

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Wednesday, July 19

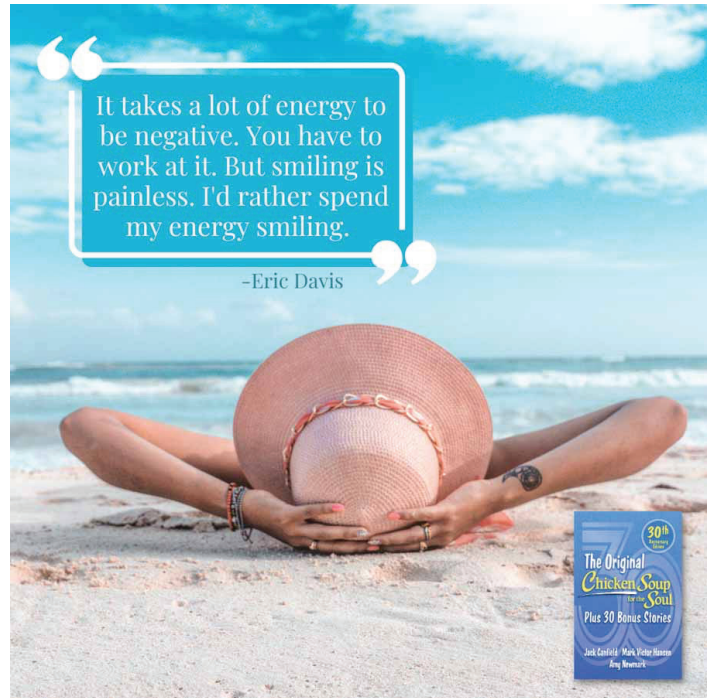
Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked sweet potato, creamed peas, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Movie night, 7 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.  
Olive Grove: Kid's Lessons; Men's League Amateurs at Aberdeen, 7 p.m.  
Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville

## Thursday, July 20

Senior Menu: Breaded chicken breast on bun, sliced tomato, potato salad, mandarin oranges, cucumber salad.  
Water Tower Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, 11:30 a.m. to Noon followed by open house at City Hall, noon to 1:30 p.m.  
Sip and Shop, Downtown Groton, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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

**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.  
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“It takes a lot of energy to be negative. You have to work at it. But smiling is painless. I'd rather spend my energy smiling.”

-Eric Davis

Olive Grove: Pro Am  
Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville

## Friday, July 21

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, mashed potatoes, green beans, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.  
Olive Grove: Ferny Open  
Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville  
State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

## Saturday, July 22

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.  
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. ago 1 p.m.  
Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville  
State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

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## The Bulletin by Newsweek

JULY 18, 2023

### World in Brief

Billions of people face blisteringly high temperatures worldwide, with record-high mercury levels likely to continue as people battle adverse health effects. Phoenix broke a 1974 record with the 19th consecutive day at or above 110° Fahrenheit.

The Republican-controlled House passed a resolution condemning antisemitism and expressing support for Israel a day before Israeli President Isaac Herzog is scheduled to address a joint meeting of Congress.

Fox News host Sean Hannity urged Donald Trump to encourage his supporters to take advantage of early and mail-in voting schemes, claiming not doing so would be a "big mistake."

The Biden administration unveiled tougher new guidelines for the evaluation of corporate mergers by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission, including factoring in the impact mergers can have on workers.

Florida Governor and 2024 Republican presidential hopeful Ron DeSantis ended his mainstream media blackout with an interview on CNN, stating his military plans will involve an attempt to "rip the woke" out of the armed forces.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino claimed that his organization can't guarantee that each player will receive their \$30,000 payment for partaking in the Women's World Cup, insisting it is up to the individual federations.

Australian sailor Tim Shaddock and his dog Bella, who were lost at sea for two months and survived by eating raw fish, returned to dry land in Mexico yesterday after being rescued by a trawler.

Fifteen people, including six law enforcement officials, were killed after an electricity transformer exploded in Chamoli district, in the north Indian state of Uttarakhand.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, more than 2,000 residents of four Crimean settlements will be evacuated after strong explosions rocked a military training ground in the annexed Black Sea peninsula, causing a fire and forcing the closure of a major highway.

### TALKING POINTS

"We have recently seen a renewed interest from the Turkish government in reviving the EU accession process. This will not happen as a result of geopolitical bargaining but when Turkish authorities show real interest in stopping the continuous backsliding in fundamental freedoms and rule of law. If the Turkish government is sincere in this, they should show it with concrete reforms and actions," European Parliament member Nacho Sánchez Amor said.

