions have mounted for years as rivalry builds over trade and global influence. Repeated flare-ups have helped escalate the tensions, including over the balloon, U.S. tariffs, sanctions on China, and self-ruled Taiwan.

The U.S. is pressing China to embrace direct communications between Biden, Xi and other senior U.S. and Chinese military and civilian leaders, as a channel to defuse tensions and keep incidents from escalating into open hostilities.

Despite the administration's diplomatic efforts to soothe relations, analysts point to the Republican political pressure, and note Biden regularly seems to go off-script to criticize Xi.

Bonnie Glaser, Asia director of the George Marshall Fund of the United States, pointed Wednesday to Biden's state of the union address in February, soon after the balloon flight, as Republican lawmakers in the audience heckled him over China and other issues. Waving a finger in the air, Biden cried out, "Name me a world leader who'd change places with Xi Jinping! Name me one! Name me one!"

For Biden, "he's under a lot of criticism from the right. He doesn't want to be seen as soft on China. He views Xi Jinping as a dictator," Glaser said.

"And he's not very good ... at differentiating what should be said in public and what should be said in private," Glaser said. "And the relationship pays a price for it. There's no doubt about it."

Xi was likely upset by the claim that he hadn't been fully informed about the balloon incident, said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies and a longtime observer of Chinese politics.

"My sense is that Xi may not want to overreact and put the relationship back on ice again," Tsang said in an email.

The initial Republican response to Biden's remarks was approving. "It's an appropriate description of their system of government," Sen. Marco Rubio, the top Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said.

While Xi heads a country formally named the People's Republic of China, he faces no limits on his terms as head of state, commander of the military and leader of the ruling Communist Party, which brooks no challenges to its authority.

In California, Biden had told donors that Xi "wants to have a relationship again."

Blinken "went over there ... did a good job, and it's going to take time," he said.

Associated Press writer Seung Min Kim contributed to this report.

Search area for lost Titanic-bound submersible deepens, doubles in size as oxygen dwindles

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

Rescuers on Wednesday rushed more ships and vessels to the area where a submersible disappeared on its way to the Titanic wreckage site, hoping underwater sounds they detected for a second straight day might help narrow their search in an increasingly urgent mission.

Crews were scouring an area twice the size of Connecticut in waters 2 1/2 miles deep, said Captain Jamie Frederick of the First Coast Guard District, who noted that authorities are still holding out hope of

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saving the five passengers onboard the Titan.

"This is a search and rescue mission, 100%," he said. "... We'll continue to put every available asset that we have in an effort to find the Titan and the crew members."

But even those who expressed optimism warned that many obstacles remain: from pinpointing the vessel's location, to reaching it with rescue equipment, to bringing it to the surface — assuming it's still intact. And all that has to happen before the passengers' oxygen supply runs out, which some have estimated might happen as early as Thursday morning.

Meanwhile, newly uncovered allegations suggest there had been significant warnings made about vessel safety during the submersible's development.

The area of the North Atlantic where the Titan went missing on Sunday is prone to fog and stormy conditions, making it an extremely challenging environment to conduct a search-and-rescue mission, said Donald Murphy, an oceanographer who served as chief scientist of the Coast Guard's International Ice Patrol. The lost submersible could be as deep as about 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) below the surface near the watery tomb of the Titanic.

Key to the search are camera-equipped remote-operated robots, which are designed to scan the seafloor in real-time at depths other vessels can't reach. Two were operating in the area Wednesday and more were on the way, officials said.

Frederick said while the sounds that have been detected offered a chance to narrow the search, their exact location and source hasn't yet been determined.

"We don't know what they are, to be frank," he said.

Retired Navy Capt. Carl Hartsfield, now the director of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Systems Laboratory, said the sounds have been described as "banging noises," but he warned that search crews "have to put the whole picture together in context and they have to eliminate potential manmade sources other than the Titan."

The report was encouraging to some experts because submarine crews unable to communicate with the surface are taught to bang on their submersible's hull to be detected by sonar.

A U.S. Navy official said during a media briefing Wednesday that a special naval salvage system that could be used to pull the Titan to the surface has arrived in St. John's, Canada, but it is expected to take another 24 hours to prepare it for use. The Navy said in a statement that the equipment is capable of hoisting "large, bulky and heavy undersea objects such as aircraft or small vessels."

The Titan weighs 20,000 pounds (9,071 kilograms). The Navy's Flyaway Deep Ocean Salvage System is designed to lift up to 60,000 pounds (27,216 kilograms).

The submersible had seven backup systems to return to the surface, including sandbags and lead pipes that drop off and an inflatable balloon.

Lost aboard the vessel are pilot Stockton Rush, the CEO of the company leading the expedition. His passengers are a British adventurer, two members of a Pakistani business family and a Titanic expert.

Authorities reported the 22-foot carbon-fiber vessel overdue Sunday night, setting off the search in waters about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's.

The submersible had a four-day oxygen supply when it put to sea around 6 a.m. Sunday, according to David Concannon, an adviser to OceanGate Expeditions, which oversaw the mission.

Frank Owen, a submarine search and rescue expert, said the estimated 96-hour oxygen supply is a useful "target" for searchers, but is only based on a "nominal amount of consumption." Owen said the diver on board the Titan would likely be advising passengers to "do anything to reduce your metabolic levels so that you can actually extend this."

Titan's passengers were likely enduring extremely difficult conditions, including temperatures just above freezing, said Jeff Karson, a professor emeritus of earth and environmental sciences at Syracuse University.

"I am sure it is horrible down there," Karson said. "It is like being in a snow cave and hypothermia is a real danger."

At least 46 people successfully traveled on OceanGate's submersible to the Titanic wreck site in 2021 and

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2022, according to letters the company filed with a U.S. District Court in Norfolk, Virginia, that oversees matters involving the Titanic shipwreck.

But documents show that OceanGate had been warned there might be catastrophic safety problems posed by the way the experimental vessel was developed.

David Lochridge, OceanGate's director of marine operations, said in a 2018 lawsuit that the company's testing and certification was insufficient and would "subject passengers to potential extreme danger in an experimental submersible."

The company insisted that Lochridge was "not an engineer and was not hired or asked to perform engineering services on the Titan." The firm also says the vessel under development was a prototype, not the now-missing Titan.

The Marine Technology Society, which describes itself as "a professional group of ocean engineers, technologists, policy-makers, and educators," also expressed concern that year in a letter to Rush, OceanGate's chief executive. The society said it was critical that the company submit its prototype to tests overseen by an expert third party before launching in order to safeguard passengers. The New York Times first reported on those documents.

Chris Brown, a British adventurer who paid a deposit to go on the Titan voyage but later withdrew because of what he called safety concerns, has criticized the use of a simple commercially available video game controller to steer the Titan. But OceanGate has said that many of the vessel's parts are off-the-shelf because they have proved to be dependable.

"It's meant for a 16-year-old to throw it around," and is "super durable," Rush told the CBC in an interview last year while he demonstrated by throwing the controller around the Titan's tiny cabin. He said a couple of spares are kept on board "just in case."

The search for the missing vessel has drawn international attention. In Dubai, where the missing British adventurer Hamish Harding lives, Crown Prince Hamadan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum wrote: "Dubai and its people pray for their safety and hopeful return home."

Others aboard include Pakistani nationals Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman, whose eponymous firm invests across the country. In Pakistan's port city of Karachi, employees at his firms said they prayed for the two's safe return, as did government officials. French explorer and Titanic expert Paul-Henry Nargeolet also was on the vessel.

Retired Navy Vice Admiral Robert Murrett, who is now deputy director of the Institute for Security Policy and Law at Syracuse University, said the disappearance of the submersible underscores the dangers associated with operating in deep water and the recreational exploration of the sea and space, "two environments where in recent past we've seen people operate in hazardous, potentially lethal environments," Murrett said.

"I think some people believe that because modern technology is so good, that you can do things like this and not have accidents, but that's just not the case," he said.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia; and Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

Ousted incumbents, key matchups set: Takeaways from Virginia's primary election

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A historic number of state lawmakers were ousted in this week's Virginia primary, which featured about four dozen legislative races that set the parties' slate of candidates for what will be a hard-fought general election.

Every seat in both the House of Delegates and state Senate will be on the ballot in November in an election cycle that will help determine how much of his legislative agenda Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin

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can achieve in his final two years in office.

Virginia is currently politically divided, and its unusual off-year legislative elections typically draw outsized national attention as a possible barometer of voter sentiment heading into the next year's midterm or presidential cycle.

Here is a look at some of the key takeaways from Tuesday's results and what's ahead:

HISTORIC TURNOVER

It was clear well before Tuesday night that the General Assembly was headed for massive turnover, driven by a bipartisan redistricting process that upended the state's political maps, contributing to a flurry of retirements and diminishing incumbents' typical name-recognition advantage. The defeat of a handful of officeholders Tuesday will only add to that turnover.

In the 40-member Senate, for example, at least 15 members will be new.

According to an analysis by the nonpartisan Virginia Public Access Project, the number of state senators ousted Tuesday — five — equaled the number of all Senators who had lost a primary election since 1999.

REPUBLICANS MAKE MORE CENTRIST PICKS

Across the state, voters in Republican races — including a handful of battleground districts — nominated candidates with a center-right or pragmatic approach over outsiders, firebrands and or far-right hardliners.

Del. Tara Durant defeated restaurateur Matt Strickland, who invoked the slogan "crush the establishment" in his race for the nomination in a competitive, red-leaning Fredericksburg-area Senate seat. Del. Emily Brewer defeated former NASCAR driver Hermie Sadler, who criticized her as excessively moderate, for the nomination in another competitive Senate seat.

And several of the candidates who had most loudly embraced former President Donald Trump's false claims of widespread fraud in the 2020 election were ousted, including Sen. Amanda Chase, who called herself "Trump in heels." She did not concede and said Wednesday she was "seeking legal counsel" to challenge the results. Another, Del. Dave LaRock, was considered a top contender in an open, eight-way Shenandoah Valley-based Senate seat, but he and the rest of the field were bested by farmer Timmy French, who centered agricultural and business issues and support for education and law enforcement in his campaign.

A similar dynamic played out in nominations settled earlier through party-run processes.

Tucker Martin, a former longtime Republican strategist, said the outcomes showed voters were prioritizing "electability over entertainment value." He expressed the widely held view that the GOP has an uphill climb to retake the Senate in the general election but said the party came out of the night in the "best possible posture."

DEMOCRATIC VOTERS OUST SEVERAL MODERATES

Democrats faced more primaries this cycle and ended up with more turnover, including the ouster of several of the Senate's more moderate members.

Incumbents Joe Morrissey, George Barker, Lionell Spruill and Chap Petersen were all defeated, and a race involving a fifth — Jeremy McPike — was too close to call. Petersen's loss was considered the biggest upset — he outspent challenger Saddam Salim by a nearly 6-to-1 margin.

