

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Groton Community Calendar

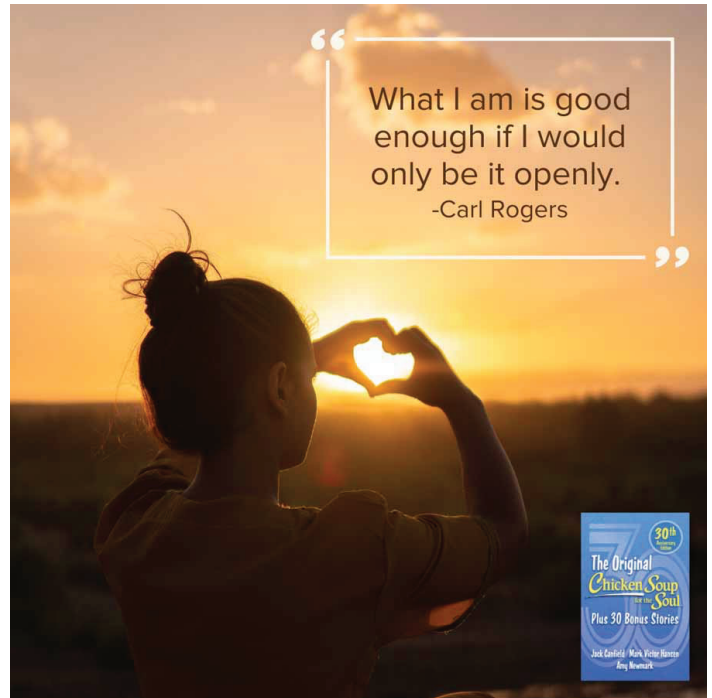
### Thursday, June 29

Senior Menu: BBQ chicken breast, rice pilaf, mixed vegetables, fruit, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Blood Drive at Groton Community Center, 11:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Legion hosts Redfield, 5:30 p.m. (1); Jr. Legion hosts Redfield, 7:30 p.m. (1); Us Softball hosts Clark, 6 p.m.; U10 Groton Scrimmage, 7 p.m.; U12BB hosts Borge 12, 5:30 p.m. (2)

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



### Friday, June 30

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, vanilla pudding.

Softball hosts Clark (U8 at 6:00); T-Ball B&G Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

### Saturday, July 1

Amateurs host Redfield DQ, 7 p.m.

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

Common Cents Community Thrift Store is Closed

### Sunday, July 2

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.

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

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

United Methodist: Worship with communion (Conde at 8:30 a.m., Groton at 10:30 a.m., coffee hour at 9:30 a.m.)

## **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

### World in Brief

The Supreme Court agreed to take up *Moore v. United States*, a lawsuit challenging a Trump-era tax provision that could thwart the Democrats' hopes of imposing a federal wealth tax on American billionaires.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said the Fed will likely need to raise interest rates at least two more times before the end of 2023 as a result of increased inflation.

More than 120 million people across the U.S. are currently under air quality alerts, from Iowa to the East Coast, as Canada's second-worst

wildfire season rages on. Bands of smoke have reached as far as Western Europe.

New York Yankees pitcher Domingo Germán became the first player since 2012—and just the 24th player in major league history—to pitch a perfect game, retiring all 27 batters in an 11-0 win over the Oakland Athletics.

North Carolina House voted 67-46 to pass legislation that would ban gender-affirming care for minors with some exceptions, and prevent state funds from being used to cover the treatments.

French President Emmanuel Macron convened a crisis meeting with government ministers after protests continued for a second night in Paris following the shooting of a 17-year-old boy known only as Naël M. At least 77 people have been arrested.

17-year-old Canadian hockey player Connor Bedard, seen as a generational talent by many in the sport, was selected No. 1 overall by the Chicago Blackhawks in the NHL draft.

Space time is constantly fluctuating because of a "hum" of gravitational waves created by supermassive black holes, research suggests (you can try to make sense of it later today by subscribing to our sister newsletter *Infinite Scroll*).

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian General Sergei Surovikin, who may have had prior knowledge of the Wagner Group rebellion, has reportedly been arrested by Kremlin law enforcement. It is unclear if Surovikin helped plan Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin's rebellion or when he learned of the uprising..

### TALKING POINTS

"Maybe we need another gang to come up with a set of rules changes, but the vast majority of us who understand these tools should be used sparingly, I think we need to raise our voices," Democratic Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia told CNN when asked about Alabama Sen. Tommy Tuberville's ongoing hold on military nominees.

"[House Speaker Kevin] McCarthy later told Breitbart that you-know-who is Biden's strongest opponent. What is happening? You know, I just want him to grow a pair of cojones that will give him some way to actually not waffle," Whoop Goldberg said on *The View* after McCarthy questioned whether former President Donald Trump would be President Joe Biden's "strongest" challenger in 2024.

"We share the emotion and pain of the family and loved ones of young Naël. I want to tell them our solidarity and the Nation's affection. Justice was immediately seized. Our police and gendarmes are committed to protecting us and serving the Republic. I thank them every day for that. They do so within an ethical framework that must be respected. It is up to Justice to establish the truth and assign responsibility. I hope that his work can be completed quickly. In such a context, what Nanterre and the Nation need is respect and calm," French President Emmanuel Macron said after protests erupted when a 17-year-old delivery driver was fatally shot by police..

### WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

The National Mall in Washington, D.C., will host a fireworks display at 10 a.m. ET presented by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The display aims to demonstrate fireworks safety risks ahead of the July 4th holiday.

President Joe Biden is traveling to New York City, where he will appear for a live interview with MS-NBC's Nicolle Wallace. Later, Biden is scheduled to attend campaign receptions in the city.

Markets will keenly watch for the final GDP growth figures for the first quarter. The economy likely grew at the rate of 1.6%, slightly better than the second reading of 1.3%.

## **Powerful Pitching Performance From Ryan Groeblichhoff Carries Groton Legion Post 39 Past Clark/Willow Lake Senators**

Ryan Groeblichhoff struck out 12 batters as they led Groton Legion Post 39 past Clark/Willow Lake Senators 5-1 on Wednesday at Groton. Groeblichhoff allowed two hits and one run over six and two-thirds innings while walking two.

Clark/Willow Lake Senators opened the scoring in the first after Lucas Kannegieter doubled, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 made the score 3-1 in the bottom of the first after Tate Larson doubled, scoring two runs, and Logan Ringgingberg singled, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 added two runs in the second. Bradin Althoff doubled, making the score 5-1.

Trey Huber took the loss for Clark/Willow Lake Senators. The righty went six innings, allowing five runs (four earned) on six hits, striking out four and walking five. Larson appeared in relief for Groton Legion Post 39.

Braxton Imrie, Brevin Fliehs, Colby Dunker, Althoff, Larson, and Ringgingberg each collected one hit for Groton Legion Post 39. Althoff and Larson were tough to handle back-to-back in the lineup, as each drove in two runs for Groton Legion Post 39. Cole Simon stole two bases. Groton Legion Post 39 ran wild on the base paths, accumulating five stolen bases for the game. Groton Legion Post 39 were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Cade Larson had the most chances in the field with 12.

Conner Mudgett, Lucas Kannegieter, and Jack Helkenn each collected one hit for Clark/Willow Lake Senators. Lucas Kannegieter led Clark/Willow Lake Senators with one run batted in. The cleanup hitter went 1-for-3 on the day.

## **Early Lead For Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion Seals Fate For Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion**

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion fell behind early and couldn't come back in a 7-3 loss to Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion on Thursday. Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion scored on a single by Collin Gaikowski and an error in the first inning.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion lost despite out-hitting Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion seven to five.

In the first inning, Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion got their offense started. Collin Gaikowski singled on a 0-2 count, scoring two runs.

Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion scored three runs in the seventh inning. Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion batters contributing to the big inning included Conner Mudgett and Jakob Steen, all driving in runs in the inning.

Cooper Pommer earned the win for Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion. The righthander went six and a third innings, allowing three runs on six hits and striking out three. Josh Kannegieter threw two-thirds of an inning in relief out of the bullpen.

Korbin Kucker was on the mound for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The righthander allowed three hits and four runs over six innings, striking out three. Braxton Imrie and Gavin Englund entered the game as relief, throwing two-thirds of an inning and one-third of an inning respectively.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion totaled seven hits. Imrie and Englund each racked up multiple hits for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Englund and Imrie all had two hits to lead Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion.

Collin Gaikowski went 2-for-4 at the plate to lead Clark/Willow Lake Jr. Legion in hits.

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## Clark/Willow Lake Senators 1 - 5 Groton Legion Post 39

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday June 28, 2023

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

### BATTING

Clark/Willow Lake	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
Trey Huber (P)	3	0	0	0	0	1
Mitchell Larson (...)	3	0	0	0	0	1
Jack Helkenn (1B)	2	1	1	0	0	0
Lucas Kannegieter...	3	0	1	1	0	0
Jack Bratland (2B)	3	0	0	0	0	2
Collin Gaikowski (...)	1	0	0	0	1	1
Waylan Olson	1	0	0	0	0	1
Jakob Steen (SS)	2	0	0	0	1	2
Conner Mudgett (...)	3	0	1	0	0	2
Emmerson Larson...	3	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

**2B:** Lucas Kannegieter, **TB:** Lucas Kannegieter 2, Jack Helkenn, Conner Mudgett, **HBP:** Jack Helkenn, **LOB:** 5

### PITCHING

Clark/Willow	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
Trey Huber	6.0	6	5	4	5	4	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

**L:** Trey Huber, **P-S:** Trey Huber 98-58, **BF:** Trey Huber 30

Groton Legion Post	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Flihs (3B)	3	0	1	0	1	0
C Simon (CF)	2	2	0	0	2	1
B Althoff (DH)	3	1	1	2	1	0
T Larson (1B, P)	3	1	1	2	0	2
L Ringgingberg (R...)	3	0	1	1	0	0
C Larson (C)	2	0	0	0	1	0
C Dunker (LF)	3	0	1	0	0	1
B Imrie (2B)	3	0	1	0	0	0
D Abeln (2B)	0	0	0	0	0	0
K Hoover (SS)	3	1	0	0	0	0
R Groeblinghoff (...)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

**2B:** T Larson, B Althoff, **TB:** T Larson 2, B Althoff 2, B Flihs, C Dunker, L Ringgingberg, B Imrie, **SB:** C Simon 2, B Althoff, B Flihs, L Ringgingberg, **LOB:** 7

Groton Legion	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Groeblinghoff...	6.2	2	1	1	2	12	0
T Larson	0.1	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>

**W:** R Groeblinghoff, **P-S:** T Larson 6-4, R Groeblinghoff 108-71, **HBP:** R Groeblinghoff, **BF:** T Larson 2, R Groeblinghoff 25

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Landon Johnson and Todd Gay were doing linework early this morning. They had changed out the pole and now were redoing connectors.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Carson Walker, CEO of South Dakota News Watch, stopped in Groton on Wednesday to visit with newspaper publisher Paul Kosel. Walker was in the area and stopped in to see the operation in Groton. He was especially intrigued with the GDILIVE.COM aspect of the business. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

## GROTON'S EVENTS



July 4 Firecracker  
Tourney at Olive  
Grove Golf Course

July 9 Summer  
Fest/Car Show at  
the City Park



July 20 Pro Am  
Tourney at Olive  
Grove Golf Course

July 20 Summer  
Downtown Sip &  
Shop



Aug. 4 Wine on Nine  
at Olive Grove Golf  
Course

Aug. 10 Family Fun  
Fest

COME SPEND A WEEKEND IN GROTON!

- 5 camping spots with full-service hookups
- play centers and permanent corn hole boards
- swimming pool with slide and diving board
  - 3 diamond baseball complex
- 9-hole golf course • bowling alley

**GROTON**  
Chamber Of Commerce

120 N Main St., Groton, SD 57445

605-397-8422

GrotonChamber.com

## Brown County 4-H Special Foods Contest

The 2023 Brown County 4-H Special Foods Contest was held on Tuesday, June 27th at Simmons Middle School FACS classroom. Becky Erickson and Audrey Rider were the judges. The following are the results of the contest:

Rayven Dutenhoffer- Aberdeen- Purple  
Joeseeph Dutenhoffer-Aberdeen-Blue  
Anna Johnson- Aberdeen- Purple  
Abigail Johnson-Aberdeen-Purple  
Greyson Warrington- Groton- Purple  
Norman Johnson – Aberdeen - Purple

In the 4-H Special Foods Contest, members select an item to prepare containing at least one serving from the food group in which the item is entered. Members are judged on their food preparation skills, nutrition knowledge for the age and food group in which the item is entered, the menu, the place setting that the meal will be served with, and the quality of the item prepared.

### 2023 Brown County 4-H Special Foods Contest Recipes

#### Stovetop Mac'n Cheese

Anna Johnson

8 oz. dry pasta	¼ tsp. paprika
2 Tbsp butter	1/8 tsp. chili powder
1/3 cup sour cream	1/8 tsp. black pepper
½ tsp. ground mustard	1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
½ tsp. salt	milk

Cook the pasta in boiling water to al dente. Drain. Place the pot back on the stove over low heat and melt the butter. Put the pasta back into the pot along with sour cream, mustard, salt, paprika, chili powder and pepper. Add the cheddar cheese a handful at a time mixing after each addition until the cheese is melted and smooth. Add a little milk if prefer smoother.

## Fruit Pizza

Rayven Dutenhoffer

### Crust:

½ cup butter

¼ cup powdered sugar

1 cup flour

### Glaze:

1 Tbsp cornstarch

½ cup apple juice

¼ cup sugar

½ Tbsp lemon juice  $\hat{A}$ ½

### Center:

4 oz. cream cheese

3 Tbsp sugar

### Toppings:

½ cups grapes

½ cup mandarin oranges

½ cup kiwi

½ cup blueberries

½ cup strawberries

½ cup banana

Crust: Mix ingredients spread and press into a 9x9 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 11 minutes. Glaze: Mix ingredients and microwave for 5 minutes stirring every 30 seconds. Center: Mix ingredients and spread on cool crust. Toppings: Place cut up fruit toppings on cream cheese center. Top with glaze and chill. Garnish with whole strawberry.

## Mini Pizza Wheel

Joeseph Dutenhoffer

2 English Muffins

2/3 cup mozzarella cheese

½ cup tomato sauce

¼ tsp. oregano

Cut up ¼ cup pepperoni for garnish.

1. Cut ¼ Cup Pepperoni in half.
2. Measure out 2/3 cup mozzarella cheese.
3. Line pans with aluminum foil. Cut muffins in half. Using the broil option on the oven toast muffins until lightly brown (1-2 Min.)
4. Combine ½ Cup Tomato sauce and ¼ tsp oregano.
5. Spoon 1 Tbsp sauce over each half.
6. Add pepperoni.
7. Top with 2 Tbsp mozzarella cheese.
8. Broil until cheese is bubbly for ½ minutes.
9. Add additional pepperoni as garnish.



## Pancakes

Abigail Johnson

1 egg	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
1 cup all-purpose flour	1 Tbsp white sugar
2 Tbsps. vegetable oil	3 tsp baking powder
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt	butter to grease griddle

Beat egg in medium bowl. Beat in remaining ingredients, except butter, just until smooth. Heat griddle over medium heat, to 375 degrees. Grease the griddle with butter. For each pancake, pour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup batter onto hot griddle. Cook pancake until puffed and dry around edges. Turn and cook the other side until golden brown.

## Chocolate Cooler Drink

Greyson Warrington

3 cups vanilla ice cream	2 cups skim milk
15 teaspoons chocolate syrup	2 tbsp malt mix

Put vanilla ice cream into blender. Add milk, chocolate syrup and malt mix. Cover and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses. Garnish with whipped topping and miniature chocolate chips.

## One Pot Cheesy Taco Pasta

Norman Johnson

1 lbs. ground beef	4 oz green chilis
1 tsp. onion powder	1 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. garlic powder	½ tsp. pepper
½ tsp. salt	1.25 oz. taco seasoning
1 cup salsa	8 oz uncooked rotini pasta
1 can corn drained	2 cups Mexican shredded cheese
2 cups water	Optional toppings: cilantro, avocado

Cook the ground beef, drain if needed. Stir in taco seasoning, onion powder, chili powder, garlic powder, salt, green chillis and pepper. Then add water, pasta, salsa and corn. Stir. Bring to a boil. Stir and cover, reduce heat to simmer. Cook for 15 minutes, or until pasta is tender. Turn off and stir in cheese. Serve and add additional toppings if you wish.

## Brown County Fatal Crash

What: One-vehicle crash

Where: 384th Ave. and 129th St., five miles northwest of Aberdeen, S.D.

When: 7:39 p.m., Tues., June 27, 2023

Driver: Male, 55, fatal injuries

Vehicle No. 1: 1996 Ford F150 pickup

Aberdeen, S.D.: One person died Tuesday evening in a one-vehicle crash northwest of Aberdeen, S.D.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates that a 1996 Ford F150 pickup was traveling north on 384th Ave. The pickup entered the west ditch and rolled.

The 55-year-old male driver of the pickup died at the scene. He was not wearing a seat belt.

South Dakota's Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

## Gov. Noem's Bill Updating "Governor" References Goes into Effect July 1

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Noem's bill updating references to the "governor" and other public officers, HB 1175, will go into effect on July 1st. This bill reflects the fact that South Dakota has its first woman Governor and changes references to the Governor and other officials in state statute. The prime sponsors of this legislation were Sen. Erin Tobin (R-21) and Rep. Jess Olson (R-34).

"Every little girl in South Dakota should realize that she can grow up to do whatever she wants to do – to be whoever she wants to be," said Governor Noem. "We are fixing our laws so that they reflect the fact that women and men can both attain offices like governor."

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It's time we do something we've never done before: a special two-week edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up. The past two weeks have been jam-packed as we've worked in the Senate Armed Services Committee to write the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA is an annual bipartisan bill that authorizes funding for the Department of Defense. You can read more about

this legislation and some of the victories for South Dakota that made it through this step in the process, including nearly \$400 million in funding for construction projects at Ellsworth Air Force Base, later in this report. In between helping write and voting on this legislation, we were also able to squeeze in meetings with South Dakotans who were visiting us in Washington. Here's my two-week Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: Students from Lyman, Sanborn Central, Castlewood and Milbank; Students participating in the National History Day contest; South Dakota Future Farmers of America (FFA) members and advisors; Kellie Wasko, South Dakota Secretary of Corrections; Ashley Kingdon-Reese with the South Dakota Nurses Association; Charlee Kolb, winner of the SD Congressional Art Competition; City leadership from Box Elder; and a group of South Dakota 4-H students. I also spoke to a group of officials from different sectors across South Dakota about foreign owned agricultural land, including my work at the federal level on legislation like the PASS Act.

Additionally, this past week I met with landowners, state legislators and county officials from across the state who are concerned about their ability to protect their own property from carbon dioxide pipelines, specifically the use of eminent domain. As a landowner, I am concerned about the strained relationship between a private company and South Dakota landowners. While working as governor, I stressed local buy-in before projects should move forward. In any case, eminent domain should only be used as a last resort. You can read more about our meeting here in an article from The Dakota Scout.

Meetings these past weeks: Dr. Adriana Kugler, nominee to serve on the board of the Federal Reserve; Gen. Eric Smith, nominee to be the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps; Dr. Ned Sharpless, former Director of the National Cancer Institute; Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO; Martin Gruenberg, Chair of the FDIC; Margaret Brennan and Norah O'Donnell with CBS; Representatives from the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies; Brian Gumbel, President of Armis; Maryanne Donaghy, Assistant Secretary for Accountability and Whistleblower Protection at the Department of Veterans Affairs; Tom Brand, Director of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters; Lisa Cook, member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors; Doug Duskin, CEO of Avel eCare; and General Randy George, nominee to be Chief of Staff for the U.S. Army. I had breakfast with George Will, where our discussion focused on immigration reforms. He wrote about our conversation in his Washington Post column this past week. You can read that here.

I also had the opportunity to speak with a group of interns who are working on Capitol Hill this summer, where they asked great questions ranging from why I started working in public service to the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI).

Speaking of AI, the bipartisan working group on AI that I lead with Senator Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) hosted our first all-senators briefing. We heard from Antonio Torralba, who is a professor of computer sci-

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ence and electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Our goal is to unite the Senate in a bipartisan way to address the challenges and opportunities posed by AI. Additionally, I attended an AI roundtable with a bipartisan group of senators that featured Microsoft's Chief Scientific Officer and the Executive Director at Georgetown's Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

We also had our Senate Bible Study (Joshua 1:9 was our verse of the week) and our Senate Prayer Breakfast (Senator Chris Coons from Delaware was our speaker this past week; Senator James Lankford from Oklahoma was our speaker the week before).

Met with South Dakotans from: Box Elder, Bridgewater, Buffalo, Castlewood, Faith, Florence, Forestburg, Hoven, Lake Andes, Milbank, Pierre, Presho, Rapid City, Salem, Sioux Falls, Waverly, White and Wilmot.

Topics discussed: Public service both on and off Capitol Hill, nurses in South Dakota and legislation impacting their work, foreign ownership of agriculture land and priorities for our national security.

NDAAs: As I noted in the introduction, much of my work over the past two weeks focused on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This is the ninth NDAA I've had the opportunity to work on as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The NDAA provides for our national security and supports our service members and their families. In this year's NDAA, we were able to include a 5.2 percent pay raise for both military service members and DOD civilian workforce. We were also able to include \$5.25 million in funding for the construction of a National Guard Readiness Center in Sioux Falls and \$395 million for construction projects at Ellsworth Air Force Base in Box Elder as we prepare for the bed down of the B-21 Raider Bomber.

Additionally, we've included provisions in this bill to stop the toxic "woke" ideologies in the Department of Defense at their source. Our military should be focused on performance, not pronouns.

You can read more about this year's NDAA [here](#).

Votes taken: 20 over the past two weeks – Most of these were on nominees to positions within the executive and judicial branches. We also attempted to override the president's veto on a joint resolution, which would have rejected an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that places further regulations on truckers and small business owners. Though all 49 Republicans and one Democrat voted to override the veto, it needed 67 votes to be overturned.

Hearings: Six – one in SASC, two in the Banking committee and one in the Select Committee on Intelligence. We also spent two long sessions on NDAA markup in SASC.

One of these hearings in the Banking committee was a markup on the FEND Off Fentanyl Act, legislation that I cosponsored which aims to stop the flow of fentanyl into the United States by cutting off income sources for those who traffic fentanyl. This bill passed out of committee after the markup and will now head to the Senate floor.

Classified briefings: I had one briefing related to my work on the SASC Subcommittee on Cybersecurity.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Box Elder, De Smet, Fort Pierre, Howard, Huron, McLaughlin, Mitchell, New Underwood, Rapid City, Sisseton and Watertown.

Steps taken this week: 49,215 steps or 23.61 miles the first week. 50,169 steps or 23.71 miles the second week. We are moving in the right direction!

★ SENATE MAJORITY LEADER CASEY ★  
**CRABTREE**

## The Start of a New (Fiscal) Year

MADISON—The South Dakota Legislature covered a lot of issues in the 2023 Session. Everything from abandoned mobile homes to truancy to golf carts to tax cuts. This week, we are on the eve of the Legislature's hard work taking effect on July 1 as well as the start of the new fiscal year for South Dakota. Here's a look at some of the most impactful policies taking effect.

**Lower Taxes.** The Tax Foundation stated that South Dakota taxed its people the fourth lowest per capita in FY2021. For 2022, the Tax Foundation ranked South Dakota as the second-best business tax climate in the country. News will be even better for 2023. The Legislature passed the largest tax cut in the state's history this year, which will save taxpayers an estimated \$500 million in the next four years. The good news doesn't stop there though, another \$18 million dollars annually in taxes on business owners was cut from the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Both of these tax cuts return the money to where it belongs, the pocket of South Dakotans.

**Education:** One of my top priorities in 2023 was to make college and technical school more affordable for South Dakota kids. We delivered on this promise with a tuition freeze that will result in one of the best investments in workforce development and the sustainability of South Dakota's economy. We are helping students reduce debt and fight Biden's inflation, while giving our children and grandchildren the best opportunities to succeed. This year members of the South Dakota National Guard will also receive 100 percent tuition reimbursement to attend our public universities. This is long overdue to help those that have sacrificed so much for our freedoms.