"In the past 24 hours, I have been accused of releasing a pro-lynching song (a song that has been out since May) and was subject to the comparison that I (direct quote) was not too pleased with the nationwide BLM protests. These references are not only meritless, but dangerous. There is not a single lyric in the song that references race or points to it—and there isn't a single video clip that isn't real news footage—and while I can try and respect others to have their own interpretation of a song with music—this one goes too far," country music singer Jason Aldean tweeted in response to criticism aimed at his new song 'Try That in a Small Town.'

### WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

More housing data is scheduled today, with housing starts and building permits for June due at 8:30 a.m. ET.

Shares of Tesla, Goldman Sachs, U.S. Bancorp, IBM, Netflix, and United Airlines Holdings will be in focus as the companies report their quarterly results.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog will address a joint meeting of Congress at 2 p.m. ET. Herzog is later scheduled to attend a bilateral meeting with Vice President Kamala Harris.

## Jailhouse has new owner, new machinery discussion continues at Groton City Council meeting

by Elizabeth Varin

A new jailhouse owner, budget adjustments and a new piece of equipment were all topics at Tuesday's Groton City Council meeting.

The council approved transferring ownership of the old jailhouse property to the Groton Community Historical Society. The quitclaim deed is set to be signed when a notary is available.

The request to transfer the property to the historical society has been in discussion since June, and the property had to be replatted to separate the property that houses the city's original jailhouse and the open lot next to it.

While discussion of the jailhouse came to a quick conclusion at Tuesday's meeting, the council asked for a wider range of options for a new skid steer.

Councilman Brian Bahr asked public works staff to see if any other skid steers would work better for the city.

"I would like to see them demo more brands," he said. "Instead of demoing one brand, I would like them to see what is out there. ...It doesn't hurt to check in to it and demo other brands."

Public Works Coordinator Terry Herron said staff were impressed with the Bobcat machine that they tested out.

"We rented the Bobcat," he said. "It was a very good machine."

Herron also told the council that the quote for the skid steer is time sensitive.

"This price isn't good for very long," he said. "It's already gone up 5 percent, but he's staying with this."

A new machine would also have to be ordered before September, or the machinery will be on back order by at least six months, he said.

Bahr admitted the price quoted for the machine is not bad, especially with the city's current machine traded in.

The quote, dated May 11, totals \$68,275.90 with the skid steer, torsion suspension and block heater included. The city's current machine, a 2013 Terex PT-80, has a trade in value of \$31,500. That would leave the city to pay about \$36,800 for a new skid steer.

Mayor Scott Hanlon asked staff to check out a couple more options before the city decided on the piece of machinery.

"If you could try a few more, that would be appreciated," he said.

### Park bathroom design discussion continues

The council also held off on deciding which park bathroom design to move forward with.

"Should we make a decision tonight?" Hanlon asked.

"I think we should wait," replied Councilman Bahr, citing a previous request made for a breakdown of costs and what could potentially be covered by a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant.

Council members decided to wait until more information was available before making a decision on the project.



**The jail building located on First Avenue in Groton.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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## City funding appropriation changes

The council approved the first reading of an ordinance to shift some money to cover projects and reflect some grant funding.

"This is just moving some stuff around," said Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich.

The curb and gutter project came in a little more than anticipated, he said. An additional \$7,547 will be moved to the project fund from contingency funding.

The ordinance also calls for appropriating \$2,190 to the basketball courts from an electrical grant used to improve lighting. Changes would also include moving \$5,500 to the library fund from library donations.

The appropriation ordinance also calls for transferring \$35,510 from the unassigned fund balance to repairs needed for the pickleball courts.

Some of the pickleball court costs will be repaid to the city through grant funding.

## In other action:

- The council approved putting a temporary hold on ordinance 6-2-2, which prohibits people from carrying open containers of alcohol in public places. The ordinance will be paused for Summer Sip and Shop from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday.

- Phase two of water system improvements is nearing completion. The council approved a certificate of substantial completion for installation of all pipe line as a part of the water main extension. The council also approved a final payment to Dahme Construction for the project. That payment totals \$41,839.63, a part of the original \$1.2 million project.

- The council approved a raise for Electric Lineman Apprentice Landon Johnson after Johnson's recent completion of his journeyman's certificate. Johnson's wage will increase from \$35.79 per hour to \$40 per hour effective his next pay period.

## Death Notice: Peggy Hoops

Peggy Hoops, 75, of Groton passed away July 18, 2023 at Avera St. Lukes Hospital, Aberdeen. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

## Schedules coming on-line!

The Groton Area activities schedules are starting to become available. Please go to [397news.com](http://397news.com) and click on Activities Calendar on the black bar. I have included a date afterwards so you will know when it's updated. The schedules with lines through them are not updated yet. Available are volleyball, football and cross country along with the community events. Please look through the community events section to see if your event is listed. If you have a date, please let me know so I can include it. Also, we have a few advertising spots left. If you are interested in a spot or two, please let me know as well.