If the primary winners in those races go on to prevail in the general election, where they will be heavily favored, observers say that will nudge the Democratic Senate caucus leftward. But none of the losses came in swing districts, where the candidates backed by caucus leadership prevailed in two key battleground races.

"While we're going to miss some of our members who we've served alongside for years, we're in a strong position to win the races necessary to protect and expand our majority in the Senate," Sen. Scott Surovell said in a call with reporters.

Republicans sought to cast the outcome as a sign of a party moving hard to the fringe.

"Gone are the reasonable Democrats who would put Virginia first. They have been replaced with new nominees who would find like-minded comrades in the most liberal legislatures in the country," Youngkin's political action committee said in a memo Wednesday.

But there were notable exceptions to the trend: In northern Virginia, Del. Suhas Subramanyam handily

defeated former Del. Ibraheem Samirah, who criticized him for leading a caucus that included Republicans and aimed to increase bipartisanship. And in a Charlottesville-based seat, longtime incumbent Sen. Creigh Deeds, a moderate who has shifted leftward in recent years on gun issues, defeated progressive challenger Sally Hudson.

Lawmakers also noted some of the likely new members will add to the diversity of the General Assembly, which has grown in recent election cycles.

ABORTION RIGHTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Abortion rights advocates say Lashrecse Aird's defeat of Morrissey, a Democrat who previously sponsored a bill that would have restricted abortion access, is another electoral example of how the issue is motivating voters since the fall of *Roe v. Wade*.

Aird centered Morrissey's position on the issue — rather than his long history of personal controversy — in her campaign and resoundingly beat him.

Morrissey, who supports some access to abortion earlier in a pregnancy, had been seen as a possible swing vote on Youngkin's proposed 15-week abortion ban. His defeat and the clear path Aird now has to a victory in the heavily Democratic central Virginia 13th District mean a tougher climb for Youngkin's plan.

"This is a victory for SD-13 residents, for Virginians, and for health care access in our entire southeast region," Jamie Lockhart, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia, said in a statement.

A QUICK PIVOT TO THE GENERAL ELECTION

Leaders in both parties quickly shifted their focus to the general election battle and previewed their messaging, each side portraying the other as extremist.

Democratic House Leader Don Scott said his party would push back against Republicans "attacking voting rights, banning books, attacking children in classrooms" and a governor who wants to enact corporate tax cuts.

House Speaker Todd Gilbert said Democrats "refuse to hold violent criminals accountable, want higher taxes, and parents uninvolved in their children's education."

Gang slaughtered 46 women at Honduran prison with machetes, guns and flammable liquid, official says

By MARLON GONZÁLEZ Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Gang members in a women's prison in Honduras slaughtered 46 other women inmates by spraying them with gunfire, hacking them with machetes and then locking survivors in their cells and dousing them with flammable liquid, an official said Wednesday.

The carnage in Tuesday's riot was the worst atrocity at a women's prison in recent memory, something President Xiomara Castro called "monstrous."

Relatives said inmates at the facility had been threatened for weeks by members of the notorious Barrio 18 gang.

Chillingly, the gang members were able to arm themselves with prohibited weapons, brush past guards and attack; they even carried locks to shut their victims inside, apparently to burn them to death. The intensity of the fire left the walls of the cells blackened and beds reduced to twisted heaps of metal.

"A group of armed people went to the cellblock of a rival gang, locked the doors, opened fire on them," said Juan López Rochez, the chief of operations for the country's National Police.

Miguel Martínez, a security ministry spokesman, said the attack was taped by security cameras, up to the moment the gang members destroyed them in what he called a "planned" attack.

"You can see the moment in which the women overcome the guards, leaving them helpless, and take their keys," Martínez said.

Castro said Tuesday's riot at the prison in the town of Tamara, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northwest of Honduras' capital, was "planned by maras (street gangs) with the knowledge and acquiescence of security authorities."

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Castro fired Security Minister Ramón Sabillón, and replaced him with Gustavo Sánchez, who had been serving as head of the National Police.

But Castro but did not explain how inmates identified as members of the Barrio 18 gang were able to get guns and machetes into the prison, or move freely into an adjoining cell block. Initial reports suggested the doors to the gang's cell block had been left open, facilitating the attack.

The amount of weaponry found in the prison after the riot was impressive: 18 pistols, an assault rifle, two machine pistols and two grenades — all of which were smuggled into the prison.

"Obviously, there must have been human failures," López Rochez said. "We are investigating all the employees at the center."

Sandra Rodríguez Vargas, the assistant commissioner for Honduras' prison system, said the attackers "removed" guards at the facility — none appeared to have been injured — around 8 a.m. Tuesday.

Twenty-six of the victims were burned to death and the remainder shot or stabbed, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras' national police investigation agency. At least seven inmates were being treated at a Tegucigalpa hospital.

The riot's death toll surpassed that of a fire at a female detention center in Guatemala in 2017, when girls at a shelter for troubled youths set fire to mattresses to protest rapes and other mistreatment at the overcrowded institution. The smoke and fire killed 41 girls.

The worst prison disaster in a century also occurred in Honduras, in 2012, at the Comayagua men's penitentiary, where 361 male inmates died in a fire possibly caused by a match, cigarette or some other open flame.

There were ample warnings ahead of Tuesday's tragedy, according to Johanna Paola Soriano Euceda, who was waiting outside the morgue in Tegucigalpa for news about her mother, Maribel Euceda, and sister, Karla Soriano. Both were on trial for drug trafficking but were held in the same area as convicted prisoners.

Soriano Euceda said they had told her Sunday that "they (Barrio 18 members) were out of control, they were fighting with them all the time. That was the last time we talked."

Another woman, who did not want to give her name for fear of reprisals, said she was waiting for news about a friend, Alejandra Martínez, 26, who was been held in the ill-fated Cell Block One on robbery charges.

"She told me the last time I saw her on Sunday that the (Barrio) 18 people had threatened them, that they were going to kill them if they didn't turn over a relative," she said.

Gangs sometimes demand victims "turn over" a friend or relative by giving the gang their name, address and description, so that enforcers can later find and kidnap, rob or kill them.

Officials described the killings as a "terrorist act," but also acknowledged that gangs essentially had ruled some parts of the prison.

Julissa Villanueva, head of the prison system, suggested the riot started because of recent attempts by authorities to crack down on illicit activity inside prison walls and called Tuesday's violence a reaction to moves "we are taking against organized crime."

"We will not back down," Villanueva said in a televised address after the riot.

Gangs wield broad control inside the country's prisons, where inmates often set their own rules and sell prohibited goods.

They were also apparently able to smuggle in guns and other weapons, a recurring problem in Honduran prisons.

"The issue is to prevent people from smuggling in drugs, grenades and firearms," said Honduran human rights expert Joaquin Mejía. "Today's events show that they have not been able to do that."

Meanwhile, the grim task continued of trying to identify the bodies, some terribly burned. Officials on Wednesday began turning over some of the corpses to families for burial.

The wait for news was torture for many families of inmates. Dozens of anxious, angry relatives gathered outside the rural prison.

"We are here dying of anguish, of pain ... we don't have any information," said Salomón García, whose daughter is an inmate at the facility.

Tuesday's riot may increase the pressure on Honduras to emulate the drastic zero-tolerance, no-privileges

prisons set in up in neighboring El Salvador by President Nayib Bukele. While El Salvador's crackdown on gangs has given rise to rights violations, it has also proved immensely popular in a country long terrorized by street gangs.

Associated Press writers Elmer Martínez in Tamara, Honduras, and Maria Verza and Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Hunter Biden plea agreement in tax, gun case set for July court date

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hunter Biden will go before a judge next month to formally strike a plea agreement with prosecutors on tax and gun charges that will likely spare President Joe Biden's son time behind bars, according to court documents posted Wednesday.

U.S. District Judge Maryellen Noreika must still approve the plea agreement that was reached following a lengthy federal investigation. It calls for the president's son to plead guilty to two misdemeanor counts of failing to pay taxes. Hunter Biden also must commit to court-imposed conditions that will spare him full prosecution on a felony gun charge.

The hearing is scheduled for July 26 as a combined initial appearance and plea agreement.

News of the plea deal Tuesday sparked criticism from Republicans who are pursuing their own congressional investigations into nearly every facet of Hunter Biden's business dealings, including foreign payments.

Attorney General Merrick Garland, traveling in Stockholm on Wednesday, said David Weiss, the U.S. attorney for Delaware, was given "full authority to decide the matter as he decided was appropriate. And that's what he's done."

Former President Donald Trump and other Republicans have pointed to the case to raise questions about Justice Department independence as Trump faces a historic criminal indictment. The charges against Trump were filed by a special prosecutor appointed in an effort to avoid any perception of a political conflict.

The Hunter Biden charges, meanwhile, were filed by U.S. Attorney Weiss, who was appointed by Trump and kept on during the Biden administration to continue the investigation, some aspects of continue. Noreika was also appointed by Trump, in 2017.

Hunter Biden's lawyer has said the guilty pleas are an effort to take responsibility for mistakes that he made "during a period of turmoil and addiction in his life," and his understanding is that it wraps up the five-year investigation of his client.

'Tiger King' star 'Doc' Antle convicted of wildlife trafficking in Virginia

Associated Press undefined

WINCHESTER, Va. (AP) — A wild animal trainer featured in the popular Netflix series "Tiger King" has been convicted of wildlife trafficking in Virginia, the attorney general's office announced Tuesday.

Bhagavan "Doc" Antle was accused of illegally buying endangered lion cubs in Frederick County, Virginia, for display and profit at his South Carolina zoo, Attorney General Jason Miyares said in a news release. A jury convicted Antle on Friday of two felony counts each of wildlife trafficking and conspiring to wildlife traffic.

Antle, who owns the Myrtle Beach Safari, appeared in "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness," a Netflix documentary miniseries that focused on tiger breeders.

The jury acquitted Antle of five counts of animal cruelty and Judge Alexander Iden dismissed four additional animal cruelty charges against Antle and all charges against his two adult daughters, The Winchester Star reported.

Prosecutor Michelle Welch said Myrtle Beach Safari's lucrative petting zoo motivated Antle to maintain a

steady supply of immature lion cubs that he purchased from Wilson's Wild Animal Park near Winchester, calling the arrangement a "cub pipeline" from Virginia to South Carolina.

When Antle and Keith Wilson, the park's former owner, began doing business in 2015, it was still legal to buy and sell lions, Welch said. But after lions were designated as an endangered species in December 2015, lions could only be traded between zoos and wildlife preserves that were part of an established breeding program and had permits. There were three illegal cub exchanges in 2017, 2018 and 2019, Welch said.

Antle was indicted in 2020 on several offenses including felony counts of wildlife trafficking and conspiracy. In August 2019, 119 animals — including lions, tigers, bears, camels, goats and water buffalo — were seized from Wilson's roadside zoo after a judge found that Wilson "cruelly treated, neglected, or deprived" the animals of adequate care.

Wilson testified that Antle paid him in advance under the guise of a donation. He said Antle paid \$2,500 to \$3,000 per cub with the exception of the 2017 transaction when Antle traded three lynx kittens for three lion cubs.