**Public Safety:** The state has the responsibility to protect the people of South Dakota. With our truth in sentencing bill, victims of violent crimes will know that their attackers will serve the time that the judge sentences. Violent criminals belong behind bars and starting in July they will stay there.

**Election Integrity:** South Dakota will now have the gold standard when it comes to election laws. A total of nine bills that focused on absentee voting, voter roll cleanup, ballot tabulation testing and post-election audits were passed through the legislature. Voters can have confidence that South Dakota's elections are secure when elections are held in 2024.

Looking ahead to the 2024 session, legislators are already working on county funding, long-term health-care sustainability, education reform, and greater economic freedoms. There are big challenges to tackle, but I'm confident that South Dakota's best days lie ahead.

###

## Rounds Joins Markey, Cruz and Colleagues on Bicameral, Bipartisan Legislation to Keep AM Radio in New Vehicles

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) joined Senators Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and 17 of their Senate colleagues on the AM for Every Vehicle Act. This bicameral and bipartisan legislation would direct federal regulators to require automakers to maintain AM broadcast radio in their new vehicles at no additional charge.

“Free AM broadcast radio has been an important resource for decades,” said Rounds. “Whether someone is in their car or tractor, AM radio is a valuable tool to share local news and emergency information. I grew up listening to KCCR on 1240 and KGFX on 1060, especially when I delivered newspapers throughout the Pierre area. It made the time go by quick! I am pleased to join Senators Markey and Cruz on this bipartisan legislation so our future generations have access to this free, key resource, especially in our rural areas across South Dakota.”

“For decades, free AM broadcast radio has been an essential tool in emergencies, a crucial part of our diverse media ecosystem, and an irreplaceable source for news, weather, sports, and entertainment for tens of millions of listeners,” said Markey. “Carmakers shouldn’t tune out AM radio in new vehicles or put it behind a costly digital paywall. I am proud to introduce the AM for Every Vehicle Act to ensure that this resilient and popular communication tool does not become a relic of the past.”

“Each day, millions of Americans turn to AM radio to stay up to date on life in their community, engage on the issues they care about, or to be simply entertained during rush hour,” said Cruz. “AM radio is a critical bulwark for democracy, providing a platform for alternative viewpoints and the ability for elected officials to share our efforts with our constituents. Congress should act swiftly to pass this bill so Americans retain access to news, music, talk, and emergency alerts on the public airwaves. I’m glad to work with Senator Markey on this bipartisan legislation to ensure carmakers do not limit Texans’ access to radio in their vehicles.”

Specifically, the AM for Every Vehicle Act would:

- Direct the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to issue a rule that requires automakers to maintain AM broadcast radio in their vehicles without a separate or additional payment, fee or surcharge.
- Require any automaker that sells vehicles without access to AM broadcast radio before the effective date of the NHTSA regulation to clearly disclose to consumers that the vehicle lacks access to AM broadcast radio.
- Direct the Government Accountability Office to study whether alternative communication systems could fully replicate the reach and effectiveness of AM broadcast radio for alerting the public to emergencies.

This legislation was also cosponsored by Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), J.D. Vance (R-Ohio), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Roger Marshall (R-Kan.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Rick Scott (R-Fla.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and Ted Budd (R-N.C.).

Companion legislation was introduced in the House by Representative Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.).

The AM for Every Vehicle Act is endorsed by the National Association of Broadcasters and the National Association of Farm Broadcasters.

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**HELP  
WANTED!**

## 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.

## Help Wanted

THE GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT has openings for the following certified positions for the 23-24 school year: K-12 Vocal Music Teacher, HS Agriculture Teacher/FFA Advisor. Applicants should complete and submit the certified staff application form along with a current cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation. All materials should be submitted to Joe Schwan, Superintendent PO Box 410 Groton, SD 57445. EOE

## For Sale

2010 Hitchhiker Discover America 345 Uk 5th wheel trailer, 36 feet long, 3 slides, \$17,000 or best offer. Can be seen at 715 N 2nd Street, Groton by calling 605-216-6468.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Pine Ridge nonprofit awarded \$1.5M grant to train Indigenous women for solar energy jobs**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 28, 2023 5:46 PM**

Pine Ridge-based solar energy nonprofit Red Cloud Renewable was awarded a \$1.5 million federal grant to increase the number of Native American women working in the solar industry.

The grant is part of the Biden Administration's "Investing in America" agenda aimed at achieving a 100% clean electricity grid by 2035 while boosting economic growth across the country. The grant is one of 12 nationwide with a total investment of \$13.5 million.

According to the 2022 U.S. Energy and Employment Report, Indigenous workers make up 1% of the 330,000 solar energy employees across the country — and Indigenous women make up a fraction of that percentage.

"President Biden's Investing in America agenda is accelerating the clean energy transition, resulting in the creation of hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs and boosting our growing clean energy economy," said U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm in a news release.

The Department of Energy expects solar energy will grow to between 500,000 and 1.5 million workers by 2035 to reach decarbonization goals.

That means there are plenty of job opportunities for Native Americans in South Dakota and across the country as that infrastructure is built, said John Red Cloud, managing director of Red Cloud Renewable.

Red Cloud Renewable is a training center focused on preparing students to enter the solar workforce or begin their own businesses. The program offers hands-on training over several months on how to install solar systems (including rooftop, ground mount and pole solar panels), installing over 1,000 solar systems and solar air furnaces since 2008. The installations are funded by donors.

Solar workers are paid \$21 an hour for an entry level position and upwards of \$28 an hour, nearly \$60,000, depending on their experience, Red Cloud said.

"Companies are screaming for workers," he added.

The program was started by Red Cloud's father in 2008. His goal of Native involvement in the solar industry centered not only on self sufficiency but the spirituality of the sun to Indigenous people. For example, the Sun Dance is one of the most important ceremonies practiced by the Lakota and Plains Indians, as it is a time of renewal, according to Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center.

"We're using a new way, solar technology, to honor the old ways," Red Cloud said, "giving reverence and respect to the life-giving power that the sun provides."

Red Cloud Renewable has worked with over 70 tribal nations since it started, training over 1,200 students. Red Cloud hopes the program can be replicated and scaled up on different reservations across the country.

This grant program will focus on expanding the number of Native women in the solar workforce by creating a mobile lab and offering family-centric services, such as on-site child care at the training center while students are attending class.

"Let's dot the countryside with solar. Let's help the trajectory to reach those carbon goals," Red Cloud said. "That's what we're doing, and we think Pine Ridge is a place to provide that example. If it can be done on Pine Ridge, then it can be done anywhere."

*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.*

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## COMMENTARY

### **Noem's actions speak louder than words on eminent domain**

by **DOUG SOMBKE**

South Dakota Farmers Union policy supports landowners' rights. Because of this, during the 2023 legislative session, we supported House Bill 1133.

In a nutshell, the bill would have excluded carbon dioxide as a common carrier commodity. Unlike electricity, water or natural gas transported via pipelines, transporting highly pressured CO2 only benefits two private investor groups in pursuit of federal tax incentives.

The legislation passed the House but died in the Senate. If the bill had passed the Senate, CO2 would not qualify for "eminent domain," which is a legal process to gain access to land from unwilling landowners. And Summit Carbon Solutions would not be drilling on farm ground owned by Brown County landowners like Jared Bossly. And farmers like Jared Bossly could focus on growing crops, not fighting in court with Summit Carbon Solutions.

While Farmers Union and other agriculture and landowner rights group lobbied for HB 1133, Summit Carbon Solutions' 12 lobbyists worked hard to influence senators against the bill. Summit Carbon Solutions also served as a platinum sponsor of the 2023 inauguration.

I share all this background with you because during a recent interview with KWAT Radio, Gov. Kristi Noem said she had no legal control over the fact that Summit Carbon Solutions is exercising eminent domain.

"There were several bills that came to the Legislature that would have addressed this," she said. "The Legislature killed them all. None of them made it to my desk."

The governor is the most powerful political position in our state, wielding extreme influence when it comes to lobbying for bills during legislative session. Yet, never did she or anyone from her office support HB 1133 or any other bill making property rights stronger for landowners.

In the radio interview, she also mentioned her failed bill targeting against Chinese investors, Senate Bill 185, which had nothing to with eminent domain or the way Summit Carbon Solutions is using it to abuse family farmers and ranchers.

The governor pivoted to that bill to throw listeners off the fact she has done nothing to support family farmers and property rights. Moreover, she is doing everything she can for her platinum sponsor of the 2023 inauguration, Summit Carbon Solutions.

The least this governor should have done is use her influence with her party leadership to make sure HB 1133 would get to the floor of the state Senate for debate and a vote. Remember, South Dakota's House and Senate along with all statewide elected officials are controlled by the same party: the governor's Republican Party. Any lack of action protecting family farmers from eminent domain abuse is clearly on the governor and her party leadership.

She also has the power to call a special session to address eminent domain's abuse of family farmers and county commissions, who are calling for specific pipeline setback limitations protecting the public.

In South Dakota, actions speak louder than words. Gov. Noem has clearly spoken with her lack of action.

*Doug Sombke is a fourth-generation farmer and president of South Dakota Farmers Union.*

## **\$14 million headed to SD as White House awards \$2.2B in transportation grants**

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JUNE 28, 2023 7:55 AM**

The U.S. Department of Transportation will send more than \$2.2 billion in grants to state, tribal and local governments under a grant program that was expanded under the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law.

The \$2.26 billion for 162 projects provides funds for each of the 50 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. It is similar to the allocation for the grant program last year, the first after President Joe Biden signed the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure law that added funding for the program.

The projects include improvements and expansions of roads, rail, bridges, pedestrian trails and maritime infrastructure.

In South Dakota, about \$14 million will be split between projects on two Native American reservations. About \$10.1 million will go toward reconstructing 1 mile of U.S. Highway 18 and a quarter-mile of state Highway 407 in Oglala, on the Pine Ridge Reservation. And about \$4.2 million will go toward planning and preconstruction activities to address problems with decades-old infrastructure, limited pedestrian access, lack of handicap accessibility and inefficient stormwater drainage on the Cheyenne River Reservation.

The Transportation Department has managed a similar discretionary grant program since 2010, though the name of the program and criteria have changed with each presidential administration. Funding levels, set by Congress, also vary year to year, ranging from roughly \$500 million to more than \$2 billion in each of the two years since the infrastructure law passed.

Under Biden, the department has prioritized projects that advance climate goals, racial equity and safety.

In a call with reporters previewing the announcement Tuesday, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg emphasized that all the projects were proposed and planned by local authorities.

"It is particularly focused on communities' needs," he said. "We don't design the projects at headquarters. We are proceeding very much on the idea that the answers don't all come from Washington, but more of the funding should."

No project received more than \$25 million from the program, the maximum for projects of less than \$45 million total cost. The department selected 22 projects to receive that maximum.

The funding is split between rural and urban projects, White House Infrastructure Coordinator Mitch Landrieu told reporters.

Most of the funding — 70% — will go toward either areas of persistent poverty or historically disadvantaged communities. That represented a record high for the program, Buttigieg said.

Many of the communities that received funding had sought federal help for the projects for years, Buttigieg said. The department will work with communities that submitted highly rated proposals that were not accepted in this round to improve their applications for future years, he said.

About 10 projects that received grants this year had applied last year, Assistant Secretary of Transportation Policy Christopher Coes said.

Buttigieg and Landrieu highlighted a handful of projects on Tuesday's call.

Iowa will receive \$24.7 million to rebuild nine bridges in rural areas. The bridges' poor condition forces detours for residents and commercial drivers, according to a DOT news release. The federal government will pay for most of those bridge repairs, estimated to total about \$31 million.

The city of Jackson, Kentucky, will receive \$21.1 million to widen a highway near Panbowl Lake. The area has been hit with severe flooding recently. The project will help improve resiliency to future floods, Buttigieg said.

An Atlanta trail project was among those receiving \$25 million. The project, which has a total cost of \$70.7 million, will add 4.8 miles to the BeltLine Northeast Trail, which is accessible to pedestrians and bicycles. The project will improve access to transit and to jobs, schools and other services in an area with 5,000 affordable housing units nearby.

— *The staff of South Dakota Searchlight contributed to this report.*

*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.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 7:04 PM

Low Temp: 63 °F at 2:57 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 12:06 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 41 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1931

Record Low: 42 in 1900

Average High: 83

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in June.: 3.63

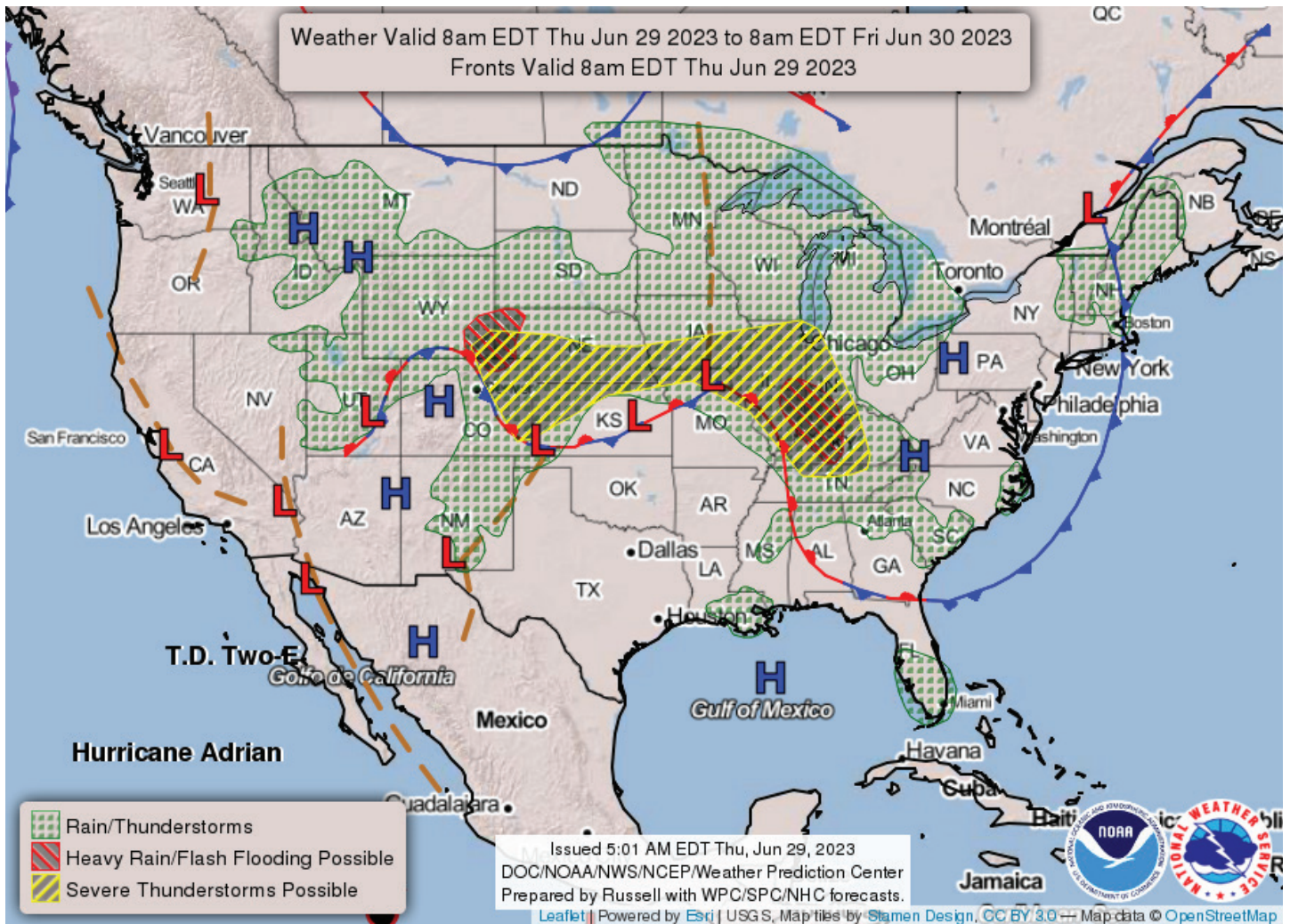
Precip to date in June.: 3.44

Average Precip to date: 10.88

Precip Year to Date: 11.35

Sunset Tonight: 9:26:47 PM

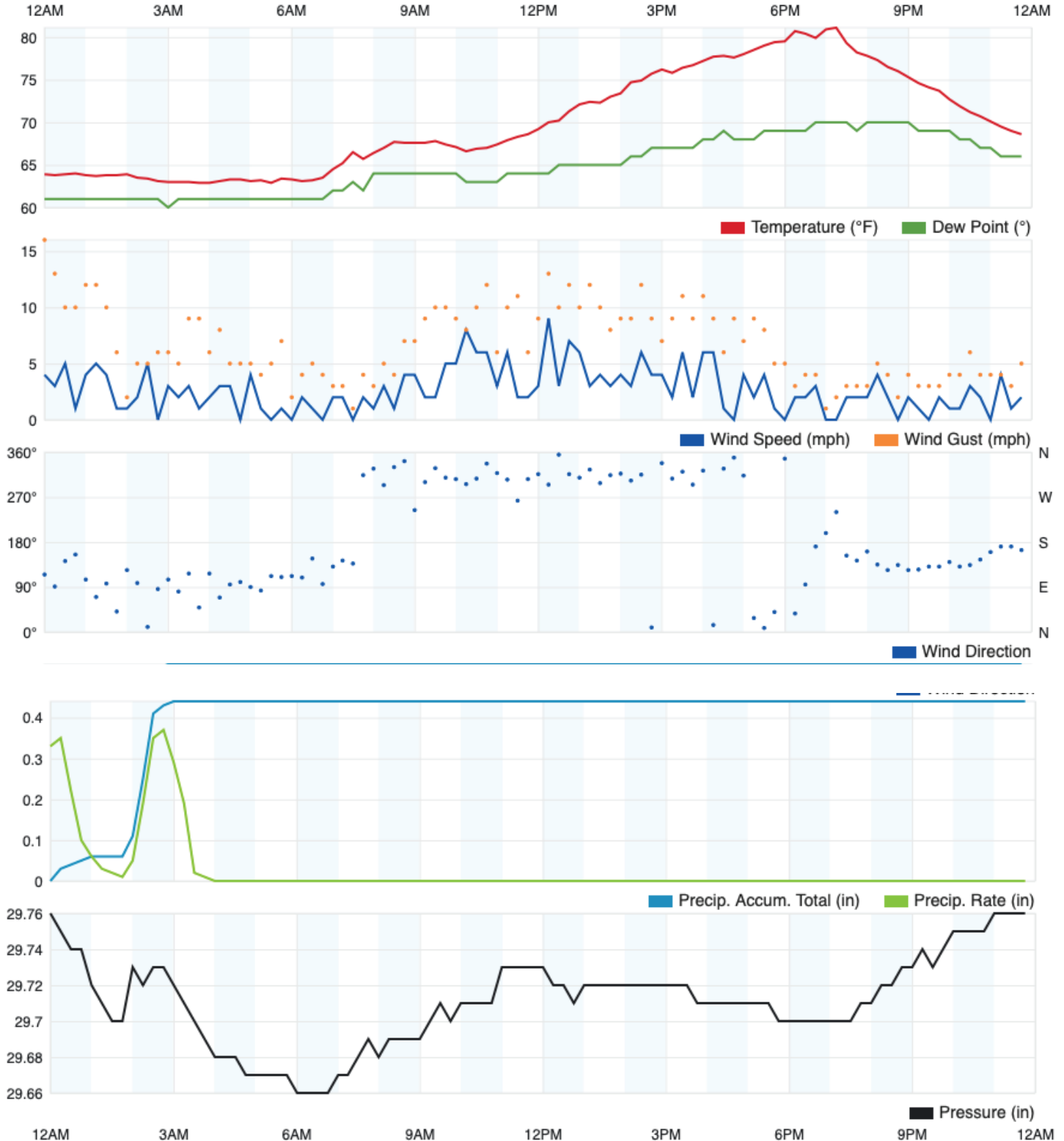
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45:32 AM



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Hot
High: 88 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 91 °F



## Afternoon Showers/Storms Possible

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)  
June 29, 2023 3:38 AM

Today	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
				
84-89°	83-86°	85-89°	89-93°	87-93°

Showers/storms possible south

Evening showers and storms are possible for areas around and south of I-90. Afternoon and evening showers/storms are possible almost every day through the holiday weekend. You can keep track of the forecast for your area at [www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr).

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## Today in Weather History

June 29, 1927: This estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from near Claremont, passing along the northwestern edge of Britton. The Claremont area had a \$12,000 loss as a large silo was destroyed. A dozen homes had roof damage in Britton.

June 29, 2005: Torrential rains of three to seven inches fell across far eastern Brown, western and northern Day, and most of Marshall Counties in the early morning and again in the afternoon hours. One location measured five inches of rain in two hours. Many township roads and highways were flooded along with thousands of acres of cropland. Water surrounded several homes resulting in people being rescued. Some of the houses were flooded. Many bridges were damaged, and roads and culverts were washed out. In Day County, 30 roads were washed out, and 15 bridges needed repairs. Some rainfall amounts include 5.04 inches in Britton, 3.34 at 8N of Columbia, and 2.08 in Aberdeen. Total June rainfall for some locations in Marshall and Day Counties was between 11 and 12 inches. The flooding continued into early July before receding by July 10th.

1826: Thomas Jefferson made his last entry in his weather observation log on this date, just six days before he died. The weather held a fascination for Jefferson as he made regular weather observations. He bought his first thermometer while working on the Declaration of Independence and his first barometer shortly after that.

1904: Tornado hits Karacharov Village area of Moscow killing about 24 people.

1931 - The temperature at Monticello FL hit 109 degrees to establish an all-time record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1954 - Hurricane Alice dumped as much as 27 inches of rain on the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The Rio Grande River at Laredo reached a level 12.6 feet above its previous highest mark, and the roadway of the U.S. 90 bridge was thirty feet below the high water. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes Region, with reports of large hail and damaging winds most numerous in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. Thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes in Michigan. A tornado near Clare MI was accompanied by softball size hail. In Colorado, an untimely winter-like storm blanketed Mount Evans with six inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Alpena, MI, reported a record low of 39 degrees while Jackson, MS, equalled their record for the month of June with an afternoon high of 105 degrees. Thunderstorms in the central U.S. soaked Springfield MO with 3.62 inches of rain, a record for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern and Central High Plains Region. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced softball size hail at Kit Carson, while pea to marble size hail caused ten million dollars damage to crops in Philips County, CO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: "The Corn Belt Derecho of 1998" in the following states NE, IA, IL, IN, KY. A derecho which originated in far southeast South Dakota moved across Illinois during the afternoon and evening and continued as far east as Ohio the next morning. Every county in central Illinois sustained some damage, as these severe thunderstorms passed. Winds gusted in the 60 to 80 mph range, with some localized microbursts producing winds more than 100 mph. Significant damage occurred in the microburst areas, including the towns of Morton, McLean, LeRoy, and Tolono. In Tolono, 22 cars of a southbound 101-car Illinois Central freight train were blown off the tracks. It was unknown how many vehicles were picked up by the wind, but 16 cars were turned over, and another six derailed but remained upright. The train was en route to Centralia from Chicago with a load of mixed freight, including plastic pellets and meal. The freight cars empty weighed about 60,000 pounds, while a full one weighs about 260,000 pounds. Overall, 12 people were injured, and damage was estimated at around \$16 million.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### IS GOD ASLEEP?

A small child was having a difficult time being quiet in church. Whispering in his ear, his father said in desperation, "Hush, this is where God lives. Be quiet when you are in His house!"

"Why?" asked the child. "Is God asleep?"

Certainly not. Our God, the God Who created heaven and earth - and all that is in it and on it and above it - has promised us in His Word that He is always watching over us, day and night. We must never forget that He is "awake," watching carefully and waiting patiently to guide and guard us. This One, this all-powerful God, who loved us and gave His Son to redeem us, is always available to meet our every need - every moment of every day!

We often forget that God is constantly watching over us and caring deeply for us. More than anyone we know, He is for us. We often "trade Him in" for lesser "gods" who cannot be trusted - the gods of money and power, prestige and worldly success. Even though we turn to them often and trust in them deeply, only the God who created us will always be faithful to us, strengthen and sustain us and never abandon us. In Him we are safe and secure - day and night.