E-mail: [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net).

Text: 605-397-7460



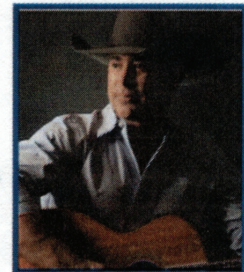
## 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL **COLUMBIA FEST** & PARKS DEDICATION “A BLAST FROM THE PAST” **JULY 29, 2023**



### **COME FOR A FULL DAY OF FUN!**

- 10:00 AM.....PARADE!
- 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.....Vendors
- 11:00 AM.....Parks Dedication
- 12:00 - 3:00 PM.....Ballgames
- 3:00 - 4:00 PM.....Home Run Derby
- 4:00 - 5:00 PM.....Harry Luge Performs
- 5:00 PM.....Duck Race
- 6:00 - 8:00 PM.....Karaoke
- 9:00 PM.....Harry Luge

Lots of **GREAT ENTERTAINMENT, DELICIOUS FOOD** and **FUN ACTIVITIES**. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blanket.





## **BBB investigation finds online car dealership scam operating under fraudulent South Dakota address, consumer reports \$40,000 loss**

An online car dealership using the address of a reputable South Dakota business recently cost a consumer more than \$40,000, a Better Business Bureau (BBB) investigation uncovered.

Collector's Car continues to list a Webster, South Dakota address on its company website, collectorclassiccars.com, and claims to sell "Highly Rated Classic Vintage Cars in South Dakota."

An investigation by the BBB revealed thousands of dollars in customer losses through company advertisements on Facebook.

Collector's Cars falsely claimed its business address to be located at 730 W Highway 12 Webster, SD 57274-2212. The registration contact associated with the site is listed in Burlington, MA. The aforementioned South Dakota address is occupied by Restorable Cars, a company that confirmed to BBB it has no association with Collector's Cars.

A BBB Scam Tracker report in mid-July showed a \$40,900 loss reported by a consumer. The consumer reported seeing a Facebook advertisement for a 1966 Chevrolet Nova SS (Super Sport). The father-in-law of the victim made contact with the company and purchased the car through a wire transfer. However, the car was never delivered, and Collector's Cars later blocked the victim's phone number.

According to the South Dakota Department of Revenue, Collector's Cars is not listed on its list of active vehicle dealers. Additionally, the South Dakota Secretary of State told BBB that the company isn't registered.

### **BBB tips to avoid online car sales scams:**

There are plenty of pros to buying a car online, but caution is needed as well. Anytime you shop online, and especially when making an expensive purchase like a car, you should keep the following tips in mind:

- Watch out for too good to be true deals. They are most likely a scam. Scammers often steal consumers' personal information and money by offering them high-value goods at extremely discounted prices.
- Never wire funds or complete bank-to-bank transactions. Scammers love this kind of transaction because there is no way for you to get your money back once it is completed. Instead, make legitimate purchases by check or credit card.
- Contact the seller by phone. At some point during your negotiations, speak with the sales manager on the phone. If they are unusually vague about certain details of the sale or cannot confirm their location or the vehicle location, it's most likely a scam.
- See the car first. Never buy a car without making an in-person inspection and taking test drive first.
- Don't give in to pressure. Scammers often try to pressure you into giving up your personal information or making a down payment before you have time to think about the purchase. Take your time and think a deal over before agreeing to anything. If you get a bad feeling, listen to your gut.
- Don't trust a seller or buyer who says that the transaction is guaranteed by eBay, PayPal, Craigslist or another online marketplace. These sites explicitly explain they cannot guarantee that people using their services are legitimate. Anyone who says otherwise is lying.

### **If you are considering buying a car online, BBB recommends the following tips to help you avoid getting scammed and get the best deal possible:**

- Set a budget. Before you set out to find the perfect car, it is important to establish a budget. You will also want to factor in monthly expenses that come with owning a car, including insurance payments, fuel, parking, and routine maintenance and repairs. A clearly defined budget will make choosing a vehicle, negotiating with a dealer, and getting a loan much easier.
- Do thorough research. Assess your personal needs first. Do you need a large vehicle for a big family? Do you spend a lot of time on the road and want good fuel economy? The answers to these questions will help you narrow down the makes and models as you search for a vehicle that fits your needs. Once you have narrowed your search, compare models you are interested in keeping a close eye on safety ratings, owner reviews, and warranties. Visit manufacturer websites to see detailed images of each car and research MPG statistics, interior options, cargo space, towing capacity, and more. The more time you spend on these initial steps, the more comfortable you will feel when it is time to make a purchase.