Wilson is charged with nine misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty and 10 felony counts of selling an endangered species and a hearing in his case is scheduled for Friday.

Defense attorney Erin Harrigan called Antle's prosecution politically motivated in response to a growing public outcry against wild animals being exploited for entertainment purposes.

"This has been an agenda in search of a crime from the beginning of the investigation," Harrigan said.

Harrigan maintained that the cubs were gifts and Antle sent Wilson donations for an expanded tiger habitat.

"These were not sales," Harrigan said.

Iden allowed Antle, who faces up to 20 years in prison, to remain free on bond pending sentencing on Sept. 14.

MLB sued by 17 ex-scouts who say they were discriminated against because of their age

DENVER (AP) — Seventeen former Major League Baseball scouts who say they were discriminated against because of their age sued the league, its teams and Commissioner Rob Manfred on Wednesday.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Denver. The former scouts allege violations of the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 along with laws in 11 states and New York City.

The scouts, ranging from 55 to 71, allege they were discriminated against from 2020-22. They say MLB and the teams "have acted to prevent the reemployment of older scouts or refused the reemployment of older scouts."

They also say an MLB provision that offsets scouts' salaries when they sign with a new team — but are still being paid by a previous team from which they've been fired — is discriminatory.

MLB said in a statement it looks "forward to refuting these claims in court," but it does not comment on pending litigation.

The ex-scouts also allege MLB in 2015 ended a listing of scouts eligible for employment, the decision to end the MLB Scouting Bureau in 2018 was discriminatory and MLB used analytics and the coronavirus pandemic as pretexts to eliminate older scouts.

"This lawsuit is about age discrimination within a sport that supposedly values history, tradition and putting the best possible product on the field," lawyer Mitchell C. Abeita of Kilgore & Kilgore said in a statement.

The plaintiffs are headed by former Chicago Cubs scout James S. Benedict, who was terminated in 2020. They seek class-action certification.

The former scouts allege violations of laws in Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Trump adviser faces possible disbarment over his efforts to overturn 2020 election

By STEFANIE DAZIO, MICHAEL R. BLOOD and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Attorney John Eastman, the architect of a legal strategy aimed at keeping former President Donald Trump in power, concocted a baseless theory and made false claims of fraud in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election, a prosecutor said Tuesday in arguing that Eastman be disbarred.

Eastman's attorney countered that his client never intended to steal the election, but was considering ways to delay electoral-vote counting so states could investigate allegations of voting improprieties. Trump's claims of fraud were roundly rejected by courts, including by judges the Republican appointed.

Eastman faces 11 disciplinary charges in the State Bar Court of California stemming from his development of a dubious legal strategy aimed at having Vice President Mike Pence interfere with the certification of President Joe Biden's victory. If the court finds Eastman culpable of the alleged violations it can recommend a punishment such as suspending or revoking his law license. The California Supreme Court makes the final decision.

Duncan Carling of the office of chief trial counsel — which is seeking Eastman's disbarment — said Eastman's legal theory was "unsupported by historical precedent and law and contrary to our values as a nation." Eastman continued his efforts to undermine the election even after state and federal officials publicly rejected Trump allies' claims of fraud, Carling said.

"All of his misconduct was done with one singular purpose: To obstruct the electoral count on Jan. 6 and stop Vice President Pence from certifying Joe Biden as the winner of the election," Carling said. "He was fully aware in real time that his plan was damaging the nation," he added.

Eastman's attorney, Randall A. Miller, told the judge that Eastman "was not there to steal the election or invent ways to make President Trump the winner." Miller argued Eastman was merely engaging in what he said was a serious debate at the time about what authority the vice president had concerning the certification of the election.

"The facts will show that the purpose of Dr. Eastman's eventual assessment here was to delay, to delay the counting of the electoral votes so that there could be reasonable investigation undertaken by those states," he said.

The proceedings are expected to last at least eight days. The California State Bar is a regulatory agency and the only court system in the U.S. that is dedicated to attorney discipline. Eastman is expected to testify later Tuesday.

Others who will testify in the hearing in the State Bar Court of California include Greg Jacob, a former attorney for Pence. Jacob had pushed back against Eastman's plan to have Pence stop the certification of Biden's victory. Pence didn't have the power to overturn the election and has said so.

The State Bar alleges that Eastman violated California's business and professions code by making false and misleading statements that constitute acts of "moral turpitude, dishonesty, and corruption," and in doing so he "violated this duty in furtherance of an attempt to usurp the will of the American people and overturn election results for the highest office in the land — an egregious and unprecedented attack on our democracy."

Eastman has been a member of the California Bar since 1997, according to its website. He was a law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and a founding director of the Center for Constitutional Jurisprudence, a law firm affiliated with the Claremont Institute. He ran for California attorney general in 2010, finishing second in the Republican primary.

Eastman had been dean of Chapman University law school in Southern California from 2007 to 2010, and was a professor at the school when he retired in 2021 after more than 160 faculty members signed a letter calling for the university to take action against him.

Eastman's disciplinary hearing comes as special counsel Jack Smith continues his investigation into efforts by Trump and his Republican allies to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

A federal grand jury in Washington has been meeting behind closed doors for months to hear testimony

from witnesses, including Pence, who has publicly described a pressure campaign by Trump aimed at getting him to halt Congress' certification of the election results and the win by Biden, a Democrat.

Federal agents seized Eastman's cellphone last summer as he was leaving a restaurant, he said in a court filing. That day, law enforcement officials conducted similar activity around the country as part of their probe.

In an interview after the hearing, Eastman said he had not been contacted by the Justice Department or summoned by the grand jury.

Eastman said of his advice to Trump, "It's what lawyers are expected to do, kind of lay out what are the options we have before us to consider."

"There are huge problems," Eastman added, saying he wanted to ensure that alleged voting irregularities did not influence the outcome in the election. "I think it's important, quite beyond the partisan controversies over the former president ... to identify whether our election system has such vulnerabilities that we can't trust it anymore."

Since Smith's appointment in November, he has cast a broad net in demanding interviews and testimony related to fundraising, Trump's rally that preceded the U.S. Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021, and communications between Trump associates and election officials in battleground states. Eastman spoke at the rally.

In December, Smith subpoenaed local election officials in Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and Pennsylvania, asking for communications with or involving Trump, his 2020 campaign aides and a list of allies — including Eastman — who were involved in his efforts to try to overturn the results of the election.

The investigation is separate from another probe by Smith into classified documents found at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, that led this month to felony charges against Trump. Trump pleaded not guilty last week to 37 felony counts, including conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Richer reported from Boston.

This story has been corrected to show that Eastman was a professor, not the dean, when he retired from Chapman University law school in 2021.

Movie review: Jennifer Lawrence in the raunchy teen comedy 'No Hard Feelings'

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

In a saner world, we would have already had a dozen Jennifer Lawrence comedies.

When aliens arrive they will surely go directly to IMDB to survey her filmography and wonder why one of Hollywood's funniest and most naturally charismatic stars spent the first decade of her career in dystopias, action movies and whatever it is you call "Mother!"

As if to make up for lost time, Lawrence has in "No Hard Feelings" made the kind of R-rated teen comedy that has usually launched young actors. She plays a 32-year-old Montauk Uber driver who, desperate for money after her car is towed, is hired by the wealthy parents (Matthew Broderick, Laura Benanti) of a timid and sheltered 19-year-old (newcomer Andrew Barth Feldman) to take his virginity before he heads off to Princeton.

We've, of course, had plenty of movies about teenagers trying to get laid for the first time. But "No Hard Feelings," directed and co-written by Gene Stupnitsky, may be the first in which the teen in question has seemingly no desire to do so. He's heterosexual, his parents are sure based on his browsing history.

But when Maddie Barker (Lawrence) turns up in a tight pink dress and heels at the Long Island animal shelter Percy (Feldman) works at, he responds mostly with prickliness and fear to her come-ons. The encounter ends with Percy spraying Maddie with mace.

Now, a 19-year-old rejecting Jennifer Lawrence like this is potentially a good way to sever any possible connection the audience has with one of your main characters. It's like having him smack a child. Some things are unforgivable. Maddie and Percy go on a series of increasingly intimate dates, and Percy vows

to eventually “put out.”

The basis of “No Hard Feelings,” all around, is fairly untenable. Even less believable than Percy’s response to Maddie is her involvement in this scheme in the first place. In the movie’s opening scenes, her car is towed away by a ghosted ex-boyfriend (Ebon Moss-Bachrach of “The Bear”). In the uber-rich environs of Montauk, Maddie is trying to hold onto her house — the one she grew up in — while foreclosure lurks.

Maddie, forced to rollerblade to her bartending job, may be financially desperate. But, say what you will about the gig economy, it offers plenty of alternatives to earning money besides sleeping with teenagers who cringe when the restaurant doesn’t have Pepsi.

And yet, “No Hard Feelings” works better than it ought to. The preposterousness of the set-up is, naturally, part of the joke. Feldman, who here resembles the awkward Linguini of “Ratatouille” brought to life, brings more sensitivity to the role than you would expect, and flashes of good comic timing. So uncomfortable is he on their dates that at the sound of a break in a nearby game of pool, he jumps like a frightened cat. Skinny dipping in the ocean, he doggy paddles.

And while the role forces Lawrence into raunchy situations that could easily be said to be beneath her, “No Hard Feelings” gives her plenty of room to showcase her talent at upending traditional ideas of Hollywood glamour. At every moment, she delights in undercutting her own sexiness; it’s not every A-lister who’s willing to film a beach brawl in the nude. Lawrence — Hollywood screenwriters take note — is more at home parodying the sex bomb than being one.

Yet while “No Hard Feelings” finally gives Lawrence (also an executive producer) a platform for some of the slapstick humor she’s so good at, it also feels like she’s been inserted into the framework of a quite male coming-of-age rom-com/fantasy. Big-screen comedies are dishearteningly few and far between these days, so it’s tempting to applaud that “No Hard Feelings,” which opens in theaters Friday, simply exists.

Stupnitsky’s “Good Boys” cleverly shrunk a familiar genre — the house-party movie — into an R-rated romp for sixth-graders. But “No Hard Feelings” can feel stuck in adolescence. There are times here where you’re glad Lawrence is at least getting to act with adults. (Natalie Morales and Scott MacArthur are good as Maddie’s friends.) Lawrence could have easily carried a comedy that’s just on Maddie’s level, without the amateur-escort-for-a-kid storyline.

“No Hard Feelings” does, though, smartly dig into a generation gap in inverting the genre’s standard beats. Percy — and many of his classmates — are depicted as too tethered to their phones and too delicate to perceived offenses. In one scene, Maddie tears down the upstairs hall of a high-school party. Behind every door, there are kids not making out but calmly texting or playing video games — a portrait of Gen Z with plenty of basis in fact. Incredulous, Maddie exclaims: “Doesn’t anyone f--- anymore?”