Prayer: Lord, help us to recognize that Your watchful eye is carefully overseeing our lives with compassion. May we realize that You are meeting each need. THANKS! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I lift up my eyes to the mountains -where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121



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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## Groton Daily Independent

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.27.23

8 34 35 41 52 12

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$368,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 29  
DRAW: Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.28.23

9 28 33 43 47 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$4,780,000**

NEXT 2 Days 14 Hrs 44  
DRAW: Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.28.23

14 27 38 40 45 13

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 14 Hrs 59 Mins 55  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.28.23

2 11 17 29 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$124,000**

NEXT 2 Days 14 Hrs 59  
DRAW: Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.28.23

27 33 48 64 69 23

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 28  
DRAW: Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.28.23

19 25 34 57 68 4

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$493,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 28  
DRAW: Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **\$115M in federal grants will give a boost to smaller meat processors in 17 states**

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Smaller meat and poultry operators in 17 states will receive \$115 million in grants, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Thursday.

The USDA grants are the latest in a series of awards the Biden administration has made that are intended to increase meat and poultry processing, benefiting farmers and providing more job opportunities in largely rural areas.

“While American farmers and ranchers have been responding to the demand to produce more, their communities have struggled to see their share of the benefits,” Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement ahead of a meeting Thursday morning in Des Moines with producers and business owners. The participants were expected to talk with Vilsack about ways to strengthen and market farm and food businesses.

The funding includes 10 awards to recipients in 12 states totaling \$77 million through a program that finances the start-up or expansion of meat and poultry processing plants. The awards include \$15 million to Mountain West Economic Development in Montana to expand slaughterhouse operations in the state’s Flathead Valley, and \$800,000 that will go toward the Farmers Union Foundation for smaller processors in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

The USDA made five awards totaling \$38 million through a slaughterhouse expansion program that will help independent producers in five states.

Projects receiving funding are in Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin.

### **EU leaders to assess Putin’s position in talks with NATO and Ukraine chiefs at summit**

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — All eyes were on NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at Thursday’s European Union summit because their presence will underscore the importance the 27 EU leaders attach to protecting their eastern flank from Russian aggression and beefing up Ukraine’s defense capabilities.

Zelenskyy is set to address the gathering by video link and Stoltenberg will host an early lunch at the spring summit for leaders. But the biggest seat at the table will be reserved for something that’s not officially on the agenda: the fallout from the stunning weekend mutiny in Russia.

“The mutiny we saw at the weekend demonstrates that there are cracks and divisions within the Russian system. At the same time, it is important to underline that these are internal Russian matters,” said Stoltenberg on arrival at the summit.

President Gitanas Nausėda of Lithuania, one of several EU nations bordering Russia, insisted it was all the more reason to take a robust posture toward Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“Some colleagues sometimes say that a strong Putin is less dangerous than a weak Putin. I don’t agree with that. We have to move forward and be decisive, because now is a crucial moment of history,” he said.

Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins of Latvia, another nation bordering Russia, said that “we cannot control what is happening inside Russia, but we can control what we do on the outside.”

Officials from several member states and EU institutions said the chaos and instability created by the rebellion would not only force the EU to double down on its support for Ukraine with commitments for

more ammunition but also to ensure fighting and violence does not spill over into the bloc itself.

"There is no room for hesitation," said Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas. "We must continue to increase the price of Russian aggression."

Within the EU, some are saying that the effects of the mutiny reach right into the Kremlin.

"In any case, they will certainly have a long-lasting impact in Russia," German Chancellor Olof Scholz told the broadcaster ARD. "I do believe that (Russian President Vladimir Putin) has been weakened."

Scholz was saying aloud what many EU leaders have been hoping. And they see the increasing impact of 11 sets of sanctions that the EU has imposed in conjunction with the United States as key.

And even if the EU holds back from offering any military guarantees, the prevailing mood is for leaders to toughen the language in their summit conclusions. In the latest draft, obtained by the Associated Press, the leaders say they "stand ready to contribute, together with partners, to future security commitments to Ukraine, which will help Ukraine defend itself in the long term, deter acts of aggression and resist destabilization efforts."

Most EU nations are also members of NATO, and at the July 11-12 alliance summit they will look to offer Ukraine more security guarantees, if stopping short of full NATO membership. That approach for more support is expected to be fully endorsed by the time the two-day summit ends.

EU nations have also been providing billions in aid to both beef up Ukraine's military stockpiles and to make sure the country's battered economy stays afloat. EU leaders will also look more closely at using Russia's frozen assets - estimated at some 200 billion euros - for that purpose.

Several countries fear the legal ground for that is still too shaky and the European Central Bank has warned that confiscating those assets or profits accrued from them could pose a serious risk to the reputation of the euro. Officials said that some countries want to impose an additional windfall levy on the money to use for Ukraine's reconstruction.

"It's like low hanging fruit," Karins said of the frozen Russian assets. "We need to find a legal basis to utilize, mobilize these to help Russia pay for the damage Russia is causing."

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## France will deploy 40,000 police officers to quell violence that followed deadly police shooting

By SYLVIE CORBET and ALEX TURNBULL Associated Press

NANTERRE, France (AP) — A French police officer who shot and killed a 17-year-old driver will be investigated for voluntary homicide, following two days of fires and violent protests that injured scores of officers, officials said Thursday.

Some 40,000 police officers will be deployed overnight to quell violence that engulfed cities and towns in the wake of the shooting.

The killing of 17-year-old Nahel during a traffic check Tuesday, captured on video, shocked the country and stirred up long-simmering tensions between young people and police in housing projects and other disadvantaged neighborhoods around France.

Protesters set cars and public buildings ablaze in Paris suburbs and unrest spread to some other French cities and towns.

"The professionals of disorder must go home," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said. "There will be a lot more police and gendarmes present tonight."

Darmanin said 170 officers had been injured in the unrest but none of the injuries were life-threatening.

Nanterre prosecutor Pascal Prache said that he had requested that the officer be held in custody. That decision is to be made by another magistrate.

Based on an initial investigation, Prache said, he concluded that "the conditions for the legal use of the weapon were not met."

Three persons were in the car when police tried to stop it Tuesday, the prosecutor said. Nahel managed to avoid a traffic stop by running a red light. He was later got stuck in a traffic jam.

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Both officers involved said they drew their guns to prevent him from starting the car again.

The officer who fired a single shot said he wanted to prevent the car from leaving and because he feared someone may be hit by the car, including himself or his colleague, according to Prache.

Both officers said they felt "threatened" by seeing the car drive off, he added.

Two magistrates have been named to lead the investigation, Prache said. Under the French legal system, which differs from the U.S. and British systems, magistrates are often assigned to lead investigations.

In a separate case, a police officer who fatally shot a 19-year-old Guinean man in western France earlier this month was handed preliminary charges of voluntary homicide, according to a statement by the local prosecutor on Wednesday. The man was fatally shot by an officer as he allegedly tried to escape a traffic stop. The investigation is still ongoing.

Clashes first erupted Tuesday night in and around the Paris suburb of Nanterre, where Nahel was killed, and the government deployed 2,000 police to maintain order Wednesday. But violence resumed after dusk.

Nahel's surname has not been released by authorities or by his family. In earlier statements, lawyers for the family spelled the name Nael.

Police and firefighters struggled to contain protesters and extinguish numerous blazes through the night that damaged schools, police stations and town halls or other public buildings, according to a spokesperson for the national police. The national police on Thursday reported fires or skirmishes in multiple cities overnight, from Toulouse in the south to Lille in the north, though the nexus of tensions was Nanterre and other Paris suburbs.

Police arrested 150 people around the country, more than half of them in the Paris region, the spokesperson said. She was not authorized to be publicly named according to police rules.

The number of injured was not immediately released.

Scenes of violence in France's suburban areas echo 2005, when the deaths of 15-year-old Bouna Traoré and 17-year-old Zyed Benna led to three weeks of nationwide riots, exposing anger and resentment in neglected, crime-ridden suburban housing projects.

The two boys entered a power substation to hide from police in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, and were electrocuted.

French President Emmanuel Macron held an emergency security meeting Thursday about the violence. "These acts are totally unjustifiable," Macron said at the beginning of the meeting, which aimed at securing hot spots and planning for the coming days "so full peace can return."

Macron also said it was time for "remembrance and respect" as Nahel's mother called for a silent march Thursday in his honor on the square where he was killed.

Multiple vehicles were set ablaze in Nanterre and protesters shot fireworks and threw stones at police, who fired repeated volleys of tear gas. Flames shot out of three stories of a building, and a blaze was reported at an electrical plant. Fire damaged the town hall of the Paris suburb of L'Île-Saint-Denis, not far from France's national stadium and the headquarters of the Paris 2024 Olympics.

The police officer accused of the killing is in custody on suspicion of manslaughter and could face preliminary charges as soon as Thursday, according to the Nanterre prosecutor's office.

French activists renewed calls to tackle what they see as systemic police abuse, particularly in neighborhoods like the one where Nahel lived, where many residents struggle with poverty and racial or class discrimination. Government officials condemned the killing and sought to distance themselves from the police officer's actions.

Macron called the killing "inexplicable and inexcusable" and called for calm. "Nothing justifies the death of a young person," he told reporters in Marseille on Wednesday.

Videos of the shooting shared online show two police officers leaning into the driver-side window of a yellow car before the vehicle pulls away as one officer fires into the window. The videos show the car later crashed into a post nearby.

The driver died at the scene, the prosecutor's office said.

Bouquets of orange and yellow roses now mark the site of the shooting, on Nanterre's Nelson Mandela

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Square.

Speaking to Parliament, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said, "the shocking images broadcast yesterday show an intervention that appears clearly not to comply with the rules of engagement of our police forces."

Deadly use of firearms is less common in France than in the United States, though several people have died or sustained injuries at the hands of French police in recent years, prompting demands for more accountability. France also saw protests against racial profiling and other injustice in the wake of George Floyd's killing by police in Minnesota.

The most recent government statistics available show that 17 people were killed after police and gendarmerie officers shot at them in 2021.

Asked about police abuses, Macron said justice should be allowed to run its course.

A lawyer for Nahel's family, Yassine Bouzrou, told The Associated Press they want the police officer prosecuted for murder instead of manslaughter.

French soccer star Kylian Mbappe, who grew up in the Paris suburb of Bondy, was among many shocked by what happened.

"I hurt for my France," he tweeted.

Corbet reported from Paris. Oleg Cetinic and Christophe Ena in Nanterre, and Angela Charlton in Paris, contributed.

## UK appeals court rules that plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is unlawful

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A British court ruled Thursday that a government plan to send asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda is unlawful, delivering a blow to the Conservative administration's pledge to stop migrants making risky journeys across the English Channel.

In a split two-to-one ruling, three Court of Appeal judges said Rwanda could not be considered a "safe third country" where migrants could be sent.

But the judges said that a policy of deporting asylum seekers to another country was not in itself illegal. The government is likely to challenge the ruling at the U.K. Supreme Court. It has until July 6 to lodge an appeal.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has pledged to "stop the boats" — a reference to the overcrowded dinghies and other small craft that make the journey from northern France carrying migrants who hope to live in the U.K. More than 45,000 people arrived in Britain across the Channel in 2022, and several died in the attempt.

The U.K. and Rwandan governments agreed more than a year ago that some migrants who arrive in the U.K. as stowaways or in small boats would be sent to Rwanda, where their asylum claims would be processed. Those granted asylum would stay in the East African country rather than return to Britain.

The U.K. government argues that the policy will smash the business model of criminal gangs that ferry migrants on hazardous journeys across one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Human rights groups say it is immoral and inhumane to send people more than 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) to a country they don't want to live in, and argue that most Channel migrants are desperate people who have no authorized way to come to the U.K. They also cite Rwanda's poor human rights record, including allegations of torture and killings of government opponents.

Britain has already paid Rwanda 140 million pounds (\$170 million) under the deal, but no one has yet been deported there.

Britain's High Court ruled in December that the policy is legal and doesn't breach Britain's obligations under the U.N. Refugee Convention or other international agreements, rejecting a lawsuit from several asylum-seekers, aid groups and a border officials' union.

But the court allowed the claimants, who include asylum-seekers from Iraq, Iran and Syria facing de-

portation under the government plan, to challenge that decision on issues including whether the plan is “systemically unfair” and whether asylum-seekers would be safe in Rwanda.

In a partial victory for the government, the appeals court ruled Thursday that the U.K.’s international obligations did not rule out removing asylum-seekers to a safe third country.

But two of the three ruled Rwanda was not safe because its asylum system had “serious deficiencies.” They said asylum seekers “would face a real risk of being returned to their countries of origin,” where they could be mistreated.

Lord Chief Justice Ian Burnett – the most senior judge in England and Wales – disagreed with his two colleagues. He said assurances given by the Rwandan government were enough to ensure the migrants would be safe.

The government of Rwanda took issue with the ruling, saying the nation is “one of the safest countries in the world.”

“As a society, and as a government, we have built a safe, secure, dignified environment, in which migrants and refugees have equal rights and opportunities as Rwandans,” said government spokeswoman Yolande Makolo. “Everyone relocated here under this partnership will benefit from this.”

Yasmine Ahmed, U.K. director of Human Rights Watch, said the verdict was “some rare good news in an otherwise bleak landscape for human rights in the U.K.”

She urged Home Secretary Suella Braverman, the minister in charge of immigration, to “abandon this unworkable and unethical fever dream of a policy and focus her efforts on fixing our broken and neglected migration system.”

Even if the plan is ultimately ruled legal, it’s unclear how many people could be sent to Rwanda. The government’s own assessment acknowledges it would be extremely expensive, coming in at an estimated 169,000 pounds (\$214,000) per person.

But it is doubling down on the idea, drafting legislation barring anyone who arrives in the U.K. in small boats or by other unauthorized means from applying for asylum. If passed, the bill would compel the government to detain all such arrivals and deport them to their homeland or a safe third country.

Follow AP’s coverage of global migration at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>

## Trump’s GOP support dips slightly after his indictment over classified documents, AP-NORC poll finds

By JILL COLVIN and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump’s criminal indictment on charges of mishandling government secrets appears to have dented his popularity among Republicans — but only slightly — according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Sixty percent of Republicans now have a favorable view of Trump, down slightly from April, when 68% of Republicans said they had a favorable view of the 2024 GOP presidential front-runner. The poll found 38% of Republicans have an unfavorable view of Trump, an uptick from 30% in April.

The dip suggests some Republicans could be growing weary of Trump’s never-ending legal drama after he became the first former president in U.S. history to be indicted on federal criminal charges. Trump, who was also indicted on separate charges in New York this spring, pleaded not guilty this month to 37 felony counts accusing him of improperly storing classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, concealing them from investigators and refusing to turn them over when subpoenaed.

Overall, Americans are more likely to have an unfavorable view of Trump than a favorable one, 63% to 33%, similar to April. The poll was conducted June 22-26, after the full indictment became public and after Trump’s not guilty plea.

The poll also finds that U.S. adults overall are slightly more likely than they were earlier in the year to believe the former president acted illegally in his handling of classified documents stashed at Mar-a-Lago.



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Just over half, 53%, now say he broke the law, compared with 47% in the April AP-NORC poll. But most of that increase is attributable to Democrats.

An overwhelming majority of Democratic voters, 84%, now say they think Trump broke the law in connection to the documents, compared with 75% who said so in April.

When it comes to Republicans, however, only about a quarter say Trump acted illegally in the Mar-a-Lago case, about the same as in April. An additional 29% said he acted unethically but did not do anything illegal, while 26% said they believe he did nothing wrong, with the rest saying they didn't know enough to say.

They include Patty Faber, a registered Republican who lives north of Phoenix and was dismissive of the charges.

"It's a bunch of hooley," said Faber, 62, who runs an RV park. "Should he have taken all that stuff home? No. But other presidents have also taken things home." She noted that President Joe Biden and former Vice President Mike Pence were also found to have classified documents in their possession — though neither has been accused of trying to conceal the documents from or lying to investigators.

Still, Faber, who has supported Trump in the past, said that while she would be "ecstatic" to see him return to the White House, she would much prefer the party nominate Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is currently a distant second in the polls.

"He has a better chance of winning the general election. Trump is carrying too much baggage now," she said.

Others' feelings were more complicated. Nancy Tobeck, 74, a Republican in Crossville, Tennessee, believes Trump may have potentially broken the law. But if he did, she said, "I don't think it was deliberate."

"It's a hard one because I think he might have done something wrong by not giving them all over. But I also understand that he had things in there. So it's kind of half and half on that," she said. "I do believe that it is politically motivated, though."

Tobeck, who voted for Trump in 2016 and 2020, said the indictment had not changed her feelings about Trump because she had already soured on the former president after he refused to accept the results of the 2020 election.

Still, the numbers make clear the challenges faced by Trump's GOP rivals, who have struggled to respond to charges that would, in any other era, spell a candidate's demise. While former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley called Trump's alleged actions "reckless" and Pence has said he "can't defend" the "very serious allegations," the candidates have also criticized the Justice Department, reflecting GOP voters' deep skepticism of federal law enforcement.

Besides the charges he faces in Florida, Trump was indicted in New York in March in connection to hush money payments made during the 2016 campaign to women who alleged sexual encounters with him. And he faces additional potential charges in other jurisdictions.

In Georgia, a prosecutor is investigating efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the 2020 election. And in Washington, special counsel Jack Smith continues to investigate Trump's election lies and their aftermath, including the violent riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The poll finds half of U.S. adults believe Trump broke the law in his alleged attempt to interfere in Georgia's vote count during the 2020 presidential election. Slightly fewer, 45%, say his actions related to the Jan. 6 insurrection were unlawful.

Just 35% of U.S. adults say he acted illegally in allegedly covering up the hush money payments — a slight decrease from the 41% who said he had in April, just after the indictment in that case. In particular, 57% of Democrats now say Trump acted illegally in that case, down from 68% in April. Just 13% of Republicans say Trump acted illegally in that case, the same as in April.

Nearly all U.S. adults have read or heard at least a little about Trump's federal indictment, with Democrats being slightly more likely than Republicans to say they have heard a lot.

All that attention has proved a challenge for Trump's GOP rivals, who have been grappling with how to break into the spotlight.

Some voters are already sick of the drama.

Paul Schwartz, 38, a truck driver from Pocatello, Idaho, identifies as an independent but voted for Trump

in 2016 and 2020 because he saw him as the better of bad options.

While he says he's no fan of Trump — "I've always disdained the man," he said — Schwartz sees the indictment as nothing but a "witch hunt" and "mudslinging that has no point."

"I believe people are trying to swing opinions on things that are completely irrelevant to how someone governs the country," he said, arguing that what matters are candidates' positions on issues like abortion and immigration.

Plus, he said: "We know these are detestable human beings. They're politicians. That's a job requirement."

The poll of 1,220 adults was conducted June 22-26 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

## Indonesia's Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha with feasts after disease last year disrupted rituals

By ANDI JATMIKO and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Muslims across Indonesia on Thursday were celebrating Eid al-Adha, one of the biggest holidays in the Islamic calendar, with full meat-based feasts after fears of last year's foot-and-mouth disease outbreak waned.

Eid al-Adha, known as the "Feast of Sacrifice," coincides with the final rites of the annual hajj in Saudi Arabia. It's a joyous occasion, for which food is a hallmark with devout Muslims buying and slaughtering animals and sharing two-thirds of the meat with the poor.

Many Southeast Asia nations, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore observed Eid al-Adha on Thursday, while Muslims in other parts of the globe, including in countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Afghanistan and Nigeria, celebrated the holiday on Wednesday. It varies according to moon sightings in different parts of the world.

On Thursday, worshippers shoulder-to-shoulder joined in communal prayers in the streets of Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. Mosques flooded with devotees offering morning prayers, including in Jakarta's Istiqlal Grand Mosque, the largest in Southeast Asia.

"Thank God, we can pray Eid al-Adha with our family and celebrate the festival without fears of the outbreak and pandemic," said Neisya Fabiola, a Jakarta resident. "This year's celebration is much more lively than last years."

Eid al-Adha holiday in Indonesia is known for its lavish meat-based feasts, which are made with the meat from the sacrifice. Huge crowds filled the yards of mosques to participate in ritual animal slaughter for the festival.

Indonesia's government has decided to extend this year's feast of sacrifice holiday by giving an extra two days of mandatory leave before and after the Muslim festival in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country.

President Joko Widodo said the decision was geared toward spurring economic activities and tourism in the world's largest archipelago nation.

"It would allow more time for people to travel and enjoy their holiday in a bid to spur more economic activities, particularly domestic tourism," Widodo said last week.

Indonesia, like the rest of the world, is struggling to come out of an economic recession fueled by the pandemic with the Ukraine war and soaring energy and food prices creating complications in the recovery.

Eid al-Adha commemorates the Quranic tale of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Ismail as an act of obedience to God. Before he could carry out the sacrifice, God provided a ram as an offering. In the Christian and Jewish telling, Abraham is ordered to kill another son, Isaac.

Last year, a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak disrupted the ritual slaughter of animals to mark Eid al-Adha in Indonesia. But the government has worked to overcome that outbreak.

Foot-and-mouth disease is an acute, highly contagious viral disease of cloven-footed animals that is

sometimes transmitted to humans. It significantly dampened the typically booming holiday trade in goats, cows and sheep in Indonesia.

The disease returned to Indonesia last year, which had been outbreak-free for 32 years. The government, struggling to cope, set up a task force and ordered the culling of tens thousands infected livestock.

The trend of active cases was observed to have decreased with zero new cases in the recent weeks, with the remaining active cases of 4,682 as of Monday, out of a total of 630,706 cases largely on the most populated islands of Java and Sumatra, according to data from the National FMD Task Force.

## **Police release body camera video of an officer killing the gunman who killed 8 at a Texas mall**

ALLEN, Texas (AP) — Police released video footage on Wednesday of an officer killing a neo-Nazi gunman, quickly ending a mass shooting that left eight people dead and seven others wounded at a Dallas-area shopping mall.

The edited five-and-a-half-minute video details the final moments of Mauricio Garcia, 33, after he unleashed a rain of bullets from an AR-15-style rifle at the Allen Premium Outlets on May 6.

Those killed included three members of a Korean American family including a 3-year-old child, two young sisters, a security guard and an engineer from India.

Police haven't revealed a motive for the attack.

The shooting came in a year that has seen an unprecedented pace of mass killings.

The footage from a body camera worn by an Allen police officer starts off with the officer telling two children outside the mall to wear their seatbelts and be good.

Moments later, the sound of rapid gunfire erupts from the mall. The children and a woman with them run away as the officer radios in the report, grabs his rifle from his car and dashes toward the gunfire, the body camera footage shows.

As he runs, the panting officer shouts at people to move and get out. At one point, he tells the dispatcher, "I believe we've got a mass shooter" and shouts at the gunman to drop his weapon.

"I'm passing injured (people)," he adds.

The officer continues to run through the outside galleries of the outlet as the sound of gunfire bursts continues. About four minutes into the video, the officer opens fire with at least a half-dozen shots.

An instant later, the officer shouts: "Drop the gun!" and then reports: "I've got him down!"

Another officer then confirms the gunman is dead.

The video ends with the two officers standing next to the gunman's body, which is blurred out.

The video was released a day after a grand jury cleared the officer of wrongdoing, indicating that "the use of force was justified under Texas law," according to a police statement.

In the statement, Allen Police Chief Brian Harvey praised the officer.

"This video shows how quickly a routine interaction with the public turned into a life-and-death situation," Harvey said. "The officer recognized the danger, ran toward the gunfire and neutralized the threat — and for his actions, the Allen community is forever grateful."

Three members of a Korean American family were killed: Kyu Song Cho, 37; Cindy Cho, 35; and their 3-year-old son, James Cho. Their 6-year-old son was wounded.

Also killed were Aishwarya Thatikonda, 27; sisters Daniela Mendoza, 11, and Sofia Mendoza, 8; security guard Christian LaCour, 20; and Elio Cumana-Rivas, 32.

Garcia used one of eight legally purchased guns he had brought to the mall, authorities said.

The killer had no criminal record. An Army official told The Associated Press that Garcia failed to complete basic training about 15 years earlier and was kicked out for mental health reasons. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

Garcia left a long trail of online posts describing his white supremacist and misogynistic views. He described mass shootings as sport and posted photos showing his large Nazi tattoos and a favorite passage in the "Hunger Games" books marked with a swastika drawn in green highlighter.