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- Shop for a deal. While you are still doing research, don't forget to look for deals! These may include cash-back deals, rebates, low-interest financing options, or incentives for recent graduates, military veterans, Uber and Lyft drivers, or first responders. In addition, many dealers are willing to make price cuts on previous year models or any model that did not sell as well as expected. Purchasing one of these surplus vehicles can mean extra incentives from the dealer.

- Prequalify for a loan. Prequalifying for a loan gives you a few advantages when approaching a dealer to make a purchase. First, you can set a reasonable price range that fits your budget. Second, when approaching a dealer with a pre-approved loan, you give them a price limit that they will have to meet to make a sale, which can save you money. Of course, most car dealers offer their own in-house financing for consumers, but you can often get lower interest rates on loans from your bank or credit union.

- Search dealers for inventory. Now that you have a specific make and model in mind and a pre-approved loan in hand, you're ready to start shopping. You can do a search for the specific car, or you can browse a dealer's inventory online to see what they have on hand. You can include out-of-town dealers, but they will likely charge higher fees for delivery. It is a good idea to start with a local search and expand it if you don't find what you are looking for. Take advantage of online showrooms to get a close look at the vehicle. Many online dealers feature dozens of photos from a variety of angles, so you can give each car a close inspection from the comfort of your own home. Compare the offerings of multiple dealers and check each dealer's business ratings on BBB.org before you reach out to them.

- Speak with internet sales managers. When you find an upstanding dealer with car in which you are interested, it is time to get in touch with an internet sales manager. During your initial conversations, focus on what car you want, whether they have it or can get it, and how much they will sell it for. Give the sales manager the general price range that fits your budget. If things go smoothly and you feel good about purchasing with this dealer, you can arrange a test drive with the sales manager or move forward towards making the purchase. If you are considering purchasing a certified pre-owned vehicle, now is the time to ask for a copy of the vehicle history report.

- Test drive the vehicle. You should always take a test drive before you sign the final paperwork. There is no substitute for seeing a car in person, looking under the hood, sitting in the driver's seat, and making sure the engine runs smoothly. To do so, you may need to travel to the dealer's place of business. Some dealers offer the ability to test drive upon delivery and if anything isn't as expected you may cancel the sale. Take the route that works best for you, but never skip the test drive.

- Complete the sale at the dealer or upon delivery. If everything checks out, decide how you will complete the sale. It is still usually necessary to sign the final paperwork in person. If you would rather avoid visiting the dealership, ask about delivery. Some dealers will drop off the car at your home or place of business and allow you to sign upon delivery.

ABOUT BBB: BBB is a nonprofit, business-supported organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. BBB services to consumers are free. BBB provides objective advice, BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.3 million companies, 11,000 charity reviews, dispute resolution services, alerts and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust. Visit BBB.org for more information.

## Moisture levels critical to cover crop decisions

By Stan Wise

South Dakota Soil Health Coalition

PIERRE, SD – Cover crops offer a wide range of potential benefits for producers – better nutrient cycling, more weed suppression, more livestock forage, better soil structure, increased soil organic matter, and healthier soil microbial communities. To reap those benefits, producers need to make some careful decisions.

Those decisions start with the goal for the cover crop. Is it intended primarily to produce forage for livestock, provide weed suppression, or feed the soil? The answer to that question is the first piece of data needed, but it's not the only one.

Another critical point to consider is how much moisture a producer expects to be available the following cash crops. If a cover crop uses too much moisture, it can affect the yield of a water-sensitive crop like corn in the following season.

### Monitor soil moisture

Dan Forgey, longtime agronomy manager at Cronin Farms near Gettysburg, SD, finalizes his cover crop decisions by determining how much moisture is already available in the soil. "There's a lot of people say, 'Plant them in dry dirt and it'll happen.' I won't do that because you want your covers to be a success," Forgey said. "We're really cautious with our covers on these drier years. I go out with a soil probe. I use the soil probes because then you can actually tell what you have for moisture."

Cronin Farms has a diverse crop rotation, and they normally plant cover crops with higher carbon/nitrogen ratios for grazing after winter wheat harvest.

"When we planted our cover last year, it was after harvest. It was probably like the 6th or 7th of August that we planted it, and at that time with the soil probe, we had 16 inches of moisture in our profile," Forgey said.

Forgey thought that was a little dry. He said the farm had received just enough rain that spring and summer to make a good crop, but it wasn't enough to fully recharge the soil profile. Still, after some careful thought, the Cronin Farms team decided to plant the cover crops anyway.