“No Hard Feelings,” a Sony Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for sexual content, language, some graphic nudity and brief drug use. Running time: 103 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Amazon is accused of enrolling consumers into Prime without consent and making it hard to cancel

By HALELUYA HADERO The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon was sued Wednesday by the Federal Trade Commission for allegedly engaging in a yearslong effort to enroll consumers without consent into Amazon Prime and making it difficult for them to cancel their subscriptions.

In a complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, the agency accused Amazon of using deceptive designs, known as “dark patterns,” to deceive consumers into enrolling in Prime, which provides subscribers with perks such as faster shipping for an fee of \$139 annually, or \$14.99 a month.

The FTC said Amazon made it difficult for customers to purchase an item without also subscribing to

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Prime. In some cases, consumers were presented with a button to complete their transactions — which didn't clearly state it would also enroll them in Prime.

Getting out of a subscription was often too complicated, and Amazon leadership slowed or rejected changes that would have made canceling easier, the complaint said.

Internally, Amazon called the process "Iliad," a reference to the ancient Greek poem about lengthy siege of Troy during the Trojan war.

"Amazon tricked and trapped people into recurring subscriptions without their consent, not only frustrating users but also costing them significant money," FTC Chair Lina Khan said in a prepared statement. "These manipulative tactics harm consumers and law-abiding businesses alike."

The FTC argued that Amazon's practices violated the FTC Act and another law called the Restore Online Shoppers' Confidence Act, which Amazon disputed.

"The FTC's claims are false on the facts and the law," Amazon spokesperson Heather Layman said in a statement. "The truth is that customers love Prime, and by design we make it clear and simple for customers to both sign up for or cancel their Prime membership."

Launched in 2005, Prime has more than 200 million members worldwide who are entitled to perks such as free delivery, returns and the streaming service Prime Video. In the first three months of this year, Amazon reported it made \$9.6 billion from subscriptions, a 17% jump from the same period last year.

In a news release announcing the lawsuit, the FTC said though its complaint is significantly redacted, it contains "a number of allegations" that backs up its accusations against Amazon. It also accused the company of attempting to hinder the agency's investigation into Prime, which began in 2021, in several instances.

In the past two years, the agency has been ramping up its enforcement against deceptive sign-up and cancellation tactics that could manipulate consumers into buying products or services they don't want. In December, it said Epic Games Inc., the maker of the popular Fortnite video game, would pay \$245 million in customer refunds for deceptive payment methods. In November, the telecom company Vonage settled a similar case for \$100 million.

Layman, the Amazon spokesperson, said the company found it "concerning" the FTC filed the lawsuit without notifying Amazon, which was in discussion with agency staffers about Prime.

"While the absence of that normal course engagement is extremely disappointing, we look forward to proving our case in court," she said.

The lawsuit also comes as Amazon is facing heightened regulatory scrutiny as it moves to expand its e-commerce dominance and dip its toes into other markets, including groceries and health care.

Some anti-monopoly groups celebrated the lawsuit shortly after the FTC's announcement, while others called it absurd.

"The complaint is that Amazon encourages people to use Amazon Prime — this is like going after Kroger for promoting its rewards program or Costco for its membership club," Carl Szabo, the vice president and general counsel of the tech industry group NetChoice, said in a statement. "It is abundantly clear that the FTC is a runaway agency in need of greater oversight. Congress must engage in robust oversight to rein in the FTC by cutting funding and investigating its ethical lapses and abuse of power."

The group, which counts Amazon as one of its members, also pointed to Khan's prior criticism of the company, and accused her of using the lawsuit "to attack American businesses she doesn't like."

Khan, 34, burst onto the antitrust scene in 2017 with her massive scholarly work as a Yale law student, "Amazon's Antitrust Paradox." In 2021, Amazon asked unsuccessfully that she remove herself from separate antitrust investigations into its business, arguing that her public criticism of the company's market power before she joined the government makes it impossible for her to be impartial.

The U.S. and Amazon have traded barbs for over the investigation.

Last year, Amazon accused the FTC of harassing its executives, including founder Jeff Bezos, as the agency sought to get the company's top brass to testify as part of the probe.

The tech giant has also faced other lawsuits accusing its Prime cancellation process of being too complicated. While under scrutiny from the FTC, the company in March provided consumers with instructions

on how to cancel their Prime memberships in a blog post.

The lawsuit follows another Amazon-related win by the agency just a few weeks ago. Earlier this month, Amazon agreed to pay a \$25 million civil penalty to settle allegations it violated a child privacy law for storing kids' voice and location data recorded by its popular Alexa voice assistant. It also agreed to pay \$5.8 million in customer refunds for alleged privacy violations involving its doorbell camera Ring.

Pentagon documents leak suspect Jack Teixeira pleads not guilty to federal charges

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WORCESTER, Mass. (AP) — Jack Teixeira, the Massachusetts Air National Guard member accused of leaking highly classified military documents on a social media platform, pleaded not guilty Wednesday to federal felony charges.

Teixeira, 21, entered the pleas during a hearing in Worcester's federal court days after he was indicted by a grand jury on six counts of willful retention and transmission of national defense information. Each count is punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Handcuffed and wearing orange jail garb, Teixeira smiled at family seated in the gallery at the start of the hearing. He stood at the defense table next to his lawyers and leaned over to say "not guilty, your honor" into the microphone after the judge read each count. The judge also denied a defense request to reconsider his detention order.

Teixeira, of North Dighton, has been behind bars since his April arrest on charges stemming from the most consequential intelligence leak in years. A magistrate judge ruled last month that Teixeira must remain in jail while the case plays out, saying that releasing him would pose a risk that he would attempt to flee the country or obstruct justice.

The leak left the Biden administration scrambling to assess and contain the damage among the international community and reassure allies that its secrets are safe with the U.S.

Teixeira's family said in a statement Wednesday that they "remain committed as ever" to supporting him. "The important thing is Jack will now have his day in court," they said. "We are hopeful that Jack will be getting the fair and just treatment he deserves."

Teixeira's attorney has said his client "will answer the charges" and "will be judged by his fellow citizens." In pushing for his release, Teixeira's attorneys argued that the government isn't alleging Teixeira ever intended that the information be widely disseminated.

Teixeira is accused of sharing classified military documents about Russia's war in Ukraine and other sensitive national security topics on Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games. Investigators believe he was the leader of a private chat group called Thug Shaker Central, where enthusiasts shared jokes, talked about their favorite types of guns and discussed wars, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Authorities say Teixeira, who enlisted in the Air National Guard in 2019, began around January sharing military secrets with other Discord users — first by typing out classified documents and then sharing photographs of files that bore SECRET and TOP SECRET markings. Teixeira worked as a "cyber transport systems specialist," essentially an IT specialist responsible for military communications networks.

Prosecutors say he continued to leak government secrets even after he was warned by superiors about mishandling and improper viewing of classified information. After being admonished by superiors last year, he was again seen in February viewing information not related to the intelligence field, not his primary duty, according to internal Air National Guard memos filed in court.

Justice Department lawyers revealed in earlier court filings that Teixeira had a history of disturbing online remarks. He wrote in November that he would "kill a (expletive) ton of people" if he had his way, because it would be "culling the weak minded." He also used his government computer in July to look up mass shootings, searching terms such as "Mandalay Bay shooting" and "Uvalde," prosecutors said.

Authorities have provided few details about an alleged possible motive, but accounts of those in the

online private chat group where the documents were disclosed have depicted Teixeira as motivated more by bravado than ideology.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement last week that Teixeira was entrusted with information "that reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to national security if shared."

Police say Idaho dad killed neighbors over alleged indecent exposure by neighbor's oldest son

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — An Idaho father killed a neighboring family because he was upset that the neighbor's 18-year-old son had reportedly exposed himself to the man's children, a police document alleges.

Majorjon Kaylor, 31, is charged with four counts of first-degree murder in the Father's Day shooting in Kellogg, nearly 400 miles (644 kilometers) north of Boise.

Kaylor shot and killed Kenneth Guardipee, 65; his daughter Kenna Guardipee, 41; and her sons 18-year-old Devin Smith and 16-year-old Aiken Smith, an Idaho State Police detective said in a probable cause affidavit that was released Tuesday evening.

Kaylor and his wife, Kaylie Kaylor, told investigators that they were upset because Devin Smith had exposed himself in front of his bedroom window in view of the Kaylor's young daughters several days earlier. The families shared a duplex, and the girls were playing in the yard when the exposure allegedly occurred.

The alleged indecent exposure was reported to the police, and the police report was forwarded to the county prosecutor the same day so a criminal charge could be filed, Kellogg Police Chief Paul Twidt told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

But on Sunday evening, the Kaylor's argued with Kenna and Kenneth Guardipee over how the allegation was being handled. That's when Majorjon Kaylor shot both adults near their front door before going inside the family's apartment to kill the two sons, according to probable cause affidavit.

Kenneth Guardipee's brother, Russell, told Spokane, Washington, TV station KHQ that Kenneth helped his daughter raise the two boys, making sure that they made it to after-school events and doctor appointments. Devin Smith had some behavioral issues, Russell Guardipee said, but he did not provide details.

A longtime family friend, Katy James, told The Spokesman-Review newspaper that Devin Smith struggled with a learning disability and had difficulty with social cues, but that he had worked hard to move past his issues.

The Guardipee family loved the outdoors, mountain biking and skiing, and Kenna Guardipee's social media posts sometimes included photos of their bikes parked in front of scenic mountain views. Devin had just graduated from high school, and Aiken was a member of the local Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Kenna worked as a cook at a nearby assisted living facility.

"Received 2 National level awards from the MCJROTC program," Aiken Smith wrote in a social media post late last year. "Joining the program is one of the best decisions I have ever made and I wouldn't change it for anything."

By Tuesday night, a collection of balloons, flowers and photos had been left outside of the family's home by friends and relatives.

On Wednesday, the landing page of the Kellogg High School website included a list of local counseling resources, information about grieving, and a handout on how to talk to young students about tragedy.

Kaylor made his first appearance in court Tuesday and is being held without bond. He has not yet entered a plea, and a preliminary hearing has been set for July 3. Prosecutors could seek the death penalty, but they don't have to inform the court of their plans until 60 days after a plea is entered.

After the shooting, Kaylie Kaylor told police that her husband had warned authorities that if an indecent exposure were to happen again that he "was going to take care of it, which she indicated she interpreted as more like beating someone up," Idaho State Police Detective Justin Klitch wrote in the affidavit.

Kaylie Kaylor also said she and her husband had shared a meme that referred to Leon Gary Plauche, a father who shot a man suspected of abducting and sexually abusing his son in a Louisiana airport in 1984,

according to the affidavit. The meme included a drawing of Plauche shooting the suspected abuser, along with the words "How to catch a predator."

She also told the detective that after the shootings, her husband handed her his wallet, keys and phone and told her to tell their children that "he protected them," according to the affidavit.

When police arrived at the duplex to respond to two 911 calls about the shooting, Majorjon Kaylor was still there.