He was Latino, and he posted one cartoon image showing a Latino child at a fork in a road, with one direction labeled "act black" and the other, "become a white supremacist."

"I think I'll take my chances with the white supremacist," he wrote.

## Expect a hot, smoky summer in much of America. Here's why you'd better get used to it

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The only break much of America can hope for anytime soon from eye-watering dangerous smoke from fire-struck Canada is brief bouts of shirt-soaking sweltering heat and humidity from a southern heat wave that has already proven deadly, forecasters say.

And then the smoke will likely come back to the Midwest and East.

That's because neither the 235 out-of-control Canadian wildfires nor the stuck weather pattern that's responsible for this mess of meteorological maladies are showing signs of relenting for the next week or longer, according to meteorologists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Prediction Center.

First, the stuck weather pattern made abnormally hot and dry conditions for Canada to burn at off-the-chart record levels. Then it created a setup where the only relief comes when low pressure systems roll through, which means areas on one side get smoky air from the north and the other gets sweltering air from the south.

Smoke or heat. "Pick your poison," said prediction center forecast operations chief Greg Carbin. "The conditions are not going to be very favorable."

"As long as those fires keep burning up there, that's going to be a problem for us," Carbin said. "As long as there's something to burn, there will be smoke we have to deal with."

Take St. Louis. The city had two days of unhealthy air Tuesday and Wednesday, but for Thursday "they'll get an improvement of air quality with the very hot and humid heat," said weather prediction center meteorologist Bryan Jackson. The forecast is for temperatures that feel like 109 degrees (42.8 degrees Celsius) — with 101 degree (38.3 degrees Celsius) heat and stifling humidity.

On Wednesday, the low pressure system was parked over New England and because winds go counter-clockwise, areas to the west — such as Chicago and the Midwest — get smoky winds from the north, while areas east of the low pressure get southerly hot winds, Jackson said.

As that low pressure system moves on and another one travels over the central Great Plains and Lake Superior, the Midwest gets temporary relief, Jackson said. But when low pressure moves on, the smoke comes back.

"We have this this carousel of air cruising around the Midwest, and every once in a while is bringing the smoke directly onto whatever city you live in," said University of Chicago atmospheric scientist Liz Moyer. "And while the fires are ongoing, you can expect to see these periodic bad air days and the only relief is either when the fires go out or when the weather pattern dies."

The stuck weather pattern is "awfully unusual," said NOAA's Carbin who had to look back in records to 1980 to see anything even remotely similar. "What gets me is the persistence of this."

Why is the weather pattern stuck? This seems to be happening more often — and some scientists suggest that human-caused climate change causes more situations where weather patterns stall. Moyer and Carbin said it's too soon to tell if that's the case.

But Carbin and Canadian fire scientist Mike Flannigan said there's a clear climate signal in the Canadian fires. And they said those fires aren't likely to die down anytime soon, with nothing in the forecast that looks likely to change.

Nearly every province in Canada has fires burning. A record 30,000 square miles (80,000 square kilometers) have burned, an area nearly as large as South Carolina, according to the Canadian government.

And fire season usually doesn't really get going until July in Canada.

"It's been a crazy crazy year. It's unusual to have the whole country on fire," said Flannigan, a professor at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia. "Usually it's regional... not the whole shebang at once."

Hotter than normal and drier air made for ideal fire weather, Flannigan said. Warmer weather from climate change means the atmosphere sucks more moisture out of plants, making them more likely to catch fire, burn faster and hotter.

"Fires are all about extremes," he said.

And where there's fire, there's smoke.

Both high heat and smoky conditions are stressors on the body and can present potential challenges to human health, said Ed Avol, a professor emeritus at the Keck School of Medicine at University of Southern California.

But Avol added that while the haze of wildfire smoke provides a visual cue to stay inside, there can be hidden dangers of breathing in harmful pollutants such as ozone even when the sky looks clear. He also noted there are air chemistry changes that can happen downwind of wildfire smoke, which may have additional and less well-understood impacts on the body.

It's still only June. The seasonal forecast for the rest of the summer in Canada "is for hot and mostly dry" and that's not good for dousing fires, Flannigan said. "It's a crazy year and I'm not sure where it's going to end."

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Associated Press reporter Melina Walling contributed from Chicago.

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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.

## **Facebook content moderators in Kenya call the work 'torture.'** **Their lawsuit may ripple worldwide**

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI and CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — On the verge of tears, Nathan Nkunzimana recalled watching a video of a child being molested and another of a woman being killed.

Eight hours a day, his job as a content moderator for a Facebook contractor required him to look at horrors so the world wouldn't have to. Some overwhelmed colleagues would scream or cry, he said.

Now, Nkunzimana is among nearly 200 former employees in Kenya who are suing Facebook and local contractor Sama over working conditions that could have implications for social media moderators around the world. It is the first known court challenge outside the United States, where Facebook settled with moderators in 2020.

The group was employed at the social media giant's outsourced hub for content moderation in Kenya's capital of Nairobi, where workers screen posts, videos, messages and other content from users across Africa, removing any illegal or harmful material that breaches its community standards and terms of service.

The moderators from several African countries are seeking a \$1.6 billion compensation fund after alleging poor working conditions, including insufficient mental health support and low pay. Earlier this year, they were laid off by Sama as it left the business of content moderation. They assert that the companies are ignoring a court order for their contracts to be extended until the case is resolved.

Facebook and Sama have defended their employment practices.

With little certainty of how long the case will take to conclude, the moderators expressed despair as money and work permits run out and they wrestle with the traumatic images that haunt them.

"If you feel comfortable browsing and going through the Facebook page, it is because there's someone like me who has been there on that screen, checking, 'Is this okay to be here?'" Nkunzimana, a father of three from Burundi, told The Associated Press in Nairobi.

The 33-year-old said content moderation is like "soldiers" taking a bullet for Facebook users, with workers watching harmful content showing killing, suicide and sexual assault and making sure it is taken down.

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For Nkuzimana and others, the job began with a sense of pride, feeling like they were “heroes to the community,” he said.

But as the exposure to alarming content reignited past traumas for some like him who had fled political or ethnic violence back home, the moderators found little support and a culture of secrecy.

They were asked to sign nondisclosure agreements. Personal items like phones were not allowed at work.

After his shift, Nkuzimana would go home exhausted and often locked himself in his bedroom to try to forget what he had seen. Even his wife had no idea what his job was like.

These days, he locks himself in his room to avoid his sons’ questions about why he’s no longer working and why they likely can no longer afford school fees. The salary for content moderators was \$429 per month, with non-Kenyans getting a small expat allowance on top of that.

The Facebook contractor, U.S.-based Sama, did little to ensure post-traumatic professional counseling was offered to moderators in its Nairobi office, Nkuzimana said. He said counselors were poorly trained to deal with what his colleagues were experiencing. Now, with no mental health care, he immerses himself in church instead.

Facebook parent Meta has said its contractors are contractually obliged to pay their employees above the industry standard in the markets they operate and provide on-site support by trained practitioners.

A spokesman said Meta could not comment on the Kenya case.

In an email to the AP, Sama said the salaries it offered in Kenya were four times the local minimum wage and that “over 60% of male employees and over 70% of female employees were living below the international poverty line (less than \$1.90 a day)” before being hired.

Sama said all employees had unlimited access to one-on-one counseling “without fear of repercussions.” The contractor also called a recent court decision to extend the moderators’ contracts “confusing” and asserted that a later ruling pausing that decision means it has not gone into effect.

Such work has the potential to be “incredibly psychologically damaging,” but job-seekers in lower-income countries might take the risk in exchange for an office job in the tech industry, said Sarah Roberts, an expert in content moderation at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In countries like Kenya, where there is plenty of cheap labor available, the outsourcing of such sensitive work is “a story of an exploitative industry predicated on using global economic inequity to its advantage, doing harm and then taking no responsibility because the firms can be like, ‘Well, we never employed so-and-so, that was, you know, the third party,’” she said.

In addition, the mental health care provided might not be “the cream of the crop” and concerns have been raised about the confidentiality of therapy, said Roberts, an associate professor of information studies.

The difference in the Kenya court case, she said, is that the moderators are organizing and pushing back against their conditions, creating unusual visibility. The usual tactic in such cases in the U.S. is to settle, she said, but “if cases are brought in other places, that might not be so easy for the companies to do that.”

Facebook invested in moderation hubs worldwide after being accused of allowing hate speech to circulate in countries like Ethiopia and Myanmar, where conflicts were killing thousands of people and harmful content was posted in a variety of local languages.

Sought for their fluency in various African languages, content moderators hired by Sama in Kenya soon found themselves looking at graphic content that hit painfully close to home.

The two years that Fasica Gebrekidan worked as a moderator roughly overlapped with the war in her native Ethiopia’s northern Tigray region, where hundreds of thousands of people were killed and many Tigrayans like her knew little about their loved ones’ fate.

Already suffering from having to flee the conflict, the 28-year-old spent her workday looking at “gruesome” videos and other content overwhelmingly related to the war, including rape. With videos, she had to watch the first 50 seconds and the last 50 seconds to reach a decision on whether it should be taken down.

The feeling of gratitude she’d had upon landing the job quickly disappeared.

“You run away from the war, then you have to see the war,” Fasica said. “It was just a torture for us.”

She now has no income and no permanent home. She said she would be looking for new opportunities

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With the crowd of 12,479 on its feet for the ninth, Germán quickly finished what he started. He got Aledmys Díaz to ground out before Shea Langeliers flied out to short center field. When Esteury Ruiz grounded out to third baseman Josh Donaldson to end it, New York's dugout and bullpen emptied as Germán's teammates raced out to the mound to celebrate.

"That last inning was very different — very different. I felt an amount of pressure that I've never felt before," Germán said. "I'm trying to visualize what I want to execute there. At the same time, I don't want to miss. So much pressure, but yet so rewarding.

"The key there was not to overthrow," he added.

A's leadoff hitter Tony Kemp said Germán's curveball set up everything else.

"He threw that curveball in any count that he wanted to," Kemp said. "It was spinning differently and moving differently. He put his fastball where he wanted to. Changeup as well. He just kind of mixed them. Got a couple of good swings off him, but no results."

Six days after allowing a career-high 10 runs (eight earned) and four homers over 3 1/3 innings in a loss to the Mariners at home, Germán got his 500th career strikeout and was the definition of perfection.

"This has not been an easy week or time for him," Boone said. "For him to go out there and paint that masterpiece was really just a lot of fun just to be able to watch."

It was the 13th no-hitter in Yankees history, including Larsen's perfect game in the World Series. Corey Kluber pitched their previous no-hitter against the Texas Rangers on May 19, 2021.

Germán, who idolized Hernández growing up, is the rare pitcher who wears zero on the back of his uniform.

Never has that number been more appropriate.

"I'm just happy for Domingo. He's had a rough last couple starts and he's kind of been dragging a little bit," Yankees catcher Kyle Higashioka said. "I kind of always felt like of anyone, he has a really good chance to do something like this and for it all to come together tonight is just amazing."

It marked quite a personal turnaround for Germán, who went 18-4 in 2019 with the Yankees but was put on administrative leave late that season while Major League Baseball investigated an alleged domestic violence incident involving his girlfriend.

He missed the entire pandemic-shortened 2020 season and playoffs while serving an 81-game suspension, then met face-to-face with Yankees teammates and made a public apology at spring training when he returned to the club in February 2021.

Giancarlo Stanton homered for the first time in more than two weeks and drove in three runs, and Donaldson added three RBIs against his former team to help the Yankees to their 15th win in 21 games against the A's since Aug. 31, 2019.

Stanton crushed a 422-foot homer on a first-pitch fastball from former Yankees pitcher JP Sears (1-6) in the fourth. The slumping slugger added a two-run single off Shintaro Fujinami in the fifth when the Yankees scored six runs and benefited from two errors by the A's.

Higashioka had an RBI double, then scored when Anthony Volpe reached on an infield single and Sears flipped the ball wildly into foul territory. Volpe took second on the error, stole third and then scored on DJ LeMahieu's single.

Isiah Kiner-Falefa, who walked leading off the inning and scored, capped the uprising with a two-out RBI single.

But the night belonged to Germán, who was loudly cheered as the game unfolded. Many fans in Oakland were decked out in Yankees colors or jerseys.

"Unfortunately, two days ago an uncle of mine passed away and I cried a lot yesterday in the clubhouse. So I had him with me throughout the whole game. I was thinking about him," Germán said. "This game is a tribute to him. He would have been so happy. He was always someone that really brought a joy to our family and it happened for him to watch it this way, from up there."

STATS AND STUFF

The Yankees became the first franchise with four perfect games (the Chicago White Sox have three). ...

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The Coliseum joined Yankee Stadium as the only ballparks to be the site of three perfect games. ... Oakland had played 5,063 games since the last time the team was no-hit, by four Baltimore pitchers in July 1991. Now, the Washington Nationals franchise holds the longest active streak in the majors, going 3,812 games (including playoffs) since Cone's perfect game against the Montreal Expos at Yankee Stadium in July 1999.

## ROSTER MOVES

Yankees RHP Jhony Brito, the losing pitcher Tuesday, was optioned to Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. RHP Ian Hamilton was activated off the injured list after missing 35 games with a right groin strain.

## UP NEXT

Yankees RHP Clarke Schmidt (2-6, 4.32 ERA) starts Thursday afternoon and has pitched to a 2.19 ERA over his past seven outings dating to May 19. A's manager Mark Kotsay said LHP Hogan Harris (2-1, 4.91) would either start or come in following an opener.

AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/mlb> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Professor and 2 others stabbed in gender issues class at Canadian university. Suspect is in custody

TORONTO (AP) — A professor and two students were stabbed Wednesday during a class on "gender issues" at a university in the Canadian city of Waterloo and a suspect has been taken into custody, police said.

The wounds were non-life threatening, police said, adding that the motive for the attack at the University of Waterloo was not immediately clear. The suspect was being questioned by investigators.

"There is no further threat to public safety either on campus or outside in the broader community at this time," Waterloo Regional Police Service Supt. Shaena Morris said at a news conference.

Nick Manning, associate vice-president of communications for the University of Waterloo, identified the suspect as a member of "the university community" but declined to confirm the individual is a student. He said two students and a professor were stabbed.

Manning said the stabbing occurred in Philosophy 202, which, according to the university website, focuses on "gender issues."

"Our entire community is really concerned that this would happen here. It's a big shock," Manning told reporters.

Yusuf Kaymak, a student at University of Waterloo, told CTV News the attack happened in a gender studies class.

"The guy basically walked in and asked the teacher if he was the professor, he said 'yeah' then he pulled out a knife and after that, everybody just ran out," Kaymak said to CTV.

"I ran out, and after we went outside, there was a kid that was stabbed. He was bleeding (from) his arm. I don't know what happened to the professor," he said.

Kaymak said about 40 students were in the class at the time.

Classes scheduled for Wednesday evening in Hagey Hall, where the attack took place, were canceled, but all other campus operations will proceed as usual, the university said in a tweet.

"Our first thoughts, of course, go to the students who are in the class and have turned immediately to making sure in addition to supporting the police inquiry," Manning said.

## Recapping the revolt in Russia, through the words of 4 presidents and a mutinous warlord

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Civil war. An evil that must be stopped. Fratricide. A bug about to be squashed. The dramatic weekend rebellion by a mercenary warlord in Russia that challenged Russian President Vladimir Putin was punctuated by dramatic language from the key protagonists — and some long silences



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— as the world held its collective breath at the biggest challenge to Putin’s rule of more than two decades. Mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin incited a rebellion against Russia’s military leaders and sent his troops toward Moscow but aborted his mutiny when Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko brokered an agreement that included exile for the warlord in Belarus. Though short-lived, the revolt rattled Russian power circles, tarnished Putin’s aura of complete control and gave Ukrainians hope that Russian infighting could help them.

Many questions remain unanswered about how Prigozhin managed to get 200 kilometers (125 miles) from Moscow with little resistance. But a lot of words went back and forth. Here is a look at the past several days with a focus on comments by key figures — Prigozhin, Putin and Lukashenko — as well as by Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and U.S. President Joe Biden.

## DAY 1: THE REVOLT GETS UNDERWAY

Prigozhin had been hurling expletive-laced insults at Russia’s military brass for months before escalating his confrontation on Friday night. In a significant challenge to the Kremlin, he argued that Russia’s stated reasons for invading Ukraine — a threat from NATO and neo-Nazis — were lies.

“The evil embodied by the country’s military leadership must be stopped,” the 62-year-old shouted in a recorded statement released Friday. He said his forces weren’t seeking to challenge Putin and other government structures, but that: “Justice in the armed forces will be restored, and then justice will be restored in all of Russia.”

His troops have carried out war atrocities in Ukraine, Syria and Africa, and Prigozhin doesn’t oppose the war in Ukraine. He wants it prosecuted more effectively. His forces, boosted by tens of thousands of convicted felons conscripted from prisons, have been some of the most effective in the 16-month war.

For months, he accused the military brass of starving his forces of ammunition. A video in May showed him standing in front of the bloodied bodies of his slain troops yelling obscenities at Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and the chief of the General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov, calling them weak and incompetent and blaming them for the carnage.

“They came here as volunteers and they died to let you lounge in your mahogany offices,” Prigozhin shouted. “You are sitting in your expensive clubs, your children are enjoying good living and filming videos on YouTube. Those who don’t give us ammunition will be eaten alive in hell!”

Prigozhin, who said he had 25,000 troops to march towards Moscow with him, vowed that his troops would punish Shoigu and urged the army not to offer resistance: “This is not a military coup, but a march of justice.”

## DAY 2: PUTIN ADDRESSES THE NATION, PRIGOZHIN RETREATS

As Prigozhin’s forces set up camp in Rostov-on-Don, Putin made a televised address to the nation Saturday morning calling the uprising “a stab in the back” and vowing harsh punishments for its organizers.

Without mentioning Prigozhin by name, Putin denounced “anarchy and fratricide.” He compared the actions of the rebels with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that led to civil war and the collapse of imperial Russia.

The fact that he never mentioned Prigozhin by name, just as he never mentions the name of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny, is itself meaningful, argues Konstantin Sonin, a Russian professor of political economy at the University of Chicago. “It means that he takes the situation extremely seriously and he is rattled inside,” Sonin said.

Prigozhin initially said his fighters would not surrender, as “we do not want the country to live on in corruption, deceit and bureaucracy.”

“Regarding the betrayal of the motherland, the president was deeply mistaken. We are patriots of our homeland,” he said.

The Russian military was fortifying the defenses around Moscow, and Lukashenko told Prigozhin he was about to get “squashed like a bug,” he later recalled.

By the evening, Lukashenko had brokered a deal promising Prigozhin immunity from prosecution even though his forces had shot down Russian helicopters and a military communications plane, killing about a dozen airmen. It was a remarkable outcome given that many other Russians have been imprisoned for

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the smallest of antiwar gestures.

Zelenskyy said Moscow was suffering “full-scale weakness” and that Kyiv was protecting Europe from “the spread of Russian evil and chaos.”

Prigozhin ended Saturday with crowds cheering him and his Wagner troops, and they began their retreat.

DAY 3: PRIGOZHIN AND PUTIN GO SILENT, MOSCOW RETURNS TO NORMAL

After a day of such drama, the world on Sunday awaited news about Prigozhin’s whereabouts and fate. In Moscow, life was returning to normal. People packed cafes and there was little sign of the “counterterrorist regime” of restrictions on movement and enhanced security declared the day before. Anchors on state-controlled television stations cast the deal ending the crisis as a show of Putin’s wisdom and aired footage of Wagner troops retreating.

Prigozhin went completely silent. When The Associated Press wrote to his press office, it got a reply saying: “He says hi to everyone and will answer the questions when he gets a normal connection.” Many questions continued to swirl, including if Prigozhin would be taking a larger contingent of Wagner fighters with him to Belarus — and whether he himself would go there.

Meanwhile, Biden spoke to Zelenskyy and “reaffirmed unwavering U.S. support,” the White House said.

Zelenskyy said he told Biden that the aborted rebellion in Russia had “exposed the weakness of Putin’s regime.”

DAY 4: PRIGOZHIN, PUTIN AND BIDEN SPEAK

After his day of silence, Prigozhin issued an 11-minute audio statement on Monday in which he denied trying to attack the Russian state and said he acted in response to a deadly attack on his force. “We started our march because of an injustice,” he said.

Putin, in his first public comments since the rebellion, said “Russia’s enemies” had hoped the mutiny would succeed in dividing and weakening Russia, “but they miscalculated.” He identified the enemies as “the neo-Nazis in Kyiv, their Western patrons and other national traitors.”

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the special services were investigating whether Western intelligence services were involved.

Early in the war, President Biden went off-script during a visit to Warsaw and said of Putin: “For God’s sake, this man cannot remain in power.” But faced with what looked to many like a possible coup, Biden became decidedly cautious.

Biden denied any involvement by the U.S. or NATO in the rebellion led by Prigozhin, who also who ran the Internet Research Agency, which organized an online interference operation during the 2016 U.S. election that brought Donald Trump to power.

“We made clear that we were not involved. We had nothing to do with it,” Biden said. “This was part of a struggle within the Russian system.”

DAY 5: PRIGOZHIN ARRIVES IN BELARUS

A private jet believed to belong to Prigozhin flew from Rostov to an air base southwest of the Belarusian capital of Minsk, according to data from FlightRadar24. Belarusian President Lukashenko confirmed that Prigozhin had arrived in Belarus, and said the warlord and some of his troops were welcome to stay “for some time” at their own expense.

Meanwhile, Moscow said preparations were underway for Wagner’s troops fighting in Ukraine, to hand over their heavy weapons to Russia’s military.

Russian authorities also said they closed a criminal investigation into the uprising and were pressing no armed rebellion charge against Prigozhin or his followers. Still, Putin appeared to set the stage for financial wrongdoing charges against an affiliated organization Prigozhin owns — or at least cast him in a negative light.

Putin also sought to project stability and authority. In a Kremlin ceremony, the president walked down the red-carpeted stairs of the 15th century white-stone Palace of Facets to address soldiers and law enforcement officers, thanking them for their actions to avert the rebellion.

Lukashenko, who has ruled Belarus with an iron hand for 29 years while relying on Russian subsidies

and support, made clear he saw the events as an existential threat to his own state, which has become a vassal of sorts to Russia.

"If Russia collapses," he said, "we all will perish under the debris."

Associated Press journalist Dasha Litvinova contributed from Tallinn, Estonia.

## **Biden is wrapping a campaign fundraising blitz aimed at making a bold early statement**

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has cozied up to high-dollar donors at posh Upper East Side penthouses and on West Coast decks gussied up with floral arrangements and flags in recent weeks. He has two more fundraisers in New York on Thursday that will close out an end-of-quarter campaign blitz his team believes will put him on strong financial footing for a contest they expect to set new spending records.

Friday's events will be Biden's 9th and 10th fundraising receptions of the past two weeks, numbers that have been matched by Vice President Kamala Harris, first lady Jill Biden, and second gentleman Doug Emhoff. The Biden campaign has been mum on how much he has raised at the often free-wheeling events, but it is broadcasting confidence in the size of the haul ahead of the July 15 reporting date.

The president is also marshaling the whole of the Democratic Party to dial for dollars, enlisting help from up-and-comers like Govs. Gavin Newsom of California and J.B. Pritzker of Illinois and more established figures like former President Barack Obama. Obama on Thursday will be featured in a new Biden campaign video meant to encourage small-dollar online donations ahead of the Friday donation deadline. Allies insist that despite polls showing lagging enthusiasm among the Democratic base for the 80-year-old president, the party is solidly behind him.

"I've been doing this for a really long time for a number of presidents and presidential candidates," said Jeffrey Katzenberg, the Hollywood mogul, Democratic mega-donor and co-chair of Biden's campaign. "I've never seen from top to bottom, the Democratic enterprise kick into gear this way, from President Obama, governors, senators, congressmen, just across the board — he's gotten outstanding support."

Aides say they are trying to motivate donors — especially small-dollar contributors — to dig deeper into their pockets early on.

The recent blitz was also a function of Biden's day job, Katzenberg said, adding that "his first, second and third job is to run the country." Biden's foreign trips in April and May, and the weeks-long showdown over raising the nation's debt limit, kept him in Washington. And Biden is set to travel to Europe next month, giving the campaign a narrow window before the historically slow summer season to fit in donor events.