"So, we thought, well, if we caught two or three inches of rain in the fall, that would make up for it," Forgey said. "That's what we normally do."

At the time of cover crop planting, he said the available moisture was at 86 percent of normal, so he reduced his seeding rate by a corresponding percentage. The goal is to reduce the number of plants taking up water in the field.

There was only one problem with his plan – Mother Nature had other ideas.

"We had the rain in July, and then we never had another rain until it snowed this winter," Forgey said. "And so, basically, (the cover crop) used all that moisture up."

The cover crop wasn't a total loss, but the true damage of last year's dry fall won't be known until this year's corn is harvested. That's when Forgey will really know if his cover crop decision paid off.

"The cattle grazed it, so we got some benefit out of it, but looking back, as dry as we are this year, it's going to tell a story," he said.

### Flexibility

While it's true that cover crops planted after small grains carry a risk in dry conditions, they can offer a useful flexibility.

Selby, SD, crops and livestock producer Doug Sieck planted cereal rye last fall after baling off some oats and peas.

"With rye, I plant that in the fall, so people will say, 'What are you going to do with that?' And I say to them, 'I don't know.' And I really don't," Sieck said. "When spring rolls around, I've got the option of grazing it and then plant something behind a grazing. Or maybe I'll let it grow and plant green into it when it's knee high and then kill it. Or maybe I'll cut it for hay like I am now. Or maybe I'll let it go and combine it. And I've done all of those things, sometimes in the same year."



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## Full season covers

Sieck, who is a South Dakota Soil Health Coalition board member, admits that planting a fall cover crop can be a bit of a gamble when it comes to moisture.

"If your cover crop uses, let's say, 3 inches of water, 90 percent of the time you'll get enough moisture over the winter to replenish those 3 inches. Well, 10 percent of the time you don't," he said. "A few years ago I was whining like everybody to [noted Burleigh County, ND, conservationist] Jay Fuhrer, and I said, 'I don't have enough moisture to grow these covers reliably,' and he said, 'Well, why don't you dedicate a full season to growing cover crops?' And so about then I switched mostly to full season covers."

Most of Sieck's cover crops are now a sudangrass mix including millet, turnips, radish, rapeseed, yellow blossom clover, and potentially other species planted in late June and used for fall forage. "As a guy who believes in a diverse rotation, I use the sudangrass mix for my diversity," he said.

Forgey also said there is a place for full season cover crops, and he mentioned a time he used one in a prevented planting field.

"It had a tremendous amount of moisture in that field, and we just left it," Forgey said. "And then we let the frost take it out, and the next year that was the best corn we had."

Newell, SD, producer Dave Ollila grows small grains for hay to feed his cattle and sheep, and he grows cover crops for forage and hay. In dry years, he will reduce the diversity and seeding rate of his cover crops, but he still plants them.

"For full season (cover crops), it worked well for us to get them planted in May, June to graze them, or sometimes if it's dense enough and we were early enough, we'll take a hay cutting to let them regrow, and then we'll graze them later," Ollila said. "But our goal is to follow that cover crop with the winter annual. So, we'll be terminating that cover crop somewhere in late August or early September and planting a winter annual."

## Fall nutrition

Ollila, who is a SDSHC soil health specialist, said he also grows cover crops after harvesting his small grains for hay.

"The other way we use them is following a hay, like a cereal hay like oats or wheat, and then we try to get a cover crop to follow into that both to have that living root in the soil, but then, hopefully, to graze that in October," he said.

The reason he likes to graze cover crops in the fall is simple – nutrition.

"A lot of times we will breed our ewes on those cover crops because the samplings I've taken, the nutrition put us somewhere between 17 and 22 percent protein, which is ideal for that time of year when nothing else is at that level," Ollila said. "That's perfect for breeding those ewes."

## Well-researched decisions

Sieck said that for a cover crop to be a success, producers need to understand the cover crops in their mix and how much moisture they will use.

"The guys around here that are that are doing things like covers, a lot of them are reliant on the agronomists at the co-op in town and saying, 'Well, just fix me up with something.' Well, that's a sure recipe to grow a lot of forage out there and lose your moisture," he said. "I'm a solid yes on planting even if it's dry, and I'm a solid yes on planting the right thing out there."

"Without a doubt, I believe in covers," Forgey said. "All I'm saying is understand your system and understand how much moisture you've got when you plant your covers."

Financial and technical assistance is available for producers interested in getting started with cover crops. To learn more, visit [www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org](http://www.sdsoilhealthcoalition.org) or contact the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition at (605) 280-4190 or [sdsoilhealth@gmail.com](mailto:sdsoilhealth@gmail.com).