Majorjon Kaylor told police that he was suspicious of Devin Smith and concerned about his own kids, and that he felt the Gardipees weren't taking his concerns seriously, the affidavit said.

"Kaylor said he 'Snapped,' 'Lost it,' and 'Did something about it,'" Klitch wrote.

The charging documents allege the shootings of the two oldest victims were "premeditated and/or to execute vengeance." The other killings were allegedly "premeditated, to executive vengeance, and/or committed in the perpetration of burglary," according to the charging documents. Under Idaho law, it is considered burglary to enter a house, room or apartment with the intent to commit a felony such as murder.

Justice Alito accepted Alaska resort vacation from GOP donors, report says

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito accepted a 2008 trip to a luxury fishing lodge in Alaska from two wealthy Republican donors, one of whom repeatedly had interests before the court, and he did not disclose the trips on his financial disclosure for that year, ProPublica reports.

A story published late Tuesday by the nonprofit investigative journalism organization states that in July 2008 Alito flew to a remote corner of Alaska aboard the private plane of businessman and Republican donor, Paul Singer. A hedge fund founded by the billionaire has brought roughly a dozen cases before the court since then, ProPublica reported. Alito did not recuse himself from participating in any of those cases.

Alito's three-day stay at the King Salmon Lodge was paid for by another wealthy donor, Robin Arkley II, the owner of a mortgage company then based in California. Leonard Leo, then a leader of the conservative legal group The Federalist Society, helped make arrangements for the trip, including securing a spot for Alito aboard Singer's jet, which would have cost Alito at least \$100,000 if he chartered the jet himself, ProPublica reported.

Supreme Court justices, like other federal judges, are required to file annual financial disclosure reports, which ask them to list gifts they have received. However, the high court is not subject to a binding code of conduct that applies to lower court judges, giving individual justices latitude to write and enforce their own rules.

Alito vigorously disputed the findings in a Wall Street Journal opinion article released before ProPublica published its story, stating he faced no obligation to disclose the details of the trip or recuse himself from cases involving Singer's hedge fund.

"My recollection is that I have spoken to Mr. Singer on no more than a handful of occasions, all of which (with the exception of small talk during a fishing trip 15 years ago) consisted of brief and casual comments at events attended by large groups," Alito wrote. "On no occasion have we discussed the activities of his businesses, and we have never talked about any case or issue before the Court."

"As for the flight, Mr. Singer and others had already made arrangements to fly to Alaska when I was invited shortly before the event, and I was asked whether I would like to fly there in a seat that, as far as I am aware, would have otherwise been vacant. It was my understanding that this would not impose any extra cost on Mr. Singer," Alito wrote.

The revelation about Alito's acceptance of the trip comes as the court is facing heightened scrutiny over issues of ethics, including the justices' obligation to disclose the details of expense-paid travels. That's led Democrats in Congress to call for legislation that would impose binding ethics rules on the court.

ProPublica previously reported that Justice Clarence Thomas accepted decades of undisclosed trips from

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a longtime friend, Republican megadonor Harlan Crow, that included stays at Crow's private resort, flights aboard his jet, and a vacation aboard Crow's yacht in Indonesia. Crow also purchased property from Thomas and paid private school tuition for a Thomas nephew whom the justice helped raise.

Since the passage of a Watergate-era law, the justices are supposed to report gifts they receive. But both Thomas and Alito have argued that a "personal hospitality" provision in the law exempts them.

In March, the federal judiciary increased disclosure requirements for all judges, including the high court justices, although overnight stays at personal vacation homes owned by friends remain exempt from disclosure.

The lodge where Alito stayed often drew celebrities and wealthy businessmen, and typically charged guests \$1,000 a night.

A picture from the trip published by ProPublica shows Alito in hip waders with a fishing guide, posing with a massive king salmon. On another day, the group flew aboard a bush plane to a waterfall in Katmai National Park, where bears snatch salmon from a waterfall.

At night, the group dined on king crab legs or Kobe beef. One member of the group boasted that the wine they were drinking cost \$1,000 a bottle, one of the lodge's fishing guides told ProPublica.

But Alito wrote that the accommodations were far less opulent, calling the lodge "comfortable but rustic."

"I cannot recall whether the group at the lodge, about 20 people, was served wine, but if there was wine it was certainly not wine that costs \$1,000," he wrote.

Television veteran Geraldo Rivera says he's quitting Fox News' political combat show 'The Five'

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Geraldo Rivera has quit as one of the lonely liberal voices on Fox News' popular political combat show "The Five," saying Wednesday that "a growing tension that goes beyond editorial differences" made it no longer worth it to him.

The last scheduled appearance on "The Five" for the television veteran, whose 80th birthday is on July 4, is next week.

"It has been a rocky ride but it has also been an exhilarating adventure that spanned quite a few years," he said in an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday. "I hope it's not my last adventure."

Rivera said that it was his choice to leave "The Five," but that Fox management "didn't race after me to say, 'Geraldo, please come back.'" There was no immediate comment from Fox.

Despite airing in the late afternoon instead of prime time, "The Five" has become Fox's most-watched program, with an average of more than 3 million viewers last year. Its conceit is simple — five people, four of them conservative and one liberal — kick around the issues of the day.

Greg Gutfeld, Jesse Watters, Dana Perino and Jeanine Pirro are the regular conservatives. Rivera has rotated as the liberal voice with Jessica Tarlov and Harold Ford Jr., a former congressman from Tennessee.

Rivera said he planned to remain as a "correspondent at large" at Fox, with a contract that expires in January 2025.

He said he'd been suspended a handful of times, most recently in early May. He had tweeted shortly after Fox fired Tucker Carlson on April 24 that he found Carlson's theories about the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection to be "bullshit," leading Gutfeld to respond via tweet, "You're a class act Geraldo, a real man of the people." Carlson had downplayed the violence on Jan. 6, calling people who invaded the Capitol "sightseers."

Rivera and Gutfeld had a handful of particularly contentious exchanges. In late April, Rivera told him "stop pointing at me" when they argued over electric vehicles. He called Gutfeld "an arrogant punk" on the air last year during a fight about abortion.

Rivera would not comment directly about Gutfeld.

"There has been a growing tension that goes beyond editorial differences and personal annoyances and gripes," he said. "It's not worth it to me."

Rivera, once a friend of Donald Trump who split with him over the former president's false claims of winning the 2020 election, said that "under no circumstances do I think Donald Trump should be president of the United States again and that's an important message I am committed to bringing to the American people between now and November 2024."

Although "The Five" and its large viewership would seem a prominent place for him to deliver that message, he said "you can imagine the friction that role by definition" would provoke.

"I'm 80 years old," he said. "I don't want the friction. 'The Five' is too intimate a place and it gets too personal."

The argument over electric vehicles illustrated the challenge faced the liberal voice on "The Five." As he talked, onscreen chyrons below him read "Biden pushing pricey electric cars on Americans" and "Americans not buying Biden's EV hype."

Rivera had a colorful syndicated talk show that aired from 1987 to 1998, and hosted an evening news and interview show at CNBC in the late 1990s. He was brought to Fox shortly by then-chairman Roger Ailes after the September 2001 to be a war correspondent at first and has remained. On Wednesday he expressed some regret, in retrospect, for not leaving the network after the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011.

He said his relationship with his colleagues on "The Five" is "a reflection of what the country is going through. ... It's not an easy job if you take it as personally as I do."

Meat grown from animal cells? Here's what it is and how it's made

By LAURA UNGAR and JONEL ALECCIA Associated Press

The U.S. government is allowing the sale of chicken made from animal cells.

California companies Upside Foods and Good Meat were granted permission on Wednesday to sell their products by the Agriculture Department.

Livestock doesn't need to be raised and killed to produce this new type of meat, which proponents say is better for the animals and for the environment because land does not need to be cleared for grazing or growing feed.

Currently, the U.S. uses over 1 billion acres of land for agriculture, or just over half of total land -- the majority of which is used for grazing cattle.

WHAT IS IT?

It's meat grown from the cells of animals in steel tanks. Though it's known in the industry as cultivated meat, it's sometimes called cultured meat, lab-grown meat or cell-based meat. There are more than 150 companies around the world trying to develop these food products. They're working on a variety of meats: chicken, beef, pork and lamb.

WHERE CAN YOU GET IT?

At this point, you can't buy these new meats at the grocery store — they will be initially rolled out at restaurants. Consumers can expect cultivated meat to be sold at a growing number of restaurants and small retailers within the next two to five years and on supermarket shelves within seven to 10 years, said Sebastian Bohn, a project manager specializing in cell-based food for CRB, a Missouri firm that designs and builds facilities for pharmaceutical, biotech and food companies.

HOW IS IT MADE?

It starts with cells, which can come from a fertilized egg, a special bank of stored cells or tissue initially taken from a living animal. The cells are mixed with a broth of nutrients that the cells need to grow and divide. Cells are triggered to turn into skeletal muscle, fat and connective tissues. After days or weeks, the cells are removed from the tanks and shaped into products such as nuggets.

The easiest products to make this way are those usually made with ground meat, such as hamburgers and chicken nuggets. Some companies are working on products with more structure, such as chicken breasts and steaks. Those need a scaffold, or structure for the cells to grow on, which can be vegetable-based or made of animal products like collagen.

IS IT REALLY MEAT?

Experts say it's real meat created in a different way. It's not the same as plant-based products such as Impossible burgers, which do not contain animal cells. Some versions of cultivated meat — including Good Meat chicken products — do contain a small amount of vegetable proteins. Upside Foods officials say their meat does not.

WILL PEOPLE BUY IT?

Until this meat costs and tastes the same as traditional meat, "it's going to stay niche," said Bruce Friedrich, president of the Good Food Institute. Also, some people find the idea of meat from cells strange. A recent poll conducted by The Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found half of U.S. adults said that they are unlikely to try it. When those unlikely to try it were asked why, about half said they didn't think it would be safe. A World Health Organization report on the food safety aspects of cell-based food noted several potential issues, such as microbial contamination at various points in the process, biological residues and by-products and scaffolding that some people might be allergic to. But experts noted that conventional meat also carries risks, such as bacterial contamination before and during the slaughtering and packaging process.

Data Journalist Nicky Forster contributed to this report.

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Capitol rioter who shocked police officer with stun gun is sentenced to over 12 years in prison

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A California man who drove a stun gun into a police officer's neck during one of the most violent clashes of the U.S. Capitol riot was sentenced on Wednesday to more than 12 years in prison.

Daniel "D.J." Rodriguez yelled, "Trump won!" as he was led out of the courtroom where U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson sentenced him to 12 years and seven months behind bars for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack. Only two other Jan. 6 defendants have received longer prison terms so far after hundreds of sentencings for Capitol riot cases.

The judge said Rodriguez, 40, was "a one-man army of hate, attacking police and destroying property" at the Capitol.

"You showed up in (Washington) D.C. spoiling for a fight," Jackson said. "You can't blame what you did once you got there on anyone but yourself."

Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone's body camera captured him screaming out in pain after Rodriguez shocked him with a stun gun while he was surrounded by a mob.

Another rioter had dragged Fanone into the crowd outside a tunnel on the Capitol's Lower West Terrace, where a line of police officers was guarding an entrance to the building. Other rioters began beating Fanone, who lost consciousness and suffered a heart attack after Rodriguez pressed the stun gun against his neck and repeatedly shocked him.

Fanone addressed the judge before she imposed the sentence. The former officer described how the Jan. 6 attack prematurely ended his law-enforcement career and turned him into a target for Donald Trump supporters who cling to the lie that Democrats stole the 2020 election from the Republican incumbent.

Fanone left the courtroom in the middle of Rodriguez's statement to the judge. He didn't miss an apology from Rodriguez, who has been jailed for more than two years and will get credit for that time already served.

"I'm hopeful that Michael Fanone will be okay some day," Rodriguez said. "It sounds like he's in a great

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deal of pain.”

Fanone said he left the courtroom because he didn't care to hear his assailant's "rambling, incoherent" statement.

"Nothing he could have said to me today would have made any difference whatsoever," he said.

Prosecutors recommended a 14-year prison sentence for Rodriguez, who pleaded guilty in February to charges including assaulting Fanone. They also sought a fine of nearly \$100,000 to offset the cost of Fanone's medical bills and medical leave.

Fanone's injuries ultimately ended his career in law enforcement. He has written a book about his Jan. 6 experience and testified in front of a House committee that investigated the insurrection, which disrupted the joint session of Congress for certifying President Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.

"Rodriguez's criminal conduct on January 6 was the epitome of disrespect for the law; he battled with law enforcement at the U.S. Capitol for hours, nearly costing one officer his life, in order to stop the official proceeding happening inside," prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

Rodriguez pleaded guilty to four felony charges, including conspiracy and assaulting a law enforcement officer with a deadly or dangerous weapon. He entered the guilty plea about two weeks before his trial was scheduled to start in Washington, D.C.

On Jan. 6, Rodriguez attended then-President Donald Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally before joining the mob of rioters who attacked police in the Lower West Terrace tunnel.

"Rodriguez made his way to the front of the line of rioters battling the officers, yelling into his bullhorn at the beleaguered line," prosecutors wrote.

Rodriguez deployed a fire extinguisher at police officers in the tunnel and shoved a wooden pole at the police line before another rioter, Kyle Young, handed him what appeared to be a stun gun, according to prosecutors.

Fanone was at the front of the police line when another rioter, Albuquerque Cospirator Head, wrapped his arm around the officer's neck and dragged him out onto the terrace steps, then restrained Fanone while other rioters attacked him. Rodriguez shocked Fanone's neck with the stun gun, below the left ear of his police helmet.

Fanone managed to retreat and collapsed behind the police line before he was taken to a hospital.

"Once inside, when officers were able to revive him after 2 minutes and 21 seconds, the first thing Officer Fanone asked was 'did we take back that door?'" prosecutors wrote.

Rodriguez entered the building and smashed a window with a wooden pole before leaving Capitol grounds.

Head was sentenced to more than seven years in prison after pleading guilty to an assault charge.

Young also was sentenced to more than seven years in prison for his role in the officer's assault. Young grabbed Fanone by the wrist while others yelled, "Kill him!" and "Get his gun!"

During an interview with FBI agents after his March 2021 arrest, Rodriguez said he had believed that he was doing the "right thing" on Jan. 6 and that he had been prepared to die to "save the country." He cried as he spoke to the agents, saying he was "stupid" and ashamed of his actions.

In the days leading up to Jan. 6, Rodriguez spewed violent rhetoric in a Telegram group chat called "PATRIOTS 45 MAGA Gang."

"There will be blood. Welcome to the revolution," Rodriguez wrote a day before the riot.

Rodriguez's attorneys said he idolized Trump, seeing the former president "as the father he wished he had."

"Mr. Rodriguez trusted Trump blindly and admired Trump so much that he referred to him as 'dad' in his social media chats leading up to Jan. 6th," defense attorneys wrote, seeking a prison sentence of five years and five months for their client.

The same judge who sentenced Rodriguez also convicted a co-defendant, Edward Badalian, of three riot-related charges and acquitted him of a fourth after a trial without a jury. Jackson is scheduled to sentence Badalian on July 21.

More than 1,000 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Jan. 6 riot. Over 700 of

them have pleaded guilty or been convicted after trials. And approximately 550 of them have been sentenced, with over half receiving terms of imprisonment ranging from seven days to 18 years.

Once wrongly imprisoned for notorious rape, member of 'Central Park Five' is running for office

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Outside a Harlem subway station, Yusef Salaam, a candidate for New York City Council, hurriedly greeted voters streaming out along Malcolm X Boulevard. For some, no introductions were necessary. They knew his face, his name and his life story.

But to the unfamiliar, Salaam needed only to introduce himself as one of the Central Park Five — one of the Black or Brown teenagers, ages 14 to 16, wrongly accused, convicted and imprisoned for the rape and beating of a white woman jogging in Central Park on April 19, 1989.

Now 49, Salaam is hoping to join the power structure of a city that once worked to put him behind bars. "I've often said that those who have been close to the pain should have a seat at the table," Salaam said during an interview at his campaign office.

Salaam is one of three candidates in a competitive June 27 Democratic primary almost certain to decide who will represent a Harlem district unlikely to elect a Republican in November's general election. With early voting already begun, he faces two seasoned political veterans: New York Assembly members Al Taylor, 65, and Inez Dickens, 73, who previously represented Harlem on the City Council.

The incumbent, democratic socialist Kristin Richard Jordan, dropped out of the race in May following a rocky first term.

Now known to some as the "Exonerated Five," Salaam and the four others — Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana and Korey Wise — served between five and 12 years in prison for the 1989 rape before a reexamination of the case led to their convictions being vacated in 2002.

DNA evidence linked another man, a serial rapist, to the attack. The city ultimately agreed in a legal settlement to pay the exonerated men \$41 million.

Salaam, who was arrested at age 15, served nearly seven years behind bars.

"When people look at me and they they know my story, they resonate with it," said Salaam, the father of 10 children. "But now here we are 34 years later, and I'm able to use that platform that I have and repurpose the pain, help people as we climb out of despair."

Those pain points are many in a district that has some of the city's most entrenched poverty and highest rent burdens.

Poverty in Central Harlem is about 10 points higher than the citywide rate of 18%, according to data compiled by New York University's Furman Center. More than a fourth of Harlem's residents pay more than half of their income on rent. And the district has some of the city's highest rates of homelessness for children.

Salaam said he's eager to address those crises and more. His opponents say he doesn't know enough about how local government works to do so.

"No one should go through what my opponent went through, especially as a child. Years later, after he returns to New York, Harlem is in crisis. We don't have time for a freshman to learn the job, learn the issues and re-learn the community he left behind for Stockbridge, Georgia," Dickens said, referring to Salaam's decision to leave the city after his release from prison. He returned to New York in December.

Taylor knows that Salaam's celebrity is an advantage in the race.

"I think that folks will identify with him and the horrendous scenario that he and his colleagues underwent for a number of years in a prison system that treated him unfairly and unjustly," Taylor said.

"But his is one of a thousand in this city that we are aware of," Taylor added. "It's the Black reality."

Harlem voter Raynard Gadson, 40, is cognizant of that factor.

"As a Black man myself, I know exactly what's at stake," Gadson said. "I don't think there's anybody

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more passionate about challenging systemic issues on the local level in the name of justice because of what he went through," he said of Salaam.

During a recent debate televised by Spectrum News, Salaam repeatedly mentioned his arrest, prompting Taylor to exclaim that he, too, had been arrested: At age 16, he was caught carrying a machete — a charge later dismissed by a judge willing to give him a second chance.

"We all want affordable housing, we all want safe streets, we all want smarter policing, we all want jobs, we all need education," Salaam said of the candidates' common goals. What he offers, he said, is a new voice that can speak about his community's struggles.

"I have no track record in politics," he conceded. "I have a great track record in the 34 years of the Central Park jogger case in fighting for freedom, justice and equality."

All three have received key endorsements. Black activist Cornel West has backed Salaam. Dickens has the backing of New York City Mayor Eric Adams and former New York U.S. Rep. Charlie Rangel. Taylor is supported by the Carpenter's Union.

At a campaign rally for Dickens, Rangel recounted that Salaam had called to say he was entering the race. Rangel then quipped that Salaam had a "foreign name." Salaam responded pointedly on social media.

"I am a son of Harlem named Yusef Salaam. I went to prison because my name is Yusef Salaam," he tweeted. "I am proud to be named Yusef Salaam. I am born here, raised here & of here — but even if I wasn't, we all belong in New York City."

Rangel and Salaam later talked and resolved the matter, according to a spokesperson for the Dickens campaign.

Unlikely is an apology from Donald Trump, who in 1989 placed newspaper ads before the group went on trial with the blaring headline, "Bring back the death penalty." The ads did not specifically mention any of the five, but Salaam said the context made it clear.

When asked by a reporter in 2019 if he would ever apologize, Trump said there were "people on both sides" of the matter.

"They admitted their guilt," Trump had said, of the Central Park Five, referring to confessions that the five later said were coerced. "Some of the prosecutors," Trump added "think the city should never have settled that case. So, we'll leave it at that."

When Trump appeared in a Manhattan court in April on charges of falsifying business records, Salaam mocked him with his own ad on social media that visually mimicked Trump's from long ago.

"Over 30 years ago, Donald Trump took out full page ads calling for my execution," Salaam tweeted above the ad, headlined: "Bring Back Justice & Fairness."

An earlier version of this report had an incorrect spelling of Cornel West's first name.

NATO wants to fight climate change. Its chief tells AP the trick is to make armies green but strong

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO faces a series of dilemmas in its attempts to fight climate change while ensuring the effectiveness of its combat forces, as Europe's biggest land war in decades ravages Ukraine, the head of the military alliance told The Associated Press in an interview on Wednesday.

The world's armed forces are among the greatest consumers of hydrocarbons — fuel and oil — that contribute to greenhouse gases. They have been in much demand recently as global warming fans conflicts and crises because of resource and food scarcity.

The main dilemma NATO is contending with, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said, is the difficult choice "between either having a green or a strong military."

He said that NATO needs to "reconcile the need for an effective, strong, armed forces with the need to have climate-friendly armed forces."

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Last year, in its new Strategic Concept – essentially NATO’s mission statement – the world’s biggest security organization recognized, for the first time, climate change as “a defining challenge of our time, with a profound impact on Allied security.”

The document acknowledged that the 31-nation alliance’s “infrastructure, assets and bases are vulnerable to its effects.” It warned that NATO armies are being forced to operate in more extreme climate conditions and are increasingly called upon to take part in disaster relief operations.

“Climate change is a crisis multiplier. It increases competition over scarce resources like water and land, and it drives millions of people to leave their country. So, all this impacts our security,” Stoltenberg told the AP at NATO’s headquarters in Brussels.