While the first quarter is widely viewed as a benchmark of campaign strength, Katzenberg said there is "no urgency right now" for Biden to raise or spend vast sums since he lacks a credible primary threat, and the election is 16 months away. Still, Biden is aiming to make a statement with the early totals.

Katzenberg said there were "very optimistic signals" for the Biden campaign's ability to comfortably exceed its 2020 fundraising levels, including strong numbers of first-time Biden donors. Other campaign aides and allies have grown more bullish about the soon-to-be-reported haul.

The president's fundraisers, with limited press access and closed to cameras, feature a far less guarded Biden than the public often sees. The president sometimes uses them to test-drive a new campaign line or dish out more candid remarks than in formal events.

He usually starts at a lectern but often shifts to using his preferred handheld mic, which allows him to roam the room and speak more directly to guests.

Biden often makes a personal nod to the hosts — in a fundraiser at the New York home of Greek shipping magnate George Logothetis in May, Biden noted that the lessons he learned from his family as a child weren't any different than "if my mom had been 'Bidenopoulos' instead of 'Finnegan'."

Though his aides make it a point not to engage with prospective 2024 opponents, Biden often doesn't shy away from criticism of those seeking the Republican presidential nominee at these events.

if she could only feel normal again. A former journalist, she can't bring herself to write anymore, even as an outlet for her emotions.

Fasica worries that "this garbage" will stay in her head forever. While speaking with the AP, she kept her eyes on a painting across the café, deep red with what appeared to be a man in distress. It bothered her.

Fasica blames Facebook for a lack of proper mental health care and pay and accuses the local contractor of using her and letting her go.

"Facebook should know what's going on," she said. "They should care about us."

The fate of the moderators' complaint lies with the Kenyan court, with the next hearing on July 10.

The uncertainty is frustrating, Fasica said. Some moderators are giving up and returning to their home countries, but that is not yet an option for her.

AP Business Writer Kelvin Chan contributed from London.

## **Yankees pitcher Domingo Germán throws 1st perfect game since 2012. It's the 24th in MLB history**

By MICHAEL WAGAMAN Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Since arriving in the big leagues six years ago, Domingo Germán has been anything but perfect.

Until now.

The New York Yankees right-hander pitched the 24th perfect game in major league history Wednesday night, retiring every Oakland batter in an 11-0 victory over the Athletics.

It was the first perfect game since Seattle Mariners ace Félix Hernández threw one against the Tampa Bay Rays on Aug. 15, 2012. There were three that season — but none since until Germán finished off the first no-hitter in the majors this year.

He joined Don Larsen (1956), David Wells (1998) and David Cone (1999) as Yankees to pitch perfect games. Larsen's gem came in Game 5 of the 1956 World Series against the Brooklyn Dodgers.

"So exciting," Germán said through a translator. "When you think about something very unique in baseball, not many people have an opportunity to pitch a perfect game. To accomplish something like this in my career is something that I'm going to remember forever."

Coming off a pair of terrible starts, Germán (5-5) struck out nine of 27 hitters against the A's, who have the worst record in the majors at 21-61.

The 30-year-old pitcher served a 10-game suspension last month after getting ejected from a game in Toronto for using an illegal sticky substance on the mound. His only previous complete game as a professional came with Double-A Trenton in April 2017.

Winless in six previous outings against Oakland, Germán threw 72 of 99 pitches for strikes. He mixed 51 curveballs and 30 fastballs that averaged 92.5 mph with 17 changeups and one sinker.

He went to three balls on a batter just twice, falling behind Ryan Noda 3-1 in the fourth and Jonah Bride by the same count in the eighth. Noda struck out on consecutive curveballs, and Germán followed with three straight curves to Bride: one for a called strike, the next resulting in a foul ball and the third in a groundout.

"It was just so fun to watch him do that and go to work. We've seen him flirt with outings like that over time," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said, thinking to when Boston's Alex Verdugo broke up Germán's no-hit bid in the eighth in July 2021.

"When he gets rolling like that he's just so fun to watch at his craft because he's so good at commanding all of his pitches. His curveball was great tonight, but because his changeup and his fastball were good, too, it made that curveball even more special."

Seth Brown came the closest to reaching base for the A's, hitting a sharp grounder in the fifth inning to first baseman Anthony Rizzo, who made a diving stop and tossed to Germán for the out.

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"I've been stunned at the damage done by the last administration to us internationally and globally. I mean, I've been stunned how deep it goes," Biden said during a fundraiser in Chevy Chase, Maryland, on Tuesday evening.

His criticisms aren't reserved just for his predecessor.

"Did you ever think you'd go through a time when the number two contender on another team was banning books?" Biden said in a veiled reference to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, during a fundraiser earlier this month in Greenwich, Connecticut.

When a baby squealed while Biden was talking to donors in Chicago on Wednesday about Republicans, the president ad libbed, "I don't blame you kiddo."

His sometimes rambling remarks are full of anecdotes about his lengthy time in public office, peppered with references to issues that animate Democrats like tougher gun restrictions and abortion rights. But in a smaller setting where cameras are barred, the president can open up, such as a rare reference to his personal views on abortion when speaking about the issue at a separate Chevy Chase fundraiser on Tuesday.

"I'm a practicing Catholic," Biden said. "I'm not big on abortion, but guess what? Roe vs. Wade got it right." At the same event, he misspoke when talking about the Ukraine war, referring instead to Iraq.

Last week, Biden sparked a round of diplomatic Sturm und Drang from Beijing after calling Chinese President Xi Jinping a "dictator" at a fundraiser — just hours after Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Xi as part of a bid to thaw tensions. Biden insisted that the epithet wouldn't affect the relationship — though others in his administration pointedly refused to repeat it.

"He wants to shake every hand and chat with everyone," said Katzenberg. "When there's something that is on his mind, he'll say it — and you know, that's what makes him authentic."

Last week in the San Francisco area, his fundraisers seemed to prove his argument that the U.S. economy has been favoring the wealthy. He attended events near homes whose Zillow price listings were about four times higher than an average U.S. worker's lifetime earnings.

"Mr. President, trust me, this is a fancy crowd," Newsom said at one event to polite laughter. "I know these folks."

The president still tries to draw connections to a blue-collar past, even as he sketches big picture issues such as climate change, relations with China and the fate of democracy.

"How many of you are from smaller Midwestern towns?" he asked. "You know what happened when the factory closes. The soul of the community is lost. Not a joke."

Breaking with the level of transparency followed by the Obama campaign when he was vice president, Biden's campaign does not share the total amount raised from any individual event.

"The campaign will share its fundraising numbers when we submit our FEC filing next month," said Biden campaign spokesman Kevin Munoz in a statement, referring to the Federal Election Commission. "We are encouraged by the strong response we are seeing from donors and our grassroots supporters, including a significant number of new donors since 2020 that support the president's agenda for restoring democracy, freedom, and growing the economy by growing the middle class."

He added: "While MAGA Republicans duke it out over extreme, divisive, and unpopular policies in their primary, we are ensuring that we have the resources needed to run an aggressive, winning campaign."

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Associated Press writers Seung Min Kim and Josh Boak contributed to this report.

## French police, protesters clash after Macron calls police fatal shooting of teen 'inexcusable'

By OLEG CETINIC and ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

NANTERRE, France (AP) — Police clashed with protesters overnight just hours after French President Emmanuel Macron called the shooting death of a 17-year-old delivery driver by police "inexcusable" and pleaded for calm while justice takes its course.

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It was the second night of violence in the Paris suburb of Nanterre even as the government heightened the police presence in Paris and other big cities Wednesday after the killing triggered a night of scattered violence.

Fires could be seen burning at some intersections in the suburb and protesters shot fireworks at police, video from the suburb showed.

The death of 17-year-old Nael during a traffic check Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre elicited nationwide concern and widespread messages of indignation and condolences. French soccer star Kylian Mbappe tweeted: "I hurt for my France." Nael's surname has not been released by authorities or by his family.

Nael's mother called for a silent march Thursday in his honor on the square where he was killed, while French activists renewed calls to tackle what they see as systemic police abuse. Government officials condemned the killing and sought to distance themselves from the police officer's actions.

"Nothing justifies the death of a young person," Macron told reporters in Marseille, calling what happened "inexplicable and inexcusable."

Videos of the incident shared online show two police officers leaning into the driver-side window of a yellow car before the vehicle pulls away as one officer fires into the window. The car is later seen crashed into a post nearby.

The victim, who was driving the car, was wounded by a gunshot and died at the scene, the prosecutor's office said in a statement. A passenger in the car was briefly detained and released, and police are searching for another passenger who fled.

Anger over the killing spawned unrest in multiple towns around Paris. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said 31 people were arrested, 24 police officers injured and 40 cars burned in overnight unrest.

The police officer suspected of firing on Nael remains in custody and faces potential manslaughter charges, according to the Nanterre prosecutor's office.

The Nanterre neighborhood where Nael lived remained on edge Wednesday, with police on guard around the regional administration and burned car wreckage and overturned garbage bins still visible in some areas. Bouquets of orange and yellow roses were tied to the post where the car crashed after the shooting, on Nanterre's Nelson Mandela Square.

Speaking to Parliament on Wednesday, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said, "the shocking images broadcast yesterday show an intervention that clearly appears as not complying with the rules of engagement of our police forces."

Deadly use of firearms is less common in France than in the United States. Tuesday's death unleashed anger in Nanterre and other towns, including around housing projects where many residents struggle with poverty and discrimination and feel police abuse is under-punished.

Several people have died or sustained injuries at the hands of French police in recent years, prompting demands for more accountability. France also saw protests against racial profiling and other injustice in the wake of George Floyd's killing by police in Minnesota.

Macron called for calm and for respect for Nael's loved ones. Asked about police abuses, he said justice should be allowed to run its course.

Interior Minister Darmanin said 1,200 police were deployed overnight and 2,000 would be out in force Wednesday in the Paris region and around other big cities to "maintain order."

A lawyer for Nael's family, Yassine Bouzrou, told The Associated Press they want the police officer pursued for murder instead of manslaughter, and want the investigation handed to a different region because they fear Nanterre investigators won't be impartial.

The lawyers rejected a reported statement by the police officers that they believed their lives were in danger because the driver had threatened to run them over.

Mbappe, who grew up in the Paris suburb of Bondy, was among those who were shocked by what happened.

"I hurt for my France. Unacceptable situation. All my thoughts go to the family and loved ones of Nael,

this little angel gone much too soon," he tweeted.

Charlton reported from Paris. Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to this report.

## **In United Arab Emirates, struggling sea turtles get a helping hand**

By MALAK HARB Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The baby sea turtle flapped its flippers as it was lowered into the ocean, only to be pushed back ashore by the strong tide. It tried again, and this time it made it, swimming fast and deep into Persian Gulf waters lapping at a string of beachfront tourist resorts.

Scientists hope the turtle will thrive back in its natural habitat, joining about 500 sea turtles that have been rescued, rehabilitated and released since Abu Dhabi's Environment Agency launched a program three years ago to aid turtles distressed by climate change and other issues.

In the latest release in early June, about 80 turtles were carried to the water's edge by members of the agency's Wildlife Rescue Program, joined by members of the community. Many were outfitted with satellite tracking gear to help scientists better understand migration patterns and the success of rehabilitation methods.

Turtles have historically been hunted for their meat and eggs, with their shells used in jewelry. But plenty of manmade factors figure into a decline in all seven sea turtle species.

"We see issues such as plastic pollution causing harm, vessel strikes, nets causing them to be entangled in them, and coastal development, which reduces the amount of nesting habitat they have available," says Hind al-Ameri, assistant scientist at the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi.

Climate change is a big contributor, researchers say.

Warming oceans harm coral reefs, which turtles need to survive, and shift currents to expose turtles to new predators. Rising sea levels diminish the beaches where the turtles nest and lay their eggs.

Abu Dhabi's isn't the only agency in the Emirates focused on aiding sea turtles. Emirates Nature-WWF launched a pair of marine conservation initiatives more than a decade ago, studying the behavior of the hawksbill and green turtles in the region.

And the Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Project has been helping sick and injured sea turtles for nearly two decades, rehabilitating and returning more than 2,000 turtles to the Persian Gulf in that time.

Scientists say they see evidence that the sea turtles are adapting to climate change.

Turtle gender is influenced by the temperature in which eggs develop, with warmer temperatures producing a higher ratio of female turtles. Al-Ameri said conditions in the United Arab Emirates have become so warm that the male population should be devastated — but it is healthy and reproducing.

"So it's driving us to understand why our species are adapting the way they are and what it would mean in terms of climate change and would turtles be able to adapt to climate change in the future or not," she said.

How the planet can limit global warming, and its damaging effects on sea turtles and the rest of the world, will be discussed at length in November when Dubai hosts the next United Nations summit on climate change.

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.

## **The AP Interview: Olympics boss vows Paris Games will be safe, says no resignations planned in probe**

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

SAINT-DENIS, France (AP) — What was shaping up as a regular workday turned out to be anything but for the organizers of France's first summer Olympic Games in a century.

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French anti-corruption police raided their bustling Olympic headquarters on the outskirts of Paris, arriving unannounced and accompanied by a magistrate from a French financial crimes prosecution unit that has made a habit of going after sports' rogues.

This time, they were zeroing in on twenty or so of the many hundreds of business contracts that Olympic organizers have signed as they race to prepare the French capital for 10,500 athletes and millions of spectators next year. The investigators were hunting for documents and information as they dig into suspicions of favoritism, conflicts of interest, and misuse of some of the billions of euros (dollars) being sunk into the Paris Games that open July 26, 2024.

Tony Estanguet, a former Olympic canoeing star with gold medals from the 2000, 2004 and 2012 Games, was at work in the Olympic HQ when police came knocking last week. The trim 45-year-old is the face and chief organizer of the Paris Games, presiding over a rapidly growing workforce whose preparations were progressing largely smoothly before investigators arrived with a judge's warrant.

"It's the first time this has happened to us, so we were surprised," Estanguet says. "We said, 'Yes, of course, take all the information you need.'"

"I am cooperating. There will surely be other stages. We'll surely have to reply to more questions. There will be more checks right up to the end, perhaps even after the Games," he acknowledges. "So I am ready for that and I know that it is part of this kind of adventure. We'll be inspected intensely, criticized hugely."

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press, the Paris 2024 president vigorously defended colleagues whose homes also were searched. The two senior organizing committee executives for now face no allegations and are being looked at because they were involved in business decisions, Estanguet says. "There's no question of envisaging" their resignation "for the moment," he adds.

Estanguet insists that the two financial probes of Paris Games contract awards bear no comparison with corruption and ethics scandals that have for decades dogged the Olympic movement and its flagship money-spinning event, including the 2021 Tokyo Olympics and Rio de Janeiro's bribery-plagued Games of 2016.

"It's unfair to say that we're like the others," he says. "Unfortunately, things went off course in the past and I think we're all being lumped together a bit, although I can tell you that we're being very careful and everyone here has to be very careful because there is no room for error."

In the hour-long AP interview, Estanguet also addressed other issues crucial to the success of the first Olympics to host spectators again after the COVID-19 pandemic:

— Security preparations for the groundbreaking opening ceremony on July 26 will turn Paris into "the safest place in the world," he boldly predicts. Instead of a traditional stadium ceremony, Paris intends to showcase its iconic monuments with a waterborne extravaganza on a 6-kilometer (3 1/2-mile) stretch of the cleaned-up River Seine. Hundreds of thousands of spectators will mostly watch for free in the heart of the French capital, where Islamic extremists attacked twice in 2015, killing 147 people, including outside the national stadium.

"If you want to be safe, come to Paris for the opening ceremony," Estanguet says.

— With just a year to go, Paris still has a lot of unfinished work, and that's fine, he says. "There are lots of things that aren't ready. But that's normal. I used to be a top-level athlete. It's never good to be ready a year beforehand ... You have to be ready on gameday and arrive with the feeling that you're not quite ready. That way you fight, cling on, give everything to really be at your best," he says.

The probes led by France's financial prosecution service — the first opened in 2017, the second in 2022 — threaten to hang over organizers for the duration of the July-August Olympics and the Paralympic Games that follow into September. Investigators expect to spend months sifting through documents recovered in their searches of the Paris 2024 offices, the homes of Etienne Thobois, its director general, and Edouard Donnelly, executive director of operations. They also searched the HQ of the company delivering Olympic infrastructure, Solideo, and homes of some of its staff, according to a judicial official with knowledge of the investigations who wasn't authorized to discuss them publicly.

The official said the Paris court that would hear any case, if the prosecutors' probes get that far, also has no room on its calendar to hold a trial before September 2024.

Investigators do not suspect that bribes were paid or received, drawing a sharp distinction with the cor-



ruption probes that ensnared Tokyo and Rio, the official said. Instead, two police units that fight financial criminality are investigating about 20 Olympic-related contracts — some worth less than 1 million euros — for suspected violations of French laws governing conflicts of interest, contract dealings and use of public funds, the official said.

Estanguet acknowledges that with an event so big and costly, it's a constant battle to keep tabs on everyone working to make it happen.

He detailed multiple layers of internal and external checks, including continuous scrutiny by state auditors, that he and other Olympic organizers work under in dealing with service providers and in handling their budget of 4.38 billion euros (US\$4.8 billion) — one of the largest chunks of the overall Paris Games spending approaching 9 billion euros. Paris 2024 says it has signed contracts with more than 1,500 companies so far.

No Paris 2024 employee awards contracts alone, "the decision is always collective," Estanguet says.

"From the outset, we've been very careful because we know we're watched and we know we're accountable. And vis-à-vis the French, we have this duty to be exemplary. Me, I have my image," says the former athlete who at the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics was chosen to carry France's tricolor flag.

"I believe in sport. It changed my life. I want to show that sport will change this country and that sport will be a success. And I don't want this adventure to be remembered as having been badly managed."

Paris chief correspondent John Leicester has covered eight summer and winter Olympics for AP. More AP coverage of the Paris Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Smoke from Canada wildfires is increasing health risks in Black and poorer US communities

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER and COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Smoky air from Canada's wildfires shrouded broad swaths of the U.S. from Minnesota to New York and Kentucky on Wednesday, prompting warnings to stay inside and exacerbating health risks for people already suffering from industrial pollution.

The impacts are particularly hard on poor and minority communities that are more likely to live near polluting plants and have higher rates of asthma. Detroit, a mostly Black city with a poverty rate of about 30%, had some of the worst air quality in the U.S. on Wednesday, prompting the Environmental Protection Agency to warn that "everyone should stay indoors."

"The more breaths you're taking, you're inhaling, literally, a fire, camp smoke, into your lungs," said Darren Riley, who was diagnosed with asthma in 2018, a few years after arriving in Detroit.

"Many communities face this way too often," said Riley, who is Black. "And while this wildfire smoke allows, unfortunately, many people to feel this burden, this is a burden that far too long communities have faced day in and day out."

The EPA's AirNow.gov site showed cities including Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis and Cleveland, Ohio, had "very unhealthy air" as of Wednesday afternoon. A wider circle of unhealthy air spread into Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Louisville, Kentucky.

Earlier this month, smoke from the wildfires blanketed the U.S. East Coast for days.

Another round of drifting smoke from the wildfires was moving through western Pennsylvania and central New York and headed toward the Mid-Atlantic, said National Weather Service meteorologist Byran Jackson. In Canada, smoke will migrate across Quebec and Ontario over the next few days, Environment and Climate Change Canada meteorologist Steven Flisfeder said.

In the U.S., the smoke is exacerbating air quality issues for poor and Black communities that already are more likely to live near polluting plants, and in rental housing with mold and other triggers.

Detroit's southwest side is home to a number of sprawling refineries and manufacturing plants. It is one

of the poorest parts of the city. According to a 2022 report by the American Lung Association, the city's and short-term particle pollution ranked among the worst in the nation.

"Being close to those refineries — that's an environmental factor that's difficult to control," said Dr. Ruma Srivastava, a pediatric pulmonologist at Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit. "It does increase their risk for asthma flareups. For them, it's even more important to follow the (air quality safety) recommendations."

Riley's own experiences prompted him to start JustAir, which provides air pollution monitoring.

"Just because you're born in a certain ZIP code or you're born into a certain family with a certain skin color doesn't mean that you should have an unequal go at it," he said.

Elsewhere, Milwaukee County Emergency Medical Services has seen a spike in calls for residents with respiratory complaints, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. Office of Emergency Management data show a disproportionate amount of calls for respiratory issues — 54.8% — have been for Black people in Milwaukee, according to the newspaper. Milwaukee County's population is 27.1% Black.

In Chicago, where about 29% of the population is Black, Mayor Brandon Johnson urged young people, older adults and residents with health issues to spend more time indoors. He pledged "swift action to ensure that vulnerable individuals have the resources they need to protect themselves and their families."

President Joe Biden visited the nation's third-largest city on Wednesday to promote his renewable energy policies. Biden has described the Canadian wildfires as clear evidence of climate change.

Minnesota issued a record 23rd air quality alert for the year through late Wednesday night, as smoky skies obscured the skylines of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana were among other states issuing air quality alerts, and cities including Louisville also advised people to limit prolonged or intense outdoor activity.

"This is particularly thick smoke," Jackson, with the National Weather Service, said.

A record 30,000 square miles (80,000 square kilometers) of Canada has burned, an area nearly as large as South Carolina, according to the Canadian government.

"As long as the fires are burning and the smoke is in the atmosphere it is going to be a concern not just for Canadians but Americans as well," Flisfeder, the Canadian meteorologist, said.

The small particles in wildfire smoke can irritate the eyes, nose and throat, and can affect the heart and lungs, making it harder to breathe. Health officials say it's important to limit outdoor activities to avoid breathing in the particles.

The warming planet will produce hotter and longer heat waves, making for bigger, smokier fires, said Joel Thornton, professor and chair of the department of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington.

Quentin Hernandez, a 24-year-old event planner from Detroit, was out skateboarding for about an hour Wednesday at a skate park near the Ambassador Bridge, which connects the city and Windsor, Ontario.

"It just sits like this all day," said Hernandez, saying that it smelled like being at a barbecue. "Literally, the smoke just sits in the air."

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Associated Press contributors include Trisha Ahmed and Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis, Ken Kusmer in Indianapolis, Rebecca Reynolds in Louisville, Ky., and Julie Walker in New York.

## Human remains have likely been recovered from the Titan submersible wreckage, US Coast Guard says

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Human remains have likely been recovered from the wreckage of the submersible that imploded during an underwater voyage to view the Titanic, the U.S. Coast Guard said Wednesday.

The news came hours after the announcement that debris from the Titan, collected from the seafloor more than 12,000 feet (3,658 meters) below the surface of the North Atlantic, had arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland. Twisted chunks of the submersible were unloaded at a Canadian Coast Guard pier.

Recovering and scrutinizing the wreckage is a key part of the investigation into why the Titan imploded last week, killing all five people on board. The multiday search and eventual recovery of debris from the

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22-foot (6.7-meter) vessel captured the world's attention.

"There is still a substantial amount of work to be done to understand the factors that led to the catastrophic loss of the Titan and help ensure a similar tragedy does not occur again," Coast Guard Chief Capt. Jason Neubauer said in a statement released late Wednesday afternoon.

The "presumed human remains" will be brought to the United States, where medical professionals will conduct a formal analysis, Neubauer said. He added that the Coast Guard has convened an investigation of the implosion at the highest level. The Marine Board of Investigation will analyze and test evidence, including pieces of debris, at a port in the U.S. The board will share the evidence at a future public hearing whose date has not been determined, the Coast Guard said.

Neubauer said the evidence will provide "critical insights" into the cause of the implosion.

Debris from the Titan, which is believed to have imploded on June 18 as it made its descent, was located about 12,500 feet (3,810 meters) underwater and roughly 1,600 feet (488 meters) from the Titanic on the ocean floor. The Coast Guard is leading the investigation, in conjunction with several other government agencies in the U.S. and Canada.

Authorities have not disclosed details of the debris recovery, which could have followed several approaches, according to Carl Hartsfield, who directs a lab at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution that designs and operates autonomous underwater vehicles and has been serving as a consultant to the Coast Guard.

"If the pieces are small, you can collect them together and put them in a basket or some kind of collection device," Hartsfield said Monday. Bigger pieces could be retrieved with a remote-operated vehicle, or ROV, such as the one brought to the wreckage site by the Canadian ship Horizon Arctic to search the ocean floor. For extremely big pieces, a heavy lift could be used to pull them up with a tow line, he said.