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Spike in complaints against officers prompts potential change to discipline process

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 18, 2023 4:32 PM

The state has seen a 132% increase in investigations against law enforcement officers and 911 operators since 2016, and is on pace to field 13% more of the formal complaints that can spark such investigations this year.

Hank Prim, of the state Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), shared the numbers with the South Dakota Law Enforcement Officers Standards Commission last week in Pierre.

Prim attributes the jump from 22 investigations in 2016 to 51 for two years in a row in part to a change in 2021 that streamlined the complaints process and made it easier to get them in the hands of the DCI.

In the past, complaints against local officers would route to a regional DCI office for initial review. Now, such complaints are funneled to DCI headquarters for an initial review.

Not all complaints result in a full inquiry with witnesses and DCI investigative reports, Prim said, but the jump in complaints that started in 2021 bears out in the number of investigations that move to the commission level.

"I don't believe it's due to officers doing more wrong," Prim told South Dakota Searchlight on Thursday, after the second of the commission's two-day July meeting. "Instead, what it is, I think, is that we're getting more visibility on complaints against law enforcement officers."

Prim also noted that South Dakota's population has increased since 2016, giving officers more people to interact with, and to a general increase in scrutiny of officer behavior.

To help manage the higher numbers, officers, deputies and 911 dispatchers facing low-level misconduct allegations may soon be able to ink plea agreements with the state for reprimands and remediation without a full public hearing on their certification.

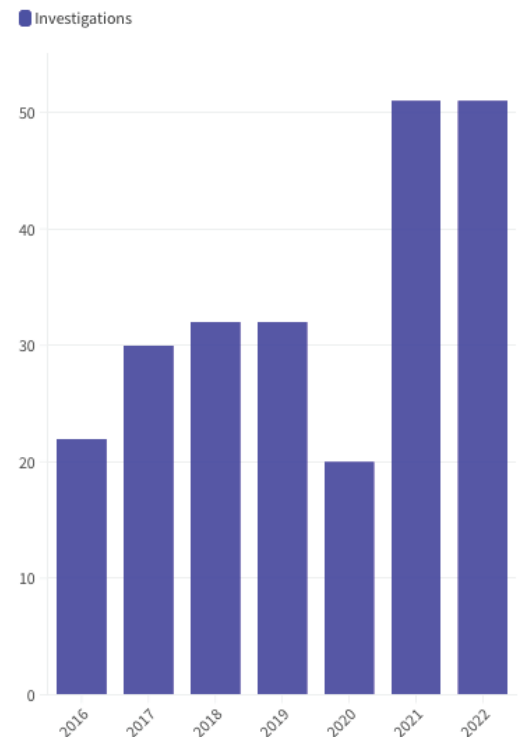
Commissioners gave the initial sign-off on a plan last Wednesday to create such a system.

Currently, such cases are often resolved at hearings that take place during the four annual meetings of the commission. On other occasions, officers will voluntarily surrender their certifications to avoid such a hearing. In practice, officers and the communities they serve sometimes wind up waiting several months for a resolution.

That's why Prim and other administrators of South Dakota's officer standards and practices team began to look for ways to expedite less egregious allegations ahead of time.

Doing so would give the commission more time to focus on serious allegations, Prim said.

"I don't think we're at the point where we can't handle hearings," Prim told commissioners. "I want to make sure that when that time comes, just with the growth in turnover in law enforcement across the state, that the commission and law enforcement training are



Source: South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation

best positioned to respond to those.”

The idea for “settlement agreements” came from Minnesota, a state with a subcommittee that handles them. About 90% of allegations in that state are handled through such agreements, Prim said.

As with any complaint, allegations destined for a settlement will be explored and documented, with officers and possibly their attorneys offered a chance to respond. Before offering a settlement, commission staff would come to an agreement on remedial action with the officer, then hand the signed agreement to the commission to review and sign off on during its next public meeting.

The commission would reserve the right to force a full public hearing if its members deem such a hearing necessary. That would comport with part of the 2021 complaint process change, wherein at least one commissioner reviews any incidents DCI investigators deem unfounded or unworthy of action and can request a full commission review.

Under the new proposal on settlement agreements, officers would be eligible if the alleged misconduct warrants disciplinary action, but not decertification. The officer would also need to be likely to benefit from remediation and rehabilitation, Prim said, and be willing to accept the terms of any disciplinary action.

“If the conduct was so egregious, or the officer doesn’t wish to essentially plea bargain on the disposition, we can still bring it before for a hearing before the full commission,” Prim said.