Last week, NATO began an air deployment exercise in Germany billed as the biggest in the alliance’s history. Some 250 aircraft – a major source of emissions – from 25 nations responded to a simulated attack on a NATO member. The United States alone sent about 100 aircraft.

The exercise was long-planned, but remains part of NATO’s deterrence and defense strategy; its ongoing effort to dissuade Russian President Vladimir Putin from expanding his war against Ukraine to any member of the alliance. Wargames are not likely to be halted.

Stoltenberg said that the best way to achieve a balance is “to develop technology and to ensure that the armed forces are part of the energy transition which is going on.” NATO has established an “innovation fund” and a center for excellence on climate change to help develop such technology.

The United Kingdom has also begun to use more climate-friendly fuels, biofuels, for some of its aircraft. Other allies are working on ways to reduce their dependency on diesel, which is also particularly vulnerable to air or land attacks when being transported.

But Stoltenberg said that NATO cannot simply “go 100% from fossil technologies to zero-emission technologies in one stroke.” That raises another dilemma.

“Over time we will have parallel systems that will increase costs and there will be additional problems with logistics,” when it comes to supplying motors, battle tanks and ships with different kinds of fuels and parts, he said.

“The other dilemma (is) to make sure that the systems can work together,” Stoltenberg said. “If different nations (use) different systems that are partly fossil and partly new technologies, then the issue of the interchangeability and interoperability will be even harder.”

The fight against climate change has, in some ways, been postponed by the heavy reliance of many European countries on Russia for oil and natural gas before it invaded Ukraine last year. Some, like Poland, are slowing their transition away from coal, while others, such as Belgium, plan to keep using nuclear energy for longer.

Stoltenberg warned that nations must be wary of creating new dependencies, notably on authoritarian countries like China, for rare earth minerals like lithium and cobalt used in the manufacture of batteries and solar panels and windmills.

Security though is at the heart of the battle against climate change, Stoltenberg told the AP, and peace is a precondition for that, whether in Ukraine or elsewhere.

We need peace and stability, he said, so countries can cooperate among themselves and incur a meaningful global effort to reduce emissions.

“If allies or Ukraine were forced to choose between a climate-friendly or an effective armed force, then everyone would choose a strong and effective military because that’s about our security,” he said. The challenge, Stoltenberg underlined “is to reconcile, those two goals in the long run.”

European Union countries agree on a new package of sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN, RAF CASERT and LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union countries on Wednesday agreed on a new package of sanctions against Russia for its war against Ukraine aimed at countering sanctions circumvention through third countries and businesses.

The EU had previously imposed 10 rounds of sanctions on Russia since President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Banks, companies and markets have been hit — even parts of the sensitive energy sector. More than 1,000 officials are subject to asset freezes and travel bans.

Much work in the latest batch of sanctions has involved closing loopholes so that goods vital to Putin's war effort don't get through via nations that trade with the EU and have maintained a business-as-usual relationship with Moscow.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the EU's executive arm, said the new package will "deal a further blow to Putin's war machine with tightened export restrictions, targeting entities supporting the Kremlin."

"Our anti-circumvention tool will prevent Russia from getting its hands on sanctioned goods," she added.

It is the first time that plans have been announced to target trade via other countries, apart from sanctions against Iranians alleged to be supplying drones to Russia.

It also prohibits the transit via Russia of products and technologies which might help boost its defense and security sector.

Under the latest package, if the EU sees for example that exports of a certain computer chip increase five-fold to one nation, and then sees that such exports from the country increase by about the same amount to Russia, the bloc would be able to take tougher action to end the practice.

The new package specifically allows the implementation of measures restricting the sale, or export of sensitive dual-use goods and technology to third countries who could then transfer them to Russia. Under the new rules, the EU could exert much more pressure to end the practice than before.

"It does give a big stick with which the EU can say: 'please don't do it,' and then, if it continues we go to restrictive measures," said an official from an EU nation on condition of anonymity because the rules had yet to be published in the EU's official journal.

The rules cannot be excessively rigid, since the EU does not want to immediately alienate nations.

"We need to look for a balance with nations. When we address their bad behavior, we have to make sure we don't immediately drive them into the arms of Putin," the official said.

The new package will also target 71 extra persons and 33 entities in relation with the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia.

Also included is the prohibition to access to ports in the EU by vessels engaged in ship-to-ship transfers when there is a suspicion that a boat is not respecting the ban on importing seaborne Russian crude oil and petroleum products into the bloc.

In addition, the package extends the suspension of the broadcasting licenses in the EU of five Russian media outlets under state control.

Past sanctions have been agreed on in just months — extremely quickly for the EU. But new measures are becoming increasingly hard to endorse as they inflict damage on the economic and political interests of some member countries even as they aim for the Kremlin.

Hungary, for instance, had said earlier this week it wouldn't allow EU measures targeting Russian state nuclear energy company Rosatom, insisting on the importance of nuclear energy for Europe's security and environmental goals.

Hungary signed new agreements in April to ensure its continued access to Russian energy, a sign of the country's continuing diplomatic and trade ties with Moscow that have confounded some European leaders amid the war in Ukraine.

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

Once starved by war, millions of Ethiopians go hungry again as US, UN pause aid after massive theft

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — An Orthodox Christian priest, Tesfa Kiros Meresfa begs door-to-door for food along with countless others recovering from a two-year war in northern Ethiopia that starved his people. To his dismay, urgently needed grain and oil have disappeared again for millions caught in a standoff between Ethiopia's government, the United States and United Nations over what U.S. officials say may be the biggest theft of food aid on record.

"I have no words to describe our suffering," Tesfa said.

As the U.S. and U.N. demand that Ethiopia's government yield its control over the vast aid delivery system supporting one-sixth of the country's population, they have taken the dramatic step of suspending their food aid to Africa's second-most populous nation until they can be sure it won't be stolen by Ethiopian officials and fighters.

Almost three months have passed since the aid suspension in parts of the country, and reports are emerging of the first deaths from starvation during the pause. At the earliest, aid to the northern Tigray region will return in July, the U.S. and U.N. say, and to the rest of the country at some point after that when reforms in aid distribution allow.

Tesfa, who lives in a school compound with hundreds of others displaced by the war in Tigray, laughed when asked how many meals he eats a day. "The question is a joke," he said. "We often go to sleep without food."

In interviews with The Associated Press, which first reported the massive theft of food aid, officials with U.S. and U.N. aid agencies, humanitarian organizations and diplomats offered new findings on the countrywide diversion of aid to military units and markets. That included allegations that some senior Ethiopian officials were extensively involved.

The discovery in March of enough stolen food aid to feed 134,000 people for a month in a single Tigray town is just a glimpse of the scale of the theft that the U.S., Ethiopia's largest humanitarian donor, is trying to grasp. The food meant for needy families was found instead for sale in markets or stacked at commercial flour mills, still marked with the U.S. flag.

The implications for the U.S. are global. Proving it can detect and stop the theft of aid paid for by U.S. taxpayers is vital at a time when the Biden administration is fighting to maintain public support for aid to corruption-plagued Ukraine.

At a private meeting last week in Ethiopia, U.S. aid officials told international partners that this could be the largest-ever diversion of food aid in any country, aid workers said. In an interview with the AP, a senior official with the U.S. Agency for International Development said the exact amount of food aid stolen may never be known.

Donated medical supplies also were stolen, according to a Western diplomat and U.N. official who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

With USAID giving Ethiopia's government \$1.8 billion in humanitarian assistance since 2022, a delay in providing food aid causes widespread pain. Millions of people went hungry during the war while food stocks were looted, burned and withheld by combatants, and U.N. investigators have warned of possible starvation-linked war crimes.

Now the hunger is being traced to corruption.

Preliminary findings released this month by Tigray regional authorities said they have tracked the theft of more than 7,000 metric tons of donated wheat — or 15 million pounds — in their region, taken by federal and regional authorities and others. The findings did not specify the time period. Other regions have yet to report amounts.

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Ethiopia's government dismisses as harmful "propaganda" the suggestion that it bears primary responsibility for the disappearance of aid in Tigray and other regions, but it has agreed to a joint investigation with the U.S. while the U.N.'s World Food Program carries out a separate probe.

The way that Western aid officials "distance themselves from the accusations by linking the alleged problem only to government institutions and procedures is absolutely unacceptable and very contrary to the reality on the ground," government spokesman Legesse Tulu told reporters earlier this month. He and other government spokespeople did not immediately respond to messages from the AP.

Aid workers say humanitarian agencies have long tolerated a degree of corruption by government officials. Provision of aid in Ethiopia has been heavily politicized for decades, including during the devastating famine of the 1980s, when the then-communist regime blocked assistance to areas controlled by rebel groups.

The senior USAID official told the AP that the latest theft of U.S. and U.N. food aid included the manipulation of beneficiary lists that the Ethiopian government has insisted on controlling, looting by Ethiopian government and Tigray forces and forces from neighboring Eritrea, and the diversion of massive amounts of donated wheat to commercial flour mills in at least 63 sites.

A former Tigray official said government workers often inflate beneficiary numbers and take the extra grain for themselves, a practice that two officials with international organizations working in Ethiopia called widespread elsewhere in the country.

Numerous officials accused WFP of simply dropping off rations in the middle of towns, where much of the aid was looted by forces from Eritrea.

There were also signs that people whom the USAID official described only as "market actors" were forcing hungry families to surrender food aid they received — something that WFP suspects as well.

In Ethiopia, which has a history of deadly hunger, "zero" of the 6 million people in Tigray received food aid in May after the pause in donations by the U.S. and U.N., according to a U.N. memo seen by the AP. That's unprecedented, it said.

With 20 million people across Ethiopia dependent on such aid, plus more than 800,000 refugees from Somalia and elsewhere, independent humanitarian groups warn that even a quick resolution to the dispute could see many people starve to death.

In the U.N. food agency's first extensive public comments, the WFP regional director for East Africa, Michael Dunford, acknowledged possible "shortcomings" in its monitoring of aid distribution.

"We accept that we could have done better," he told the AP this week. But until now, Dunford said, "it's been very much the Ethiopian government that was managing" the process.

For USAID's part, the senior agency official cited a range of reasons that U.S. officials missed the extent of the aid theft for so long. The war blocked the agency's ground access to the Tigray region for 20 months. Elsewhere in the country, COVID restrictions and security concerns limited USAID's oversight, the official said.

Some Republican and Democratic lawmakers said the rare countrywide suspension of aid showed USAID is taking the theft of U.S. aid with appropriate seriousness. Asked if he was concerned about USAID oversight, a senior Democrat, Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, said, "I'm concerned about the ways in which the Ethiopian military and government may have systematically diverted food that was meant for hungry Ethiopians."

Sen. Jim Risch of Idaho, the top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said "tough questions...need to be answered, and our partner must demonstrate some willingness to cooperate."