Representatives for Horizon Arctic did not respond to requests for comment. The ROV's owner, Pelagic Research Services, a company with offices in Massachusetts and New York, is "still on mission" and cannot comment on the investigation, company spokesperson Jeff Mahoney said Wednesday.

"They have been working around the clock now for 10 days, through the physical and mental challenges of this operation," Mahoney said.

Analyzing the recovered debris could reveal important clues about what happened to the Titan, and there could be electronic data recorded by the submersible's instruments, Hartsfield said.

"So the question is, is there any data available? And I really don't know the answer to that question," he said Monday.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada, which is conducting a safety investigation into the Titan's Canadian-flagged mother ship, the Polar Prince, said Wednesday that it has sent that vessel's voyage data recorder to a lab for analysis.

Stockton Rush, the Titan's pilot and CEO of OceanGate Expeditions, the company that owned the submersible, was killed in the implosion along with two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

OceanGate is based in the U.S. but the submersible was registered in the Bahamas.

The company charged passengers \$250,000 each to participate in the voyage. The implosion of the Titan has raised questions about the safety of private undersea exploration operations. The Coast Guard wants to use the investigation to improve the safety of submersibles.

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Associated Press writers Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire, and Michael Casey in Boston contributed to this report.

## Muslims at Hajj brave intense heat to cast stones at pillars representing the devil

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

MINA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims on Wednesday braved intense heat to perform the symbolic stoning of the devil during the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

With morning temperatures rising past 42 degrees Celsius (107 degrees Fahrenheit), huge crowds of pilgrims walked or took buses to the vast Jamarat complex just outside the holy city of Mecca, where large pedestrian bridges lead past three wide pillars representing the devil.

Using pebbles collected the night before at a campsite known as Muzdalifa, the pilgrims stone the pillars. It's a reenactment of the story of the Prophet Ibrahim — known as Abraham in Christian and Jewish traditions — who is said to have hurled stones at Satan to resist temptation.

The ceremony was marred by tragedy on a number of occasions in the 1990s and 2000s, when hundreds died in stampedes during the stoning ritual. Saudi authorities have since built an expanded network of massive pedestrian bridges and redesigned the site to make it safer for pilgrims.

This year, the biggest danger might be the heat.

Temperatures soared past 45 degrees Celsius (113 F) on Tuesday, as Muslims marked the spiritual high point of the pilgrimage by spending the day praying at Mount Arafat, where there was no breeze and almost no shade.

Pilgrims huddled under umbrellas, dousing themselves with bottled water. Cellphones were almost too hot to hold and shut down after just a few minutes of use.

Saudi authorities have deployed tens of thousands of health workers for the pilgrimage and volunteers were handing out water. More than 6,700 pilgrims have been treated for heat exhaustion or heat stroke since the start of the pilgrimage, said Dr. Muhammad Al-Abdel Ali, a Health Ministry spokesman.

The annual Hajj pilgrimage is one of the five pillars of Islam, and all Muslims are required to undertake it at least once in their lives if they are physically and financially able. For the pilgrims it is an unrivalled religious experience that wipes away sins, bringing them closer to God and face-to-face with fellow Muslims from all corners of the earth.

The last three days of the Hajj coincide with Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of the Sacrifice, a joyful occasion in which Muslims around the world sacrifice sheep or cattle and distribute some of the meat to the poor. The holiday commemorates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael on God's command. In Christian and Jewish traditions, Abraham is willing to sacrifice his other son, Isaac.

The holiday, which is held according to Islam's lunar calendar, depending on the sighting of the moon, began Wednesday in several Middle Eastern countries and will begin Thursday in some Asian countries.

The Saudi royal family has invested billions of dollars in infrastructure to maintain Islam's holiest sites and to hold the annual pilgrimage, which is a major source of its legitimacy. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, traveled to Mecca on Tuesday to oversee the pilgrimage, according to state-run media.

This is the first Hajj to be held without COVID-19 restrictions since the onset of the pandemic in 2020. Authorities had expected some 2 million pilgrims, but official figures released late Tuesday showed that around 1.8 million were taking part in the pilgrimage. That's considerably fewer than the nearly 2.5 million who came in 2019. Worldwide economic woes may have been a factor.

## Russian missile kills 11 in a pizza parlor and Ukraine arrests man accused of directing the strike

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian authorities on Wednesday arrested a man they accused of helping Russia direct a missile strike that killed at least 11 people, including three teenagers, at a popular pizza restaurant in eastern Ukraine.

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The Tuesday evening attack on Kramatorsk wounded 61 other people, Ukraine's National Police said. It was the latest bombardment of a Ukrainian city, a tactic Russia has used heavily in the 16-month-old war.

The strike, and others across Ukraine late Tuesday and early Wednesday, indicated that the Kremlin is not easing its aerial onslaught, despite political and military turmoil at home after a short-lived armed uprising in Russia last weekend.

There has been no apparent military push by Ukraine to exploit that turmoil, though the government has been tight-lipped about recent battlefield developments as it seeks to gain momentum in its recently launched counteroffensive.

The Kremlin reeled from the weekend mutiny led by Yevgeny Prigozhin, owner of the Wagner private army of prison recruits and other mercenaries. Wagner has played a key combat role for Russia in Ukraine. The rebellion posed the most serious threat so far to Russian President Vladimir Putin's grip on power.

Trying to repair the damage to his authority, Putin met with military staff in the Kremlin on Tuesday and flew to the Caspian city of Derbent, in the mostly Muslim region of Dagestan, on the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha on Wednesday. He visited an ancient citadel and a historic mosque, met with officials, and walked to cheering crowds next to a fountain, talking to people and shaking hands — rare behavior for the secretive and reserved Russian leader.

Prigozhin went into exile in neighboring Belarus on Tuesday, according to Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, after Russia said he wouldn't face charges for the revolt. Prigozhin's whereabouts could not be independently confirmed.

Lukashenko has said his country would allow Wagner to set up a temporary camp in Belarus, but it remained unclear how many mercenaries would move there.

Wagner's impending deployment to Belarus has rattled its neighbors. Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the leader of Poland's ruling party, announced plans to strengthen the country's eastern border, saying about 8,000 Wagner troops are expected to arrive in Belarus.

And Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis noted Tuesday that the mutiny "shows how fast detachments from within Russia mobilize and move within its territory," underlining "a more volatile, more unpredictable environment for our region."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy played down concerns that Wagner would pose a threat from Belarus. He said the group's mercenaries probably wouldn't go there in significant numbers, and added that Ukraine's military believes security along the Belarusian border will remain "unchanged and controllable."

U.S. President Joe Biden said Wednesday that the unrest had weakened Putin, though he added that it's "hard to tell" to what extent.

"He's clearly losing the war in (Ukraine)," Biden said of Putin before departing Washington for Chicago. "He's losing the war at home and he has become a bit of a pariah around the world."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also said Putin has been weakened by the rebellion, which showed "the autocratic structures, the structures of power have cracks." Speaking to German public broadcaster ARD, he acknowledged that Germany's foreign intelligence agency had been surprised by the rebellion.

In Kramatorsk, two sisters, both age 14, died in the attack, the city council's educational department said. "Russian missiles stopped the beating of the hearts of two angels," it said in a Telegram post.

The other dead teenager was 17, according to Prosecutor General Andrii Kostin.

The attack also damaged 18 multistory buildings, 65 houses, five schools, two kindergartens, a shopping center, an administrative building and a recreational building, regional Governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

Rescuers were still searching the rubble for bodies and more survivors in a city where last year, about six weeks after the start of war, 52 civilians were killed in a Russian missile strike on a train station.

Officials initially blamed Tuesday's strike in Kramatorsk on an S-300 missile, a surface-to-air weapon that Russia's forces have repurposed for loosely targeted strikes on cities, but the National Police later said Iskander short-range ballistic missiles were used.

Kramatorsk is a front-line city that houses the Ukrainian army's regional headquarters. The pizza restaurant was frequented by journalists, aid workers and soldiers, as well as local residents.

The Security Service of Ukraine said the man it detained, an employee of a gas transportation company, is suspected of filming the restaurant for the Russians and informing them about its popularity.

It provided no evidence for its claim. Russia has insisted during the war that it doesn't aim at civilian targets, although its air strikes have killed many civilians. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov repeated that claim on Wednesday.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces hit a facility used by Ukrainian army officers in Kramatorsk but did not mention the pizza restaurant that was struck.

Kramatorsk is in Donetsk, one of four Ukrainian provinces that Russia annexed last September but does not fully control. In 2014, Russia also annexed Ukraine's Crimea.

The Kremlin demands that Kyiv recognize the annexations, while Kyiv has ruled out any talks until Russian troops pull back from all occupied territories.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that the biggest impediment now to negotiating peace is "Putin's conviction that he can outlast Ukraine and he can outlast all of us."

"The more we are able to disabuse him of that notion, the more likely it is that at some point he'll come to the table," Blinken said at the Council on Foreign Relations. He added that the NATO summit in Lithuania in two weeks will offer "a very robust package for Ukraine, political and practical."

In other developments:

Pope Francis' peace envoy, Italian Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, was to meet with an aide to Putin, Yury Ushakov, in Moscow on Wednesday. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the talks would include "possible ways of political-diplomatic settlement."

Francis dispatched Zuppi, a veteran of the Catholic Church's peace initiatives, to Moscow in hopes of helping spur peace negotiations after his visit to Kyiv earlier this month. At the Vatican on Wednesday, Francis again appealed for an end to the war, praying that Ukrainians "may soon find peace: There is so much suffering in Ukraine, let us not forget that."

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Associated Press writer Yuras Karmanau in Tallinn, Estonia, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Vanessa Gera in Warsaw and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

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

## **Travelers suffered through another day of cancellations. It could get worse as holiday approaches**

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

Hundreds of thousands of summer travelers suffered through another day of delayed and canceled flights Wednesday, a troubling glimpse into what could happen over the long July 4 holiday weekend as airlines struggle to keep up with surging numbers of passengers.

By early evening on the East Coast, nearly 5,800 U.S. flights had been delayed and 1,000 more were canceled, according to FlightAware.

United Airlines, which depends on the airport in Newark, New Jersey, canceled the most flights among U.S. airlines for a fifth straight day.

"We're beginning to see improvement across our operation," United said in a statement Wednesday night. "As our operation improves in the days ahead, we will be on track to restore our operation for the holiday weekend."

The worst disruptions continued to be along the East Coast, which has been pummeled by thunderstorms this week. The Federal Aviation Administration temporarily held up Boston-bound flights on Wednesday. It stopped flights to all three major airports in the New York City area and two near Washington, D.C., at times Tuesday.

Huge crowds, bad weather, inability of some airline crews to reach their scheduling offices — even a Delta jet that made a belly landing in Charlotte, North Carolina — all contributed to the mess.

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And it could be just the storm before the storm: The FAA predicted that Thursday would be the heaviest travel day over the July 4 holiday period. On top of that, some airline planes may be unable to fly in bad weather starting this weekend because of possible interference with 5G wireless service.

Travel has picked up steadily every year since bottoming out during the pandemic. For the past week, about 2.6 million people a day on average have been flying in the United States, about 2% more than in the same period during pre-pandemic 2019, according to Transportation Security Administration figures.

The number of air travelers could set a pandemic-era record over the holiday weekend. The FAA expects Thursday to be the busiest, with more than 52,500 total flights.

People whose travel plans were disrupted took to social media to vent against the airlines. Some swore they would never fly again on whichever airline had done them wrong.

Tia Hudson was back at Newark Liberty International Airport for the fourth straight day, trying to catch a United Airlines flight home to Louisiana.

"My flight has been canceled like five times now. I slept at the airport two nights, I booked two hotels, I spent over \$700 since I've been here and they said they're not going to reimburse me because it's weather-related," she said. "It's not weather-related. It's a shortage of pilots and attendants."

Hudson missed her mother's wedding and caused her mother to skip her own honeymoon to pick up Tia at the airport near Dallas – only for the flight to be canceled.

On top of that, Hudson's bags were lost.

"I just want to get away from this airport, but they say nobody is leaving until Saturday," she said.

At Logan Airport in Boston, pharmaceutical company manager Rui Loureiro had to scrap plans to spend the rest of the week meeting clients on the West Coast when his flight to San Francisco was canceled. United told him the soonest he could get on another flight was Friday, and didn't offer to pay for a hotel room. He plans to fly home to Portugal instead – or at least give it a try.

"I am a little bit stressed, disappointed," Loureiro said. "People were waiting for me. We had things arranged to do. Now I have to go back and rebook everything and come again another time."

By early Wednesday evening, Chicago-based United had canceled more than 550 flights — one-fifth of its schedule — and 1,200 others were late. The airline vowed to reduce cancellations — and added it reduced the backlog of stranded bags in Newark by 30% since Tuesday. New York-based JetBlue canceled nearly one in 10 flights.

If large numbers of passengers are stranded or delayed this weekend, expect federal officials and the airlines to blame each other for the mess.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, whose department includes the FAA, has been beating up on the airlines for more than a year. He has accused them of failing to live up to reasonable standards of customer service and suggested that they are scheduling more flights than they can handle.

The airlines are punching back.

United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby blamed a shortage of federal air traffic controllers for massive disruptions last weekend at its Newark hub.

"We estimate that over 150,000 customers on United alone were impacted this weekend because of FAA staffing issues and their ability to manage traffic," Kirby wrote in a memo to employees on Monday night.

The Association of Flight Attendants, which represents United's cabin crews, said United was contributing to the situation. The union said employees were waiting three hours or longer when calling a crew-scheduling center for assignments because of "limited telephone lines and personnel."

However, the FAA signaled earlier this year that it could struggle to keep flights moving in New York, the busiest airspace in the nation. Facing a severe shortage of air traffic controllers at a key facility on Long Island, the FAA persuaded airlines to trim their summer schedules to avoid overloading the system.

Sen. Ted Cruz, a Republican from Texas, where American and Southwest are based, took the airlines' side in a series of tweets about delays at the New York City area's three big airports.

"Staffing at FAA's air traffic facilities in NY is at 54%," Cruz tweeted. "Yet (the Transportation Department) is blaming weather for delays. Nonsense."

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A Transportation Department spokesperson said the agency is working with airlines to fix things, but the combination of high traffic and bad weather reduces the rate at which planes can take off and land safely, leading to delays and canceled flights.

The FAA is training about 3,000 new air traffic controllers, but most of them won't be ready anytime soon. Last week, the Transportation Department's inspector general said in a report that the FAA has made only "limited efforts" to adequately staff critical air traffic control centers and lacks a plan to tackle the problem.

Last week, Buttigieg issued a new warning to airlines, telling them that planes that aren't outfitted with new radio altimeters — devices that measure the height of a plane above the ground — won't be allowed to operate in limited visibility starting this Saturday because of potential interference from new 5G wireless service.

American, United, Southwest, Alaska and Frontier say all of their planes have been retrofitted, but Delta Air Lines still has about 190 planes waiting to be updated because its supplier doesn't have enough altimeters. Delta said it will schedule those planes to avoid landing where the weather might be bad to limit disruptions.

Smaller airlines that operate regional flights could also be affected by the radio interference issue, as could flights operated to the United States by foreign carriers.

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Robert Bumsted in Newark and Michael Casey in Boston contributed. Koenig reported from Dallas.

## Thousands more prisoners across the US will get free college paid for by the government

By AARON MORRISON AP National Writer

REPRESA, California (AP) — The graduates lined up, brushing off their gowns and adjusting classmates' tassels and stoles. As the graduation march played, the 85 men appeared to hoots and cheers from their families. They marched to the stage — one surrounded by barbed wire fence and constructed by fellow prisoners.

For these were no ordinary graduates. Their black commencement garb almost hid their aqua and navy-blue prison uniforms as they received college degrees, high school diplomas and vocational certificates earned while they served time.

Thousands of prisoners throughout the United States get their college degrees behind bars, most of them paid for by the federal Pell Grant program, which offers the neediest undergraduates tuition aid that they don't have to repay.

That program is about to expand exponentially next month, giving about 30,000 more students behind bars some \$130 million in financial aid per year.

The new rules, which overturn a 1994 ban on Pell Grants for prisoners, begin to address decades of policy during the "tough on crime" 1970s-2000 that brought about mass incarceration and stark racial disparities in the nation's 1.9 million prison population.

For prisoners who get their college degrees, including those at Folsom State Prison who got grants during an experimental period that started in 2016, it can be the difference between walking free with a life ahead and ending up back behind bars. Finding a job is difficult with a criminal conviction, and a college degree is an advantage former prisoners desperately need.

Gerald Massey, one of 11 Folsom students graduating with a degree from the California State University at Sacramento, has served nine years of a 15-to-life sentence for a drunken driving incident that killed his close friend.

"The last day I talked to him, he was telling me, I should go back to college," Massey said. "So when I came into prison and I saw an opportunity to go to college, I took it."

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Consider this: It costs roughly \$106,000 per year to incarcerate one adult in California.



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It costs about \$20,000 to educate a prisoner with a bachelor's degree program through the Transforming Outcomes Project at Sacramento State, or TOPSS.

If a prisoner paroled with a degree, never reoffends, gets a job earning a good salary and pays taxes, then the expansion of prison education shouldn't be a hard sell, said David Zuckerman, the project's interim director.

"I would say that return on investment is better than anything I've ever invested in," Zuckerman said.

That doesn't mean it's always popular. Using taxpayer money to give college aid to people who've broken the law can be controversial. When the Obama administration offered a limited number of Pell Grants to prisoners through executive action in 2015, some prominent Republicans opposed it, arguing in favor of improving the existing federal job training and re-entry programs instead.

The 1990s saw imprisonment rates for Black and Hispanic Americans triple between 1970 and 2000. The rate doubled for white Americans in the same time span.

The ban on Pell Grants for prisoners caused the hundreds of college-in-prison programs that existed in the 1970s and 1980s to go almost entirely extinct by the late nineties.

Congress voted to lift the ban in 2020, and since then about 200 Pell-eligible college programs in 48 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico have been running, like the one at Folsom. Now, the floodgates will open, allowing any college that wants to utilize Pell Grant funding to serve incarcerated students to apply and, if approved, launch their program.

President Joe Biden has strongly supported giving Pell Grants to prisoners in recent years. It's a turnaround – the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, championed by the former Delaware senator, was what barred prisoners from getting Pell Grants in the first place. Biden has since said he didn't agree with that part of the compromise legislation.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation had 200 students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs this spring, and has partnered with eight universities across the state. The goal, says CDCR press secretary Terri Hardy: Transforming prisoners' lives through education.

Aside from students dressed in prisoner blues, classes inside Folsom Prison look and feel like any college class. Instructors give incarcerated students the same assignments as the pupils on campus.

The students in the Folsom Prison classes come from many different backgrounds. They are Black, white, Hispanic, young, middle aged and senior. Massey, who got his communications degree, is of South Asian heritage.

Born in San Francisco to parents who immigrated to the U.S. from Pakistan, Massey recalls growing up feeling like an outsider. Although most people of his background are Muslim, his family members belonged to a small Christian community in Karachi.

In primary school, he was a target for bullies. As a teen, he remembered seeking acceptance from the wrong people. When he completed high school, Massey joined the Air Force.

"After 9/11, I went in and some people thought I was a terrorist trying to infiltrate," he said. "It really bothered me. So when I got out of the military, I didn't want anything to do with them."

Massey enrolled in college after one year in the military, but dropped out. Later, he became a certified nursing assistant and held the job for 10 years. He married and had two children.

His addiction to alcohol and a marijuana habit knocked him off course.

"I was living like a little kid and I had my own little kids," Massey said. "And I thought if I do the bare minimum, that's OK."

Prison forced him to take responsibility for his actions. He got focused, sought rehabilitation for alcoholism and restarted his pursuit of education. He also took up prison barbering to make money.

In between haircuts for correctional officers and other prison staff, Massey took advantage of his access to WiFi connection to study, take tests and work on assignments. Internet service doesn't reach the prisoners' housing units.

On commencement day, Massey was the last of his classmates to put on his cap and gown. He was a

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member of the ceremony's honor guard – his prison uniform was decorated with a white aiguillette, the ornamental braided cord denoting his military service.

"It's a big accomplishment," Massey said. "I feel, honestly, that God opened the doors and I just walked through them."

Massey found his mom, wife and daughter for a long-awaited celebratory embrace. He reserved the longest and tightest embrace for his 9-year-old daughter, Grace. Her small frame collapsed into his outstretched arms, as wife Jacq'lene Massey looked on.

"There's so many different facets and things that can happen when you're incarcerated, but this kept him focused on his goals," Massey's wife Jacq'lene said. "Having the resources and the ability to participate in programs like that really helped him, but it actually helps us, too."

"There's the domino effect – it's good for our kids to see that. It's good for me to see that," she said.

In addition to his communications degree, Massey earned degrees in theology and biblical studies. His post-release options began to materialize ahead of graduation. State commissioners have deemed him fit for parole, and he expects to be released any day now. A nonprofit group that assists incarcerated military veterans met with him in May to set up transitional housing, food, clothing and healthcare insurance for his eventual re-entry.

"There's a radio station I listen to, a Christian radio station, that I've been thinking one day I would like to work for," Massey said. "They are always talking about redemption stories. So I would like to share my redemption story, one day."

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College-in-prison programs aren't perfect. Many prisons barely have enough room to accommodate the few educational and rehabilitation programs that already exist. Prisons will have to figure out how to make space and get the technology to help students succeed.

Racial imbalances in prison college enrollment and completion rates are also a growing concern for advocates. People of color make up a disproportionate segment of the U.S. prison population. Yet white students were enrolled in college programs at a percentage higher than their portion of the overall prison population, according to a six-year Vera Institute of Justice study of Pell Grant experimental programs in prison.

Black and Hispanic students were enrolled by eight and 15 percentage points below their prison population, respectively.

Prisoners with a record of good behavior get preference for the rehabilitative and prison college programs. Black and Hispanic prisoners are more likely to face discipline.

"If you're tying discipline to college access, then ... those folks are not going to have as much access," said Margaret diZerega, who directs the Vera Institute's Unlocking Potential initiative, which is focused on expanding college in prison.

"Let's get them into college and set them on a different trajectory."

It's not yet clear if the Pell Grant expansion will grow or narrow the racial disparities. The U.S. Department of Education did not respond to the AP's inquiry on this issue before publication.

"For America to be a country of second chances, we must uphold education's promise of a better life for people who've been impacted by the criminal justice system," U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a written statement to the AP.

Pell Grants will "provide meaningful opportunities for redemption and rehabilitation, reduce recidivism rates, and empower incarcerated people to build brighter futures for themselves, their families, and our communities," Cardona said.

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Of the 11 men getting Bachelor's degrees in the jubilant ceremony at Folsom Prison last month, one was no longer a prisoner.

Michael Love, who had paroled from Folsom Prison five months earlier, came back to give the valedictory speech. He wore a suit and tie underneath his cap and gown.

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To his classmates, Love is a tangible example of what is possible for their own redemption journeys. After serving more than 35 years in prison, the 55-year-old is currently enrolled in a Master's program at Sacramento State. He's been hired as a teaching aide and will teach freshmen communications students in the fall, and is also working as a mentor with Project Rebound, an organization that assists formerly incarcerated people.

"You have just as much value as anyone in the community," he told the other prisoners in his speech. "You are loved. I love you, that's why I'm here."

For many of the prisoners, it was the graduation that their families never imagined they'd get to see. A 28-year-old man met his father in person for the first time, as his dad received a GED.

As the ceremony wrapped, Robert Nelsen, the outgoing president of Sacramento State University, choked up with tears. He was retiring, so the graduation at Folsom Prison was the last ceremony he would preside over as a university president.

"There is one final tradition and that is to move the tassel – not yet, not yet, not yet – from the right to the left," Nelsen instructed to laughter from the audience and graduates.

"The left side is where your heart is," the university president said. "When you move that tassel, you are moving education and the love of education into your heart forever."

The ceremony was done. Many graduates joined their loved ones inside a visitation hall for slices of white and chocolate sheet cake and cups of punch.

The graduates walked back to their housing units with more than just hope for what their futures might bring. One day, they'll walk out of the prison gates with degrees that don't bear an asterisk revealing they earned it while in prison.

They'll walk toward a second chance.