One potential snag came from concerns about transparency. In a settlement scenario, evidence and testimony would be gathered for use in a report, just as it is now for contested case hearings before the commission. But during a contested case hearing, the investigative file is not made part of the public record. Anything that comes out in the hearing is public, but the full document remains out of public view, just as police reports in criminal investigations do under South Dakota law.

Commissioner Tom Wollman questioned on Wednesday whether handing off a full report for commissioner review and ratification during a commission hearing would place its contents in full public view.

“Whether or not that becomes a public record would certainly be of concern for the individual being investigated, and potentially for this commission, because we do want to do our business in the public light,” Wollman said.

Prim and other DCI staff returned to the commission on Thursday with an answer to that question. Because the file in the settlement agreements would contain investigative materials, DCI staff concluded, the report underlying a settlement agreement would not be open to public review after a commission sign-off.

*John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux falls Argus Leader.*

## South Dakota student debt relief could reach \$147 million under new plan

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JULY 18, 2023 4:30 PM

More than 3,000 South Dakotans qualify for a combined \$147 million in student debt relief offered by a new Biden administration policy, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

The Department of Education and the White House announced last week that more than 800,000 federal student loan borrowers across the country will have their remaining debt eliminated. The department released state-by-state numbers Tuesday.

The \$39 billion in debt relief will come through fixes to mismanagement of the agency’s income-driven repayment





plans. Many long-time borrowers, including those who had been making payments for 20 years or more, were denied relief they were eligible for under the repayment plans. Qualified payments that were made were not accounted for.

"For far too long, borrowers fell through the cracks of a broken system that failed to keep accurate track of their progress towards forgiveness," U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a statement.

Starting Friday, the Department of Education began notifying those 804,000 borrowers of their forgiveness, and within 30 days their debts will be wiped out.

The plan includes borrowers with Direct Loans or Federal Family Education Loans held by the department (including Parent PLUS loans of either type) who have reached a forgiveness threshold specified by the department.

"By fixing past administrative failures, we are ensuring everyone gets the forgiveness they deserve, just as we have done for public servants, students who were cheated by their colleges, and borrowers with permanent disabilities, including veterans," Cardona said.

— States Newsroom's D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.

## National bill on voting standards pushed anew by Democrats in Congress

Effort comes in response to passage of stricter state laws

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 18, 2023 4:35 PM

WASHINGTON — Congressional Democrats on Tuesday said they plan to again introduce a bill to set national voting standards in response to state legislatures passing strict voting laws.

The bill, known in a previous Congress as the Freedom to Vote Act, would establish national standards for early voting, mail-in ballots and protection of poll workers and volunteers from harassment. It provides funds for states to purchase updated voter machines and cybersecurity updates, among other initiatives.

"Democracy is facing unprecedented threats like we have not seen in more than a century," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said. "MAGA Republicans prove the need for this legislation time and time again."

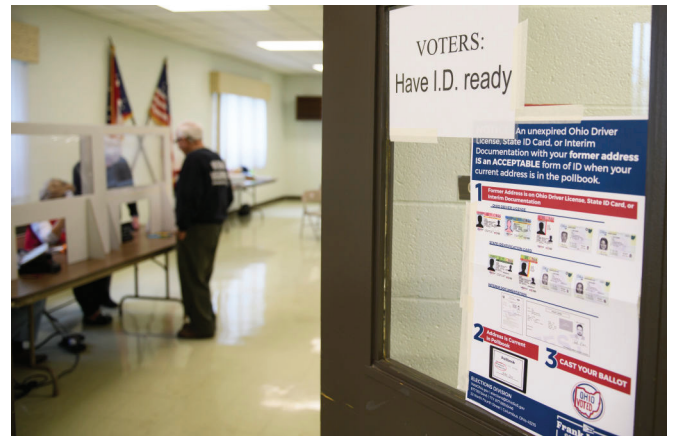
The bill also would require super political action committees to disclose their donors and tackles gerrymandering by establishing criteria for nonpartisan congressional redistricting.

"This bill speaks to our nation's ideals," said Democratic Rep. Joe Morelle of New York, the ranking member on the Committee on House Administration.

"We believe in our core that democracy works best when everyone can participate and has an equal say in the decisions governing our lives. We will pass the Freedom to Vote Act to stand up against disenfranchisement and protect the very bedrock of our democracy," Morelle said.

But with Republicans controlling the House, and Democrats with a slim majority in the Senate, the bill is unlikely to become law.

Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, said she knows "we have an uphill fight."



A voter shows identification to an election judge during primary voting on May 3, 2022, in Lordstown, Ohio. (Jeff Swensen/Getty Images)

Images)

She said Democrats have worked to put voting rights on the national stage and that several state legislatures — including her home state of Minnesota — have used the congressional bill as a template to pass voting laws.