"There must be a fundamental change in how we do food assistance in Ethiopia if we are going to resume USAID food aid there," Risch said, and called for accountability and transparency. "The first principle of humanitarian aid is to do no harm. From what I understand, harm has been done. We have to ensure for the American taxpayer that this doesn't continue to happen."

U.S. and U.N. officials said they were working to limit — or end — Ethiopian government officials' role in the aid system.

"We're taking back all the control over the commodities," Dunford said. "The entire supply chain, from the

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time that we receive the food in the country to the time it's in the hands of the beneficiaries." Plans include third-party distribution, real-time third-party monitoring and biometric registration of beneficiaries, he said.

The U.S. government wants Ethiopia's government to remove itself from the compilation of beneficiary lists and the transport, warehousing and distribution of aid, according to a briefing memo by donors seen by the AP.

The senior USAID official said Ethiopia's government has committed to cooperate on reforms, but "we have not yet seen the specific reforms in place that would allow us to resume aid."

Civilians, again, are suffering.

Ethiopia's harvest season is over and the lean season is approaching. The U.N. humanitarian agency has privately expressed fears of "mass starvation" in remote parts of Tigray, according to an assessment made in April and seen by the AP. Another assessment in May cited reports of 20 people dying of starvation in Samre, a short drive from the Tigray capital, Mekele.

Tigray's main hospital reported a 28% increase in the number of children admitted for malnutrition from March to April. At the hospital in Axum town, the increase was 96%.

"It is a good day if we manage to eat one meal," said Berhane Haile, another of the thousands of war-displaced people going hungry.

Knickmeyer reported from Washington.

Virginians oust Democrat who sought abortion limits and Republican who denied 2020 results

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Voters ousted two of Virginia's most controversial political figures in Tuesday's primary election, along with at least three more of their Senate colleagues.

Sen. Joe Morrissey, a political centrist and increasingly rare Democrat who supports limits on abortion access, lost to former state legislator Lashrecse Aird, who calls herself a 100% supporter of abortion rights.

"Joe's been here too long. It's time for new blood," said Gail Coleman, 62, who voted for Aird Tuesday afternoon in suburban Richmond.

Republican Sen. Amanda Chase, a right-wing firebrand who has served in the Senate since 2016 and embraced falsehoods about the 2020 presidential election, was edged out by Glen Sturtevant, a lawyer and former senator seeking a political comeback in the red-leaning suburban Richmond district.

Voters decided dozens of other nominees, including in some swing districts that will help determine the balance of power in the General Assembly in the November election. Virginia's Legislature is closely divided politically, and the state is one of just a few that holds its legislative races in odd-numbered years. The unusual calendar and quasi-swing state status make Virginia worth watching for hints of voter sentiment ahead of the next midterms or presidential cycle.

Both parties and both chambers had competitive contests on Tuesday's ballot, and an unusually high number of sitting officeholders faced serious challenges in an election season upended by new political maps.

This year marks the first cycle in which legislative candidates are running in districts created during the redistricting process that ended in late 2021. The new maps were drawn by outside experts without regard to protecting incumbents. That's contributed to a wave of retirements by many veteran lawmakers and diminished the name-recognition advantage for incumbents, some of whom ran in almost entirely new districts.

The losses by Chase, Morrissey and their colleagues will add to the already lofty turnover.

In another high-profile race, Sen. L. Louise Lucas, a veteran legislator, knocked off Sen. Lionell Spruill. The race for the heavily Democratic Hampton Roads seat was one of only two featuring current members of the same chamber running against one another. It was marked by particularly sharp personal attacks

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on social media and in TV ads.

Lucas, who has served in the Senate since 1992, campaigned as a fighter. She donned boxing gloves in some ads, promising to take on Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

"MOMMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT!" she tweeted.

In northern Virginia, challengers upset at least two other Democratic incumbents.

Saddam Salim, a first-generation immigrant and political activist, defeated moderate Democratic Sen. Chap Petersen, a lawyer who angered the liberal wing of his party by providing a key vote for Republicans in getting some of Youngkin's priorities across the finish line, including legislation that ended school mask mandates last year.

Stella Pekarsky, a member of the Fairfax County School Board, beat Democratic Sen. George Barker, who has served in the Senate since 2008 and wields significant influence as co-chair of the chamber's Finance and Appropriations Committee.

In a contentious Republican contest for a southwest Virginia House seat, freshman Del. Wren Williams defeated fellow Del. Marie March. In northern Virginia, former CIA officer Russet Perry secured the Democratic nomination in a Senate seat expected to be a key battleground in the general election.

Elsewhere, incumbents easily cruised past challengers. Democratic Sen. Lamont Bagby handily defeated Katie Gooch in a Richmond-area race, and Sen. Dave Marsden defeated Heidi Drauschak, who was backed by the big-spending advocacy group Clean Virginia.

In a Charlottesville-anchored seat, Democratic Sen. Creigh Deeds fended off a spirited challenge from Sally Hudson, a member of the House of Delegates. Deeds, a respected advocate on mental health issues, campaigned as a pragmatic progressive whose experience and relationships in Richmond would be a boon to his constituents, an argument echoed by other incumbents.

Among Republicans, Chase was the only Senate incumbent to face a challenge Tuesday. She campaigned as a champion of gun rights and other conservative values. She also persistently repeated former President Donald Trump's falsehoods about widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

Although Chase had campaigned with Youngkin after unsuccessfully seeking the party's nomination for governor herself in 2021, Youngkin did not endorse her in the race. Nor did he wade into an eight-way Senate contest in the Shenandoah Valley won by farmer Timmy French.

But the night went especially well for other candidates the governor backed. All of the seven on the ballot Tuesday won their nomination contests. The three others in competitive races he backed had won party-run nominations earlier.

In the central Virginia Senate nomination contest with Morrissey, Aird was powered to victory with endorsements from an unusual number of legislators and members of the state's congressional delegation. She also far outspent Morrissey, who ran a scrappy operation with no official campaign manager.

A disbarred attorney with a long history of personal and professional controversies, Morrissey calls himself "pro-life" but has long supported some abortion access. He has recently expressed a willingness to vote with Republicans to enact stricter limits.

Morrissey had time and again overcome personal controversies to win elected office. Campaigning this year, he faced allegations of mistreatment and physical abuse by his decades-younger estranged wife, which he strenuously denied.

Despite those headwinds, many observers were unwilling to count him out because of his long-established reputation as an effective grassroots campaigner who takes care of bread-and-butter issues for constituents. Morrissey conceded to Aird.

Aird, who works in higher education administration, will head into the general election season as the favorite in the blue leaning district south and east of Richmond.

A handful of other races were too early to call.

A previous headline on this story was corrected to reflect that Lashrecse Aird is a former state legislator, not a current state legislator.

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Associated Press photographer Steve Helber contributed to this report from Dinwiddie.

Today in History: June 22, Operation Barbarossa begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, June 22, the 173rd day of 2023. There are 192 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 22, 1940, during World War II, Adolf Hitler gained a stunning victory as France was forced to sign an armistice eight days after German forces overran Paris.

On this date:

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated for a second time as Emperor of the French.

In 1870, the United States Department of Justice was created.

In 1937, Joe Louis began his reign as world heavyweight boxing champion by knocking out Jim Braddock in the eighth round of their fight in Chicago.

In 1941, Nazi Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, a massive invasion of the Soviet Union.

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more popularly known as the "GI Bill of Rights."

In 1945, the World War II battle for Okinawa ended with an Allied victory.

In 1965, movie producer David O. Selznick ("Gone with the Wind") died in Los Angeles at age 63.

In 1970, President Richard Nixon signed an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that lowered the minimum voting age to 18.

In 1977, John N. Mitchell became the first former U.S. Attorney General to go to prison as he began serving a sentence for his role in the Watergate cover-up.

In 1981, Mark David Chapman pleaded guilty to killing rock star John Lennon. Abolhassan Bani-Sadr was deposed as president of Iran.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, unanimously ruled that "hate crime" laws that banned cross burning and similar expressions of racial bias violated free-speech rights.

In 1999, in a major upset at Wimbledon, top-ranked Martina Hingis lost in the opening round to Jelena Dokic, a 16-year-old qualifier ranked 129th.

Ten years ago: Islamic militants disguised as policemen killed 10 foreign climbers and a Pakistani guide in a brazen overnight raid at the base camp of Nanga Parbat, saying it was to avenge the death of their deputy leader in a U.S. drone strike. A plane carrying a wing walker crashed at an air show near Dayton, Ohio, killing both the pilot, Charlie Schwenker, and the stunt performer, Jane Wicker.

Five years ago: White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was asked to leave a Virginia restaurant; the co-owner said the move came at the request of gay employees who objected to Sanders' defense of President Donald Trump's effort to bar transgender people from the military. Trump accused Democrats of telling "phony stories of sadness and grief" about children separated from their parents while crossing the border; he met with parents of children who'd been killed by immigrants in the country illegally. The European Union began enforcing tariffs on American imports including bourbon, peanut butter and orange juice, in retaliation for duties the Trump administration imposed on European steel and aluminum.

One year ago: A powerful earthquake struck a rugged, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan, flattening stone and mud-brick homes and killing at least 1,000 people. A bloodhound named Trumpet won the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, marking the first time the breed has ever snared U.S. dogdom's most coveted best in show prize. Tony Siragusa, the charismatic defensive tackle who helped lead a stout Baltimore defense to a Super Bowl title, died at age 55.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Prunella Scales (TV: "Fawlty Towers") is 91. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is 90. Singer-actor Kris Kristofferson is 87. Actor Klaus Maria Brandauer is 80. Fox News analyst Brit Hume is 80. Singer/producer Peter Asher (Peter and Gordon) is 79. Singer Howard "Eddie" Kaylan is 76. Singer-

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musician Todd Rundgren is 75. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., is 74. Actor Meryl Streep is 74. Actor Lindsay Wagner is 74. Singer Alan Osmond is 74. Actor Graham Greene is 71. Pop singer Cyndi Lauper is 70. Actor Chris Lemmon is 69. Rock musician Derek Forbes is 67. Actor Tim Russ is 67. Rock musician Garry Beers (INXS) is 66. Actor-producer-writer Bruce Campbell is 65. Rock musician Alan Anton (Cowboy Junkies) is 64. Actor Tracy Pollan is 63. Environmental activist Erin Brockovich is 63. Rock singer-musician Jimmy Somerville is 62. Basketball Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler is 61. Actor Amy Brenneman is 59. Author Dan Brown is 59. Rock singer-musician Mike Edwards (Jesus Jones) is 59. Rock singer Steven Page is 53. Actor Michael Trucco is 53. Actor Mary Lynn Rajs kub (RYS'-kub) is 52. TV personality Carson Daly is 50. Rock musician Chris Traynor is 50. Actor Donald Faison (FAY'-zahn) is 49. Actor Alicia Goranson is 49. Actor-comedian Mike O'Brien (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 47. TV personality/actor Jai Rodriguez is 44. Americana singer-songwriter John Moreland is 38. Pop singer Dinah Jane (Fifth Harmony) (TV: "The X Factor") is 26.