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This is the second in an occasional Associated Press series examining the lives and conditions of prisoners in U.S. correctional facilities. Send confidential tips to [ap.org/tips](https://ap.org/tips). The Associated Press receives support from the Public Welfare Foundation for reporting focused on criminal justice. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## President touts 'Bidenomics' though new poll shows just 34% approve his handling of the economy

By JOSH BOAK, EMILY SWANSON and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — President Joe Biden made his pitch Wednesday to a skeptical public that the U.S. economy is thriving under what he now touts as "Bidenomics" -- even as a new poll showed that could be a hard sell as the foundation for his 2024 reelection campaign.

In a major economic speech in Chicago, Biden said his administration's efforts were sparking recovery after Republican policies had crushed America's middle class. But the poll said only one in three U.S. adults approve of his economic leadership.

That 34% figure is even lower than his overall approval rating of 41%, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Biden's approval figures have barely moved for the past year and a half, a source of concern for a president pursuing a second term on his ability to govern and focus on workers. He wants voters to connect local roads and bridge projects, factory construction and the rise of electric vehicles and renewable energy to the millions of dollars in initiatives he signed into law during the first two years of his administration.

"Bidenomics is about the future," he declared in his Wednesday speech to cheering supporters. "Bidenomics is just another way of saying: Restore the American dream."

At the same time, he sought to paint previous Republican tax cuts as deeply flawed, saying they helped the rich but failed the middle class for decades as the promised "trickle down" benefits never seemed to come to the less wealthy.

"The trickle down approach failed the middle class," he said. "It failed America. It blew up the deficit."

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It increased inequity. And it weakened our infrastructure. It stripped the dignity, pride and hope out of communities, one after another.”

As he was departing Washington on Wednesday, Biden said he believes the U.S. will avoid the recession that many economic analysts have been expecting. Republican leaders such as House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said last year that the high inflation under Biden’s watch meant that “we are in a recession,” but that is not the case under economic definitions.

GOP officials say their tax cuts have encouraged business investments and profits that have improved pay for workers and bolstered the stock market, while greater government spending would cause prices to keep rising and waste money.

Indeed, the economy has steadily improved over the past year of Biden’s term in the White House.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that consumer confidence this month reached the highest level since January 2022. Unemployment stands near a historic low at 3.7%. The inflation that has plagued Biden’s presidency has fallen to 4% from a peak of 9.1% last June. But prices are still rising significantly faster than the Federal Reserve’s target of 2%, a worry for voters and a line of attack for Republican lawmakers and other presidential candidates.

And smoke from Canadian wildfires, evident in Chicago on Wednesday, has added a new cloud for workers and shoppers in the U.S. The White House said it’s monitoring the air quality in Chicago but would not cancel the president’s scheduled events, which included a campaign reception in addition to the speech on the economy.

The new poll identifies a weakness within Biden’s own base. Many of the Democrats he needs to marshal in 2024 are comparatively unenthusiastic about his economic record. Seventy-two percent within his party say they approve of his handling of his job overall, but just 60% say they approve of his handling of the economy.

By comparison, during the depths of the pandemic as unemployment spiked, Republicans approved by overwhelming numbers of then-President Donald Trump’s economic leadership. Only about 1 in 10 Republicans now approve of Biden overall or on the economy, a testament to the polarization that defines modern U.S. politics.

Sarah Husted, 40, said she voted in 2020 for Biden, but “I wasn’t thrilled with either candidate.”

Living in Lincoln, Nebraska, Husted said that she feels as though inflation is getting worse, especially with regard to utilities and housing. But she largely believes the economic turmoil still reflects the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

“I don’t think that President Biden is helping the situation as much as he could, but I don’t think it’s all his fault,” she said.

That take was shared by other poll respondents interviewed by AP who voted for Biden in 2020. They generally saw him as a president grappling with partisan divisions, global competition and the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.

“He’s doing the best he can, but he can’t do anything without Congress,” said Alice Banner, 86, a retired nurse from Baltimore County, Maryland.

Ben Will, 34, noted the solid job growth during Biden’s presidency and said the infrastructure spending that Biden signed into law would help with growth.

“He’s doing a fantastic job with the cards that were dealt to him,” said Will, a marketing and advertising director from Reading, Pennsylvania.

Overall, 30% of U.S. adults say they think the national economy is good, up slightly from the 25% who said that last month, when the president and congressional Republicans were in the midst of negotiations over raising the nation’s debt limit and a historic government default was a risk. No more than about a third have called the economy good since 2021.

The administration is making a data-driven argument in addition to Biden’s speech. The Treasury Department released an analysis showing that spending on factory-related construction has doubled since 2021 after adjusting for inflation. White House economists issued a report that shows inflation is lower in the

U.S. than the rest of industrialized nations in the Group of Seven.

White House aides believe that Biden's speech on Wednesday can generate greater awareness of his policies and increase Democratic voters' appreciation of the economy. While the president's allies acknowledge that many Americans still hold dim views of the economy, they note that the actual economic data was far worse last November, when Democrats mounted a stronger-than-expected showing in the midterm elections.

Biden aides say they are encouraged by data showing Americans' views can be changed by a consistent message reinforced on multiple fronts, which is what the president and his Cabinet are setting out to do by touring the U.S. over the next three weeks. Their hope is that repetition of Biden's accomplishments, coupled with a contrast to GOP proposals to undo those initiatives, will stick with voters for 2024.

The poll of 1,220 adults was conducted June 22-26 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

AP White House Correspondent Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

## Space Disco Cowboy? Couples ditch traditional wedding dress codes in favor of out-there themes

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — "Space Disco Cowboy." "Yacht Shabbat." "Burning Man Formal"? More couples are tossing tradition when it comes to what wedding guests should wear, to some befuddlement among invitees.

Maggie Long, 34, recently attended the nuptials of a close friend in a low-key Denver lounge. The suggested dress? "Dive Bar Semiformal."

"I love a theme," said Long, who lives in New York. "It's fun that people aren't taking weddings so seriously, but I had no idea what that meant."

After exchanging thoughts for months with the officiant, who is also a friend, Long took her outfit idea — a strappy ultra-mini dress — to the bride. The bride deemed it a bit too "Kardashian cosplay." Long finally settled on a slinky gold lamé number by Norma Kamali, and a great time was had.

"There were a lot of vintage jumpsuits. One of our friends went full 1960s with go-go boots and a bouffant. A lot of sequins were happening," Long said.

Some couples are offering mood boards as a way to guide guests, including older ones. At the dive bar wedding, Long said plenty of older guests got into the spirit. One donned a rainbow tie-dye T-shirt, à la the Grateful Dead.

Other wedding guests have contended with "Tropical Formal," "Snappy Casual" and "Garden Party Whimsical."

Heading into the busy summer season for weddings and other special events, Indya Wright in Washington, D.C., has had enough.

She recently posted on Twitter: "These new age event dress codes are the bane of my existence. What happened to just 'casual,' 'cocktail' and 'formal'? Now I gotta Google 'After 5 Formal Festive Renaissance attire' to figure out if you want me to give Great Gatsby or King Arthur & the Knights of the Round Table."

Wright, 35, remains frustrated. The wedding of a college classmate had a "smart, but not too smart casual" dress code.

Renée Strauss, co-founder and CEO of the destination wedding planning company Wedaways in Beverly Hills, California, said wacky dress codes come down to couples striving to make their nuptials custom and unique.

"The key is making sure there's communication behind the dress code. Don't just confuse guests," she said.

When her company builds wedding websites for clients, it includes descriptions for dress codes like "Wine

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Country Chic," urging couples to offer a broad enough palette for people to express themselves. "Tropical Formal," for instance, could be long, flowing dresses in bright summer colors and linen suits with playful ties.

"Most guests have a lot of fun with it," Strauss said.

Rikki Gotthelf, 32, in Los Angeles, attended a wedding recently and has three more this year. She was a bridesmaid for the "Space Disco Cowboy" nuptials of friends who shuttled their guests to an abandoned ghost town near Austin, Texas.

"We had these shiny intergalactic Batsheva prairie dresses. Mine was iridescent," Gotthelf said. "Another wedding I went to was 'Funky Formal.'"

For guidance, Gotthelf turned to Sophie Strauss, who bills herself as a "stylist for regular people." Strauss suggests following up with the couple if they haven't made themselves clear.

"They won't be offended," she said. "They're invested enough in how everyone looks to have put forth a kooky dress code."

One of her clients has a "Music Festival Formal" wedding coming up.

"He clarified with the couple that it's more Woodstock, less Burning Man. Good to know," the stylist said.

The difference? Hippie flowy dresses, bell bottoms, tunics, tie dye, big round sunglasses and woven headbands for the former. "Mad Max-meets-Carnival on mushrooms" in lamé, combat boots, rhinestones, body paint and goggles for the latter, she said. Her client decided on a neutral-tone linen suit with a vintage beaded necklace or two.

She implored guests staring down out-there dress codes to remember: "It's not a costume. Unless, of course, it's literally a costume party."

Small adjustments may be enough, like wearing a regular suit but swapping out a dress shirt for one in an on-theme pattern. James Berger, 32, in Las Vegas, was among guests told to express their inner spirit. He managed a bow tie with multicolored polkas and a formal suit that left him feeling "slightly out of place" among a sea of vibrant colors.

Strauss, the stylist, regularly faces the issue among her clients.

"I had a client who had to do a 'Fancy Ranch' theme a few months ago and she was tempted to go buy a new outfit from head to toe," she said. "But pairing some cowboy boots with a sundress or swapping a tie for a bolo tie goes a long way. And if you're really into it you could add a cowboy hat. You don't need to dress like Orville Peck to fit the theme, though if that's your style, oh my god go for it!"

There's often sentimental meaning behind wedding themes. Madison Smith, 32, is a May 2024 bride and her dress code calls for "Black Tie Sunset Glam." The wedding will be held at the Bonnet Island Estate in Long Beach Island, New Jersey.

"It's in honor of my late grandfather," she said of the theme. "His favorite thing was the sunsets where I'm getting married."

Her vision? Sunset-colored gowns of oranges, yellows, purples, blues and pinks with fun accessories, and tuxedos with bow ties and pocket squares of the same colors.

Smith, in Arlington, Virginia, hasn't left guests guessing. She works for Pinterest and has already been pinning inspiration to give them a boost. Her bridal shower guests have a board of their own to tackle Smith's "LoveShackFancy" dress code.

"They have no precedent for an unusual dress code where a couple calls for something other than black tie, formal, cocktail or casual attire. When you receive an invitation that reads 'Festive Hudson Valley Chic' or 'Tropical Hipster,' it can certainly bode more questions than less for those used to more traditional themes," said Amy Shey Jacobs, founder of Chandelier Events in New York.

"Chic as F—k." "Gay Garden Party." "Black Tie Fabulous." "Colorful Cocktail." "Sparkle and Shine." "Red Carpet Ready." Jove Meyer, owner and creative director of an eponymous event planning company in Brooklyn, has handled all of the above in dress codes.

"As much as I love a fun and unique dress code, I always suggest couples clarify exactly what they mean with a descriptive sentence or two so there's no guessing," he said.

Brittney Drye, editor in chief of the wedding resource magazine Love Inc., said guests shouldn't be re-

luctant to quiz the bridal couple about a puzzling dress code.

"We never want to bombard the couple," she said, "but when they're asking their guests to abide by a nontraditional dress code, they're signing themselves up to be asked questions."

Find Leanne Italie on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/litalie>

## Is it a 'richcession'? Or a 'rolling recession'? Or maybe no recession at all?

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The warnings have been sounded for more than a year: A recession is going to hit the United States. If not this quarter, then by next quarter. Or the quarter after that. Or maybe next year.

So is a recession still in sight?

The latest signs suggest maybe not. Despite much higher borrowing costs, thanks to the Federal Reserve's aggressive streak of interest rate hikes, consumers keep spending, and employers keep hiring. Gas prices have dropped, and grocery prices have leveled off, giving Americans more spending power.

The economy keeps managing to grow. And so does the belief among some economists that the United States might actually achieve an elusive "soft landing," in which growth slows but households and businesses spend enough to avoid a full-blown recession.

"The U.S. economy is genuinely displaying signs of resilience," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at EY, a tax and consulting firm. "This is leading many to rightly question whether the long-forecast recession is really inevitable or whether a soft-landing of the economy" is possible.

Analysts point to two trends that may help stave off an economic contraction. Some say the economy is experiencing a "rolling recession," in which only some industries shrink while the overall economy remains above water.

Others think the U.S. is experiencing what they call a "richcession": Major job cuts, they note, have been concentrated in higher-paying industries like technology and finance, heavy with professional workers who generally have the financial cushions to withstand layoffs. Job cuts in those fields, as a result, are less likely to sink the overall economy.

Still, threats loom: The Fed is all but certain to keep raising interest rates, at least once more, and to keep them high for months, thereby continuing to impose heavy borrowing costs on consumers and businesses. That's why some economists caution that a full-blown recession may still occur.

"The Fed will keep pushing until it fixes the inflation issue," said Yelena Shulyatyeva, an economist at BNP Paribas.

On Wednesday, Fed Chair Jerome Powell reinforced that message, saying the central bank's key rate hasn't been restraining the economy for "very long" and that "the bottom line is that policy hasn't been restrictive enough for long enough."

Powell spoke at a global conference in Sintra, Portugal, along with three other central bank leaders whose economies are also struggling with persistently high inflation. The Bank of England last week raised its key rate a substantial half-point, which could send the U.K. into a recession, while Europe's economy has stagnated in the past six months.

Here's how it could all play out in the United States:

### IT'S A ROLLING RECESSION

When different sectors of the economy take their turns contracting, with some declining while others keep expanding, it's sometimes called a "rolling recession." The economy as a whole manages to avoid a full-fledged recession.

The housing industry was the first to suffer a tailspin after the Fed began sending interest rates sharply higher 15 months ago. As mortgage rates nearly doubled, home sales plunged. They're now 20% lower than they were a year ago. Manufacturing soon followed. And while it hasn't fared as badly as housing, factory production is down 0.3% from a year earlier.

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And this spring, the technology industry suffered a slump, too. In the aftermath of the pandemic, Americans were spending less time online and instead resumed shopping at physical stores and going to restaurants more frequently. That trend forced sharp job cuts among tech companies such as Facebook's parent Meta, video conferencing provider Zoom and Google.

At the same time, consumers ramped up their spending on travel and at entertainment venues, buoying the economy's vast service sector and offsetting the difficulties in other sectors. Economists say they expect such spending to slow later this year as the savings that many households had amassed during the pandemic continue to shrink.

Yet by then, housing may have rebounded enough to pick up the baton and drive economic growth. There are already signs that the industry is starting to recover: Sales of new homes jumped 12% from April to May despite high mortgage rates and home prices far above pre-pandemic levels.

And other sectors should continue to expand, providing a foundation for overall growth. Krishna Guha, an analyst at Evercore ISI, notes that some areas of the economy — from education to government to health care — are not so sensitive to higher interest rates, which is why they are still hiring and probably will keep doing so.

If the U.S. economy achieves a soft landing, Guha said, "we think these rolling sectoral recessions will be a big part of the story."

## IT'S A 'RICHCESSION'

Affluent Americans aren't exactly suffering, particularly as the stock market has rebounded this year. Yet it's also true that the bulk of high-profile job losses that began last year have been concentrated in higher-paying professions. That pattern is different from what typically happens in recessions: Lower-paying jobs, in areas like restaurants and retail, are usually the first to be lost and often in depressingly large numbers.

That's because in most downturns, as Americans start to pull back on spending, restaurants, hotels and retailers lay off waves of workers. As fewer people buy homes, many construction workers are thrown out of work. Sales of high-priced manufactured goods, such as cars and appliances, tend to fall, leading to job losses at factories.

This time, so far, it hasn't happened that way. Restaurants, bars and hotels are still hiring — in fact, they have been a major driver of job gains. And to the surprise of labor market experts, construction companies are also still adding workers despite higher borrowing rates, which often discourage residential and commercial building.

Instead, layoffs have been striking mainly white collar and professional occupations. Uber Technologies said last week that it will cut 200 of its recruiters. Earlier this month, GrubHub announced 400 layoffs among the delivery company's corporate jobs. Financial and media companies are also struggling, with Citibank announcing that it will have shed 1,600 workers in the April-June quarter. On Tuesday, Ford Motor Co. said it was laying off several hundred engineers, after having cut 3,000 white collar jobs last year.

Many of the affected employees are well-educated and likely to find new jobs relatively quickly, economists say, helping keep unemployment down despite the layoffs. Right now, for example, the federal government, as well as employers in the hotel, retail and even railroad industries are seeking to hire people who have been laid off from the tech giants.

Tom Barkin, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, notes that affluent workers typically have savings they can draw upon after losing a job, enabling them to keep spending and fueling the economy. For that reason, Barkin suggested, white collar job losses don't tend to weaken consumer spending as much as losses experienced by blue collar workers do.

"It's easy to imagine that this might be a different sort of softening labor market ... that has a different kind of impact, both on demand and on things like the unemployment rate than your normal weakening," Barkin said in an interview with The Associated Press last month.

## OR MAYBE NO RECESSION

The most optimistic economists say they're growing more hopeful that a recession can be avoided, even if the Fed keeps interest rates at a peak for months to come.

They point out that a range of recent economic data has come in better than expected. Most notably, hiring has stayed surprisingly resilient, with employers adding a robust average of roughly 300,000 jobs



over the past six months and the unemployment rate, at 3.7%, still near a half-century low.

Manufacturing, too, is defying gloomy expectations. On Tuesday, the government reported that companies last month stepped up their orders of industrial machinery, railcars, computers and other long-lasting goods.

Many analysts have been encouraged because some threats to the economy haven't turned out to be as damaging as feared — or haven't surfaced at all. The fight in Congress, for example, over the government's borrowing limit, which could have triggered a default on Treasury securities, was resolved without much disruption in financial markets or discernible impact on the economy.

And so far, the banking turmoil that occurred last spring after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank has largely been contained and doesn't appear to be weakening the economy.

Jan Hatzius, chief economist at Goldman Sachs, said this month that the ebbing of such threats led him to mark down the likelihood of a recession within the next 12 months from 35% to just 25%.

Other economists point out that the economy doesn't face the types of dangerous imbalances or events that have ignited some recent recessions, such as the stock market bubble in 2001 or the housing bubble in 2008.

"The risk of recession is receding, rapidly," said Neil Dutta, an economist at Renaissance Macro. Whether we are having a rolling recession or "richcession," he said, "If you have to call it different names, it's not a recession."

## **As a lengthy legal battle ends, a Palestinian family braces for eviction from Jerusalem home**

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Few places in Jerusalem speak of the larger conflict being waged over the city more than the apartment of 68-year-old Nora Ghaith-Sub Laban.

As the last remaining Palestinians in a building filled with Israeli settlers, the Ghaith-Sub Labans have battled Israeli attempts to evict them from their Old City home for over 45 years.

That labyrinthine legal battle ended earlier this year, when the Israeli Supreme Court struck down the family's final motion for an appeal. Now, Israeli authorities have ordered the eviction of Nora and her husband Mustafa to take place by July 13. That includes one of the biggest holidays of the Islamic calendar, Eid al-Adha, which began Tuesday night.

"I can't sleep, I can't eat," Nora said from the apartment where she was born in 1955. From the outside, with its rough-hewed stones flattered by brilliant sunlight and its windows overlooking the golden Dome of the Rock, the 200-year-old home in the heart of the Muslim Quarter is a Jerusalem postcard. Inside, the paint has chipped and walls have peeled due to court orders barring the family from doing repairs.

In what she described as a campaign to make life so unbearable that she would simply leave, Nora said her Jewish neighbors spit and hurl stones and bottles at her. Israeli police turn up at her door, asking for IDs and demanding to know everyone who has passed in and out of her home.

"This is psychological war," she said.

The Israeli police said the check-ins were "not meant to intimidate or harass but to gather the necessary information" ahead of the eviction.

The Ghaith-Sub Laban case is not a dispute over a single property, advocates say, but part of a wider effort by Israeli settlers, with government backing, to cement Jewish control over the contested city, especially the Old City, home to Jerusalem's most important holy sites.

A similar dispute that could lead to evictions of Palestinian families in the nearby neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah stirred tensions that built up to a 2021 war between Israel and the Hamas militant group in Gaza that killed over 250 people.

The family's struggle has sparked numerous protest rallies by Israeli left-wing activists, some of which have spiraled into scuffles with Israeli police who have arrested those waving Palestinian national flags.

"It's more than just, 'Oh, I have this problem with my neighbor downstairs.' You are talking about a po-

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litical and national conflict," said Yonatan Mizrahi, the settlement watch director at Peace Now, an Israeli advocacy group that opposes settlements. "What happens in the Old City does not stay in the Old City."

Captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war and later annexed in a move not internationally recognized, east Jerusalem has long been a crucible in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Today, more than 220,000 Jews live in east Jerusalem, largely in built-up settlements that Israel considers neighborhoods of its capital. Most of east Jerusalem's 350,000 Palestinian residents are crammed into overcrowded neighborhoods where there is little room to build.

Across the city's eastern half, settler organizations and Jewish trusts are pursuing court battles against Palestinian families to clear the way for settlers.

An Israeli law passed after the annexation of east Jerusalem allows Jews to reclaim properties that were Jewish before the formation of the Israeli state in 1948. Jordan controlled the area between 1948 and the 1967 war.

Nearly 1,000 Palestinians, including 424 children, currently face eviction in east Jerusalem, the United Nations humanitarian office said.

During British rule over historic Palestine, before the war over Israel's creation, the Ghaith-Sub Laban apartment was owned by a trust for Kollel Galicia, a group that collected funds in Eastern Europe for Jewish families in Jerusalem. Its legal representative, Eli Attal, declined to comment on the case, sending only an emoji with its mouth taped shut.

Arieh King, a settler leader and deputy mayor of Jerusalem, described the Ghaith-Sub Laban family as "squatters" and the case as a straightforward real estate dispute.

"It's Jewish property and they want it back," he said. "(The Ghaith-Sub Labans) don't have any right to this property."

There is no equivalent right in Israel for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled or were forced from their homes during the war surrounding Israel's establishment to return to lost properties.

Nora's case reflects the city's volatile history. Hailing from the southern Palestinian city of Hebron, her parents moved to west Jerusalem in 1945, then to the Old City when the capital was divided in the 1948 war.

As residents of the same Muslim Quarter apartment for seven decades, Nora's family gained the status of protected tenants, putting Israeli law on their side.

Nora shared with The Associated Press her Jordanian rental contract from 1953 that showed that she and Mustafa paid rent to a "General Custodian" for abandoned properties, first under Jordanian authorities and then under Israel after the 1967 war. She now pays rent — 200 Jordanian dinars, or \$282 each year — to the lawyers of the Jewish trust.

The case has dragged on for decades, as the Israeli custodian and then the Kollel Galicia trust contested the family's protected tenancy. Most recently, the Kollel Galicia endowment argued in 2019 that Nora's absence from her house that year could clear the way for their eviction.

Nora said the house was empty at times in 2019 because she was hospitalized with a back injury and later recovered in the houses of her adult children, whom Israeli authorities had previously expelled from the Old City apartment.

Israel's Supreme Court upheld the eviction order in late February, ending the saga that has subsumed almost her entire life and the lives of her five children. Two of her sons — Ahmad, a human rights researcher, and Rafat, a lawyer — have become full-time advocates for the case.

"The Jewish settlers tried and failed time and time again but this time, they've succeeded," said Aviv Tatarsky, of Ir Amim, an anti-settlement advocacy group. "Palestinians have to keep on defending themselves and the battles never end."

The Israeli police said that authorities "understand the emotions involved" but are "dedicated to upholding the rule of law" and enforcing the eviction.

Now in limbo, Nora feels her house has become a prison cell. Worried the settlers will seize on even a momentary absence to move in, she said she hasn't stepped outside since May. Her windows — and their

breath-taking view of the golden shrine — are covered with wire mesh to protect against her neighbors' stones.

Last week, supporters and artists helped the family prepare their home for its future guests. They painted an olive tree in the living room with the words "We will remain," written in its wild roots. There is a portrait of Nora, too, with her wire-rimmed glasses and careful smile.

"They don't want peace, they want surrender," she said.

## **Recruitment of children by armed groups in Syria is on the rise, even as fighting subsides**

By HOGIR ABDO and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

QAMISHLI, Syria (AP) — A 13-year-old Kurdish girl went missing on her way home from a school exam last month, after being approached by a man from an armed group. Her parents immediately feared the worst — that she had been persuaded to join the group and was taken to one of its training camps.

The girl, Peyal Aqil, was with friends when she encountered the man who turned out to be a recruiter for a group known as the Revolutionary Youth. She followed him to one of the group's centers in the city of Qamishli in northeast Syria. Her friends waited for her outside, but she never emerged.

Peyal's mother, Hamrin Alouji, said she and her husband complained to local authorities, to no avail.

The group later said Peyal joined willingly, a claim rejected by Alouji. "We consider that at this age, she cannot give consent, even if she was convinced" by the group's program, Alouji said, sitting for an interview in her daughter's room, filled with stuffed animals and school texts.

Armed groups have recruited children throughout the past 12 years of conflict and civil war in Syria. A new United Nations report on children in armed conflict, released Tuesday, says the use of child soldiers in Syria is growing, even as fighting in most parts of Syria is winding down.

The number of children recruited by armed groups in Syria has risen steadily over the past three years — from 813 in 2020 to 1,296 in 2021 and 1,696 in 2022, the U.N. says.

Among those allegedly recruiting children is a U.S. ally in the battle against Islamic State extremists — the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, according to the U.N. In 2022, the U.N. attributed more than a third of the cases, or 637, to the SDF and associated groups in northeast Syria.

The report also said the U.N. had confirmed 611 recruitment cases by the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, which has clashed with the SDF in the past, and 383 by the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al Sham in northwest Syria. The report cited 25 cases of child recruitment by Syrian government forces and pro-government militias.

Children are being recruited across Syria, said Bassam Alahmad, executive director of Syrians for Truth and Justice, an independent civil society organization.

In some cases, children are forcibly conscripted, he said. In others, minors sign up because they or their families need the salary. Some join for ideological reasons, or because of family and tribal loyalties. In some cases, children are sent out of Syria to fight as mercenaries in other conflicts.

Attempts to end such recruitment have been complicated by the patchwork of armed groups operating in each part of Syria.

In 2019, the SDF signed an agreement with the U.N. promising to end the enlistment of children younger than 18 and set up a number of child protection offices in its area. The U.S. State Department defended its ally in a statement, saying, that the SDF "is the only armed actor in Syria to respond to the UN's call to end the use of child soldiers."

Nodem Shero, a spokesperson for one of the child protection offices run by the SDF-affiliated local administration, acknowledged that children continue to be recruited in areas under SDF control.

However, the complaint mechanism is working, she said. Her office received 20 complaints in the first five months of the year, she said. Four minors were found in the SDF armed forces and were returned to their families. The others were not with the SDF, she said.

In some cases, she said, parents assume their children have been taken by the SDF when they are

actually with another group.

Alahmad said recruitment by the group decreased after the 2019 agreement, but that the SDF has not intervened as other groups in its area continue to target children.

Among them is the Revolutionary Youth, a group linked to the Kurdistan Worker's Party, or PKK, a Kurdish separatist movement banned in Turkey. The Revolutionary Youth is licensed by the the local government linked to the SDF — although both groups denied any connection beyond that.

The U.N. report attributed 10 cases to the Revolutionary Youth in 2022, but others say the numbers are higher. In a January report, Alahmad's group said Revolutionary Youth was responsible for 45 of 49 child recruitment cases it documented in northeastern Syria in 2022.

Alahmad said the SDF-affiliated administration is looking the other way. He called on it to "assume its responsibilities in order to stop these operations."

An official with the Revolutionary Youth acknowledged that the group recruits minors but denied that it forcibly conscripts them. "We do not kidnap anyone, and we do not force anyone to join us," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with his group's rules.

"They themselves come to us and tell us their intention to join the service of the nation," he said. "We do not take minors if they are indecisive or unsure."

Minors are not immediately sent to armed service, he said. Rather, they initially take part in educational training courses and other activities, after which "they are sent to the mountain if they want," he said, referring to the PKK's headquarters in the Qandil mountains of northern Iraq.

Asked about Peyal, he said the girl had complained of being unhappy at home and that her parents forced her to wear the hijab.

Alouji said her daughter had given no signs of being unhappy at home, and the night before her disappearance had said she planned to study to be a lawyer.

A month after her May 21 disappearance, Peyal came home. She had run away from one of the group's training camps, her mother said.

Since her daughter's return, "her psychological condition has been difficult because she... was subjected to harsh training," Alouji said. The family no longer feels safe, she said, and is looking for a way to get out of Syria.

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Sewell reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Omar Albam in Idlib, Syria, and Lolita Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

## London jury seated in Kevin Spacey sex assault trial on allegations over a decade old

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Jurors who will decide the fate of actor Kevin Spacey were sworn in Wednesday in a London court as the Oscar winner faces charges of sexually assaulting four men as long as two decades ago.

The outcome of the trial could send Spacey to prison or revive his career.

The two-time Academy Award winner was dressed in a dark blue suit, light blue shirt and pink tie as he strode confidently into court and was called by his full name. He was asked if he was Kevin Spacey Fowler.

"I am," he said as he stood behind a window in the dock.

Spacey, 63, has pleaded not guilty to a dozen charges including sexual assault, indecent assault and causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent.

"I am sure the defendant will be gratified to know that many of you will know his name or have seen his films," Justice Mark Wall said as Spacey nodded and smiled at the potential jurors lined up between the dock and two dozen journalists taking notes.

The first 14 jurors, including two alternates, called by name were seated without objection from the prosecution or defense. The remaining 13 were excused.

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The jurors were clad in a mix of business and casual attire. Two women wore dresses and two men had suits and ties. One man wore a black denim jacket and a bearded man had a weathered Superman T-shirt stretched across his midsection.

Spacey stood with his hands clasped behind his back as the nine men and five women were sworn in as jurors to hear evidence in the case expected to last four weeks in Southwark Crown Court.

Opening statements are scheduled for Friday.

Spacey, who is free on bail and has homes in London and the U.S., arrived at court by taxi with his manager, Evan Lowenstein, about two hours before the trial was due to start. He smiled and waved as he passed photographers and video journalists.

Spacey has said an acquittal in the case could jump-start a career that has largely been on ice since sexual misconduct allegations surfaced against the star who won his first Academy Award for supporting actor in "The Usual Suspects" in 1995.

"There are people right now who are ready to hire me the moment I am cleared of these charges in London," Spacey said in a rare interview published this month in Germany's Zeit magazine. He said the media had turned him into a "monster."

The charges involving men now in their 30s or 40s date from 2001 to 2013 — covering most of the decade when he lived in Britain and served as artistic director of the Old Vic Theatre until 2015.

Spacey's downfall came amid the #MeToo movement in the United States when allegations led to him being written off the Netflix political thriller "House of Cards," where he played the lead character Frank Underwood, a ruthless and corrupt congressman who becomes president. He was cut from the completed film "All the Money in the World," and the scenes reshot with Christopher Plummer.

Spacey became one of the most celebrated actors of his generation in the 1990s, starring in films including "Glengarry Glen Ross" and "LA Confidential." He won his second Oscar, for best actor, in the 1999 movie "American Beauty."

Spacey recently had his first film role in several years, appearing in 2022 in Italian director Franco Nero's "The Man Who Drew God," and playing the late Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in the biopic "Once Upon a Time in Croatia." He also stars in the unreleased U.S. film "Peter Five Eight."

Italy's National Cinema Museum in Turin gave him its lifetime achievement award in January. He also taught a masterclass and introduced a sold-out screening of "American Beauty" which was billed as Spacey's first speaking engagement in five years.

Spacey saluted organizers for "making a strong defense of artistic achievement" and for having "le palle" — the Italian word for male body parts synonymous with courage — to invite him.

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Associated Press writer Jill Lawless contributed to this report.

## **Families worry over the future of Medicaid caregiver payments that were expanded during the pandemic**

By TOM MURPHY and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

Nathan Hill started receiving \$12.75 an hour from a state Medicaid program to help care for his severely disabled son during the pandemic, money he said allowed his family to stop using food stamps.

The program was designed to provide a continuation of care and ease a home health worker shortage that grew worse after COVID-19 hit.

But now, with the COVID-19 public health emergency over, he worries that the extra income will disappear. Some states have already stopped payments while others have yet to make them permanent.

"The success of this during the pandemic was tremendous ... for the first time we were able to pay our own way," said the Meridian, Idaho, resident. "We're not relying on charities to help us pay our rent and utilities."

A total of 39 states, with the help of the federal government, either started paying family caregivers or expanded the population eligible for payment during the pandemic, according to a survey last summer by

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KFF, a non-profit that studies health care issues.

Depending on the state, family caregivers were paid for helping people with intellectual or physical disabilities, medically fragile children or patients dealing with traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries. Details like pay rates and who could be paid varied.

"For each state, there's a different story as to how this played out," said Alice Burns, associate director of KFF's program on Medicaid and the uninsured.

Researchers say there are no good national estimates for how many family caregivers started receiving payments during the pandemic.

About 53 million people provided care for family members with medical problems or disabilities, according to a 2020 report from AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving.

Those who got paychecks during the public health emergency say the money reduced financial stress, helped provide care and gave dignity to their previously unpaid work.

Jessa Reinhardt and her husband, Jason, each received \$24 an hour to provide care for their autistic daughters, ages 8 and 5. The Vernonia, Oregon, couple could not provide care at the same time.

The money allowed the family to build some savings since Jason quit his job several years ago to become a caregiver. It also allowed them to start taking the girls on outings to socialize them. They would make regular trips to Walmart so the girls could learn how to make choices and pick out a small item to buy.

But they had to curtail that once their payments ended in May. Jessa Reinhardt said the girls will still want to buy something.

"We can't always say yes to that," she said.

While some states have ended caregiver payments for now, federal officials say several states are still considering their next steps. Laws and waivers that regulate who can receive caregiver payments after the public health emergency may make it challenging for some to continue payments.

Federal officials say they are encouraging states to continue family caregiver payments.

States found that being flexible with caregiver payments helped keep residents served during the pandemic, said Kate McEvoy, executive director of the National Association of Medicaid Directors. She said surveys have shown, too, that people generally like receiving care from family members.

But she also noted that there are concerns both nationally and at a state level about the potential for fraud when paying family members as opposed to an agency that may be subject to more oversight. States also want to make sure that any family caregivers are trained properly and provide quality care.

Idaho Medicaid administrator Juliet Charron said the state was working to continue reimbursement for parents and spouses who provide care. But she added that the program will "likely look a bit different from the flexibility that has been in place" during the public health emergency.

Hill expects his program will last a few more months.

He was paid during the pandemic to provide non-nursing care like bathing and changing Brady, who needs around-the-clock care after surviving a rare brain cancer diagnosed at just 14 months old. He says he has no nursing degree or certification but has training and years of experience. His work is monitored by a supervising nurse.

Both Hill and Reinhardt say they can't simply bring in a state-funded outside caregiver to help.

Hill has nurses come in to monitor his son on most overnights, but he delivers care during the day. Hill says caregivers are hard to find and quick to leave. He figures that the family has probably gone through around 50 nurses in the past 13 years.

He says each new one takes a few weeks to train, and then they frequently leave for a job with better pay.

Reinhardt said bringing in help is too challenging partially because one of her daughters deals with severe anxiety. If an outside caregiver is late or calls in sick, their daughter may take days to recover from the disruption.

"There's no replacement for my husband and I," she said.

Even if outside caregivers were viable for these families, there might be a wait to get one.

More than 650,000 people were on waiting lists for home and community-based services in 2021, according to another KFF report. Who winds up on that list can depend on factors like worker shortages,

the number of available services and whether states check patients on the list for eligibility.

Family caregivers can provide more consistent care and have better long-term knowledge of their patients than someone who comes in from the outside, noted Holly Carmichael, CEO of GT Independence, a Sturgis, Michigan, company that manages financial services for people with disabilities.

"You provide better services to someone you love and care about," said Carmichael, whose daughter was born with a rare congenital disease. "They're part of your life versus a job."

Carmichael's firm helps people do background checks on potential caregivers and then does payroll, tax withholdings and other paperwork once they are hired.

She said it makes no sense to end payments to family caregivers.

"We have a shortage of caregivers in our country," Carmichael said. "We need to be pulling every lever we can."

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## Threats of impeachment and censure used to be rare. In this Congress, they're becoming routine

By STEPHEN GROVES and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans have held it over Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas for months. Attorney General Merrick Garland is facing it too. And President Joe Biden seemingly isn't far behind.

Driven by the demands of hard-right members, Republicans in the House are threatening impeachment against Biden and his top Cabinet officials, creating a backbeat of chatter about "high crimes and misdemeanors" that is driving legislative action, spurring committee investigations, raking in fundraising money and complicating the plans of Speaker Kevin McCarthy and his leadership team.

Long viewed as an option of last resort, to be triggered only for the most severe wrongdoing, the constitutionally authorized power of impeachment is rapidly moving from the extraordinary to the humdrum, driven in large part by Republicans and their grievances about how Democrats twice impeached President Donald Trump.

Republicans remain so opposed to Trump's impeachments, in fact, that they are pressing for votes to expunge the charges altogether — an attempt to clear his name that is without direct precedent in congressional history.

"We're seeing a generation of Republicans who are much more willing to test the boundaries of how much you can weaponize procedures," said Julian Zelizer, a Princeton University historian and political scientist.

McCarthy on Sunday made Garland the latest target of a potential impeachment investigation as Republicans examine how the Department of Justice handled the prosecution of Hunter Biden for federal tax offenses. It capped a tumultuous week in which hard-right Republicans forced a vote to send articles of impeachment against Biden to a committee for investigation and also voted to censure Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff for his remarks and actions during the 2017 investigation into Trump's ties to Russia.

Some Republicans are pushing for yet another censure action, this time against Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson for his leadership of the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6 insurrection.

In the past, lawmakers have reserved censure, a punishment one step below expulsion, for grave misconduct. When former Rep. Charles Rangel, a New York Democrat, was censured in 2010 on a bipartisan vote for ethics violations, then-speaker Nancy Pelosi solemnly summoned him to the well of the House, where censured members must stand as the resolution is read in a moment of public shaming.

"We really tried hard to put aside the partisan considerations because we knew how sharp and potent the weapon (of censure) was," said former Rep. Steve Israel, Democrat of New York, who was among Pelosi's closest confidantes. "This thing used to be rare. Now, it's in every cycle, in breaking news."

When Schiff was censured last week, the proceedings quickly took on a carnival-like quality. Democrats,

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Pelosi included, streamed forward to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the well of the House. They heckled McCarthy as he read the charges — calling out “Shame!” “Disgrace!” and “Adam! Adam!” — until the speaker left the dais.

“What goes around comes around,” one Democrat could be heard shouting in the chamber. Republicans streamed from the chamber shaking their heads.

“That was wild in there,” said Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla. She had brought the censure resolution against Schiff, using a legislative tool that allowed her to bypass leadership and force a vote.

The fervor in the House for doling out punishment shows no signs of breaking — in part because lawmakers are reaping the media attention and fundraising dollars that are steadily replacing committee chairmanships as the locus of power in the House.

Luna, who is just months into her first House term after winning a Florida district formerly held by Democrats, was the subject of a Fox News interview in prime-time after her successful push to censure Schiff.

And the attention cut both ways. Schiff, who is running for a California Senate seat, seemed to relish the moment and leveraged it into a fundraising blitz.

“They go after people they think are effective; they go after people they think are standing up to them,” Schiff said in an interview on “The View,” one of several TV appearances he had in the aftermath.

Yet there’s a risk that Republicans’ appetite for using the punishment powers could easily escalate into a more serious test of whether Congress is legitimately wielding power — and nowhere does that possibility loom larger than when it comes to Biden.

Rep. Lauren Boebert, a Colorado Republican who won reelection last year by fewer than 600 votes, forced a vote last week on an impeachment resolution against Biden for “high crimes and misdemeanors” over his handling of the U.S. border with Mexico.

Republican leaders were able to bottle up Boebert’s resolution, holding a vote that sent the matter to congressional committees for consideration.

Some Republicans, however, view it as a question of when, not if, Biden is impeached. Floor debate on the resolution took on the air of a dress rehearsal, as Democrats and Republicans debated whether Biden has committed “high crimes and misdemeanors” with his handling of border and immigration policy.

Only three other presidents in U.S. history have been impeached — Andrew Johnson, Bill Clinton and Trump, though none were convicted by the Senate. Should Republicans decide to make Biden the fourth, a system of checks and balances created by the framers could face a test like never before.

While the Constitution’s impeachment standard of “high crimes and misdemeanors” is deliberately open-ended, the Republicans’ impeachment argument against Biden has centered so far on disagreement with his policy decisions, namely his handling of the southern border, which they say amounts to breaking his oath of office.

Zelizer, the political historian, warned that moving forward with impeachment on those grounds would have lasting consequences.

“It weakens the function of government, it undermines trust in this democracy, and it will leave the democracy weaker than when it started,” he said.

## Activist detained in Hong Kong begins final appeal for recognition of his overseas same-sex marriage

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — An activist detained in Hong Kong began his final appeal Wednesday seeking recognition for his same-sex marriage registered overseas, in a landmark case for the city’s LGBTQ+ community.

Jimmy Sham, a prominent pro-democracy activist during the 2019 protests that roiled Hong Kong, first asked for a judicial review five years ago seeking a declaration that the city’s laws, which don’t recognize foreign same-sex marriages, violate his constitutional right to equality. But the lower courts dismissed his legal challenge and a subsequent appeal over the case.

Sham is now in custody after being charged with subversion over an unofficial primary election under a



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tough national security law enacted following the protests. Many other leading Hong Kong activists were also arrested or silenced by the law imposed by Beijing on the former U.K. colony.

The upcoming judgment by the city's top court in his marriage case will have strong implications for the lives of the LGBTQ+ community and the financial hub's reputation as an inclusive place to live and work.

Currently, the city only recognizes same-sex marriages for certain purposes such as taxation, civil service benefits and dependent visas. Many of the government's concessions were won through legal challenges over the last few years.

The court will have to address whether the exclusion of same-sex couples from the institution of marriage and a failure to provide alternative means of legal recognition for same-sex partnerships violate the right to equality. The judges will also have to decide if the city's laws violate that right enshrined in Hong Kong's constitution, as they don't recognize foreign same-sex marriages.

On Wednesday, Sham appeared spirited inside the courtroom. His supporters wished him a happy birthday as he was turning 36 years old this week.

His lawyer, Karon Monaghan, argued that the absence of same-sex marriages in Hong Kong sent a message that it is less worthy of recognition than heterosexual marriages.

But Stewart Wong, a lawyer who represents the government, said that another law under the constitution guarantees access to marriage for heterosexual couples only. The court will continue to hear the case on Thursday.

Sham and his husband married in New York in 2013. They wished to marry in Hong Kong, but it wasn't allowed under the law, according to previous judgments.

The ruling in 2020 said his marriage lacks essential validity, because the city's law doesn't permit marriage between same-sex people. It added that Sham's attempt to achieve complete parity of recognition between foreign same-sex marriages and foreign heterosexual marriages is "too ambitious."

Sham's appeal over the case was also dismissed last August.

Sham is the former convenor of Civil Human Rights Front, which was best known for organizing the annual march on the anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997, for years. The group also organized some of the bigger political protests that roiled the city in 2019.

The front was disbanded in 2021 as it reportedly faces a police investigation for possible violation of the security law.

In February, the top court ruled that full sex reassignment surgery should not be a prerequisite for transgender people to have their gender changed on their official identity cards. Supporters said it was an important milestone for the transgender community in Hong Kong.

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This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Stewart Wong's name.

## Today in History: June 29, first trans-Pacific flight

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, June 29, the 180th day of 2023. There are 185 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 29, 1613, London's original Globe Theatre, where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed, was destroyed by a fire sparked by a cannon shot during a performance of "Henry VIII."

On this date:

In 1520, Montezuma II, the ninth and last emperor of the Aztecs, died in Tenochtitlan (tay-nohch-TEET'-lahn) under unclear circumstances (some say he was killed by his own subjects; others, by the Spanish).

In 1767, Britain approved the Townshend Revenue Act, which imposed import duties on glass, paint, oil, lead, paper and tea shipped to the American colonies. (Colonists bitterly protested, prompting Parliament to repeal the duties — except for tea.)

In 1776, the Virginia state constitution was adopted, and Patrick Henry was made governor.

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In 1927, the first trans-Pacific airplane flight was completed as U.S. Army Air Corps Lt. Lester J. Maitland and Lt. Albert F. Hegenberger arrived at Wheeler Field in Hawaii aboard the Bird of Paradise, an Atlantic-Fokker C-2, after flying 2,400 miles from Oakland, California, in 25 hours, 50 minutes.

In 1946, authorities in British-ruled Palestine arrested more than 2,700 Jews in an attempt to stamp out extremists.

In 1967, Jerusalem was reunified as Israel removed barricades separating the Old City from the Israeli sector.

In 1970, the United States ended a two-month military offensive into Cambodia.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a trio of death sentences, saying the way they had been imposed constituted cruel and unusual punishment. (The ruling prompted states to effectively impose a moratorium on executions until their capital punishment laws could be revised.)

In 1978, actor Bob Crane of "Hogan's Heroes" fame was found bludgeoned to death in an apartment in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he was appearing in a play; he was 49.

In 2006, the Supreme Court ruled, 5-3, that President George W. Bush's plan to try Guantanamo Bay detainees in military tribunals violated U.S. and international law.

In 2009, disgraced financier Bernard Madoff received a 150-year sentence for his multibillion-dollar fraud. (Madoff died in prison in April 2021.)

Ten years ago: Paying tribute to his personal hero, President Barack Obama met privately in Johannesburg, South Africa, with Nelson Mandela's family as the world anxiously awaited news on the condition of the hospitalized 94-year-old anti-apartheid leader. (Mandela was discharged from the hospital on September 1, 2013; he died the following December.)

Five years ago: Canada released a list of items, including ketchup, lawn mowers and playing cards, that would be targeted with billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs against the United States in response to the Trump administration's duties on Canadian steel and aluminum. The Annapolis Capital Gazette newspaper in Maryland kept its promise to put out the day's paper, despite the shooting deaths of five people in its newsroom a day earlier. In response to the fatal shootings at a Maryland newspaper, President Donald Trump said that "journalists, like all Americans, should be free from the fear of being violently attacked while doing their jobs."

One year ago: R. Kelly was sentenced to 30 years in prison for using his R&B superstardom to subject young fans to sexual abuse. The singer and songwriter was convicted of racketeering and sex trafficking the previous year. The only surviving attacker from the 2015 terrorist massacre at the Bataclan theater and other sites in Paris was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole. That was the most severe sentence possible in France, and very rare. Salah Abdeslam was the chief suspect in an exceptional trial over the attacks, which killed 130 people and were claimed by the Islamic State group.

Today's Birthdays: Songwriter L. Russell Brown is 83. Singer-songwriter Garland Jeffreys is 80. Actor Gary Busey is 79. Comedian Richard Lewis is 76. Former actor and politician Fred Grandy is 75. Rock musician Ian Paice (Deep Purple) is 75. Singer Don Dokken (Dokken) is 70. Rock singer Colin Hay (Men At Work) is 70. Actor Maria Conchita Alonso is 68. Actor Kimberlin Brown (TV: "The Bold and the Beautiful") is 62. Actor Sharon Lawrence is 62. Actor Amanda Donohoe is 61. Actor Judith Hoag is 60. Violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter is 60. R&B singer Stedman Pearson (Five Star) is 59. Actor Kathleen Wilhoite is 59. Producer-writer Matthew Weiner is 58. Actor Melora Hardin is 56. Actor Brian D'Arcy James is 55. Actor Christina Chang is 52. Rap DJ and record producer DJ Shadow is 51. Actor Lance Barber is 50. Actor-dancer Will Kemp is 46. Actor Zuleikha Robinson is 46. Rock musician Sam Farrar is 45. Actor Luke Kirby is 45. Singer Nicole Scherzinger is 45. Comedian-writer Colin Jost (johst) is 41. Actor Lily Rabe is 41. R&B singer Aundrea Fimbres is 40. NBA forward Kawhi Leonard is 32. Actor Camila Mendes (TV: "Riverdale") is 29.