House Republicans last week passed their own elections reform bill out of committee, which is also unlikely to become law.

During that meeting, Democrats submitted an amendment that included the text of the Freedom to Vote Act, and it was not adopted by Republicans.

Following the 2020 presidential election, state legislatures with a Republican majority have passed strict voting requirements such as voter ID laws, a shorter period for early voting and additional requirements for mail-in voting, among other things.

This trend has concerned voting rights activists and Democrats who have pushed for legislation to strengthen voting rights, partially after a 2013 Supreme Court decision that gutted the Voting Rights Act.

Schumer said that the John Lewis Voting Rights Act would also be introduced later this Congress. That bill would restore the section of the Voting Rights Act that the Supreme Court struck down in 2013, but the legislation has repeatedly failed to advance in the U.S. Senate.

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.*

## Trump says he has been told he is a target of the special counsel's Jan. 6 investigation

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JULY 18, 2023 12:40 PM

Donald Trump has received a target letter from Special Counsel Jack Smith, he said Tuesday, indicating another indictment of the former president is likely over his role in encouraging the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Trump posted to his social media site, Truth Social, on Tuesday, announcing that he'd received the target letter from Smith on Sunday and was given four days to report to a federal grand jury. He cast himself as the victim of a political prosecution and denied wrongdoing.

"This has been a neverending fight since the day I came down the escalator in Trump Tower, many years ago," Trump wrote, referencing his campaign announcement in the 2016 presidential race. "VERY UNFAIR!"

The Justice Department did not respond to a message seeking confirmation of the target letter to Trump, the leading candidate in GOP presidential primary polls for 2024.

A target letter typically precedes an arrest and indictment, Trump said. It would be the third indictment Trump faces — and perhaps the most serious — amid a campaign to retake the White House.

A New York state grand jury alleged in April that Trump falsified business records and used campaign cash to cover up an affair with adult film actress Stormy Daniels.

In June, a federal grand jury indicted Trump on charges he mishandled classified material when he left office.

Trump has pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing in both cases.



**Former President Donald Trump waves as he makes a visit to the Cuban restaurant Versailles after he appeared for his arraignment on June 13, 2023, in Miami, Florida. Trump pleaded not guilty to 37 federal charges including possession of national security documents after leaving office, obstruction, and making false statements.** (Alon Skuy/Getty Images)

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A Georgia grand jury is also investigating Trump for election interference.

## Jan. 6 investigation

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed Smith last year to lead the federal investigations of Trump's potential involvement in the Jan. 6 attack and the classified materials case.

Smith's Jan. 6 investigation started after the U.S. House Select Committee to Investigate the Jan. 6, 2021 Attack on the U.S. Capitol spent two years investigating and presenting a case that Trump was responsible for that day's insurrection.

The attack was the culmination of a multistep effort by Trump to remain in power after losing the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden, the committee found. Trump pressured state officials, the Justice Department and his own running mate, then-Vice President Mike Pence, to illegally subvert the election results, according to the committee.

He summoned a group of supporters to Washington on the day Congress was to certify his reelection loss, encouraged them to storm the Capitol and stood by for hours as the attack proceeded, the committee said.

The House panel, which did not have authority to prosecute criminal charges, ultimately made a referral to the Justice Department. The committee was dissolved after Republicans took over control of the House in January.

The Justice Department has prosecuted hundreds of people who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, including some who face seditious conspiracy charges.

## House GOP backs Trump

Despite his legal challenges, Trump retains strong backing among Republicans in Congress, some of whom also describe the prosecutions as politically motivated.

"The Justice Department's as wrong as it gets," U.S. House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan, an Ohio Republican, told reporters at the U.S. Capitol Tuesday morning.

U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Georgia Republican, called the investigation "an embarrassment on the world stage" and said she would stand with Trump "the entire way."

"If this is the direction America is going in, we are worse than Russia, we are worse than China," she said. "We are worse than some of the most corrupt third-world countries and this needs to end."

But former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican who is among Trump's rivals for the 2024 nomination, said in a written statement that Trump's actions on Jan. 6 should disqualify him from being president and called for him to drop out.

"While Donald Trump would like the American people to believe that he is the victim in this situation, the truth is that the real victims of January 6th were our democracy, our rule of law, and those Capitol Police officers who worked valiantly to protect our Capitol," he said. "Anyone who truly loves this country and is willing to put the country over themselves would suspend their campaign for President of the United States immediately."

Trump is expected to be in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Tuesday afternoon to tape a town hall appearance with Sean Hannity of Fox News.

*Senior Washington reporter Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.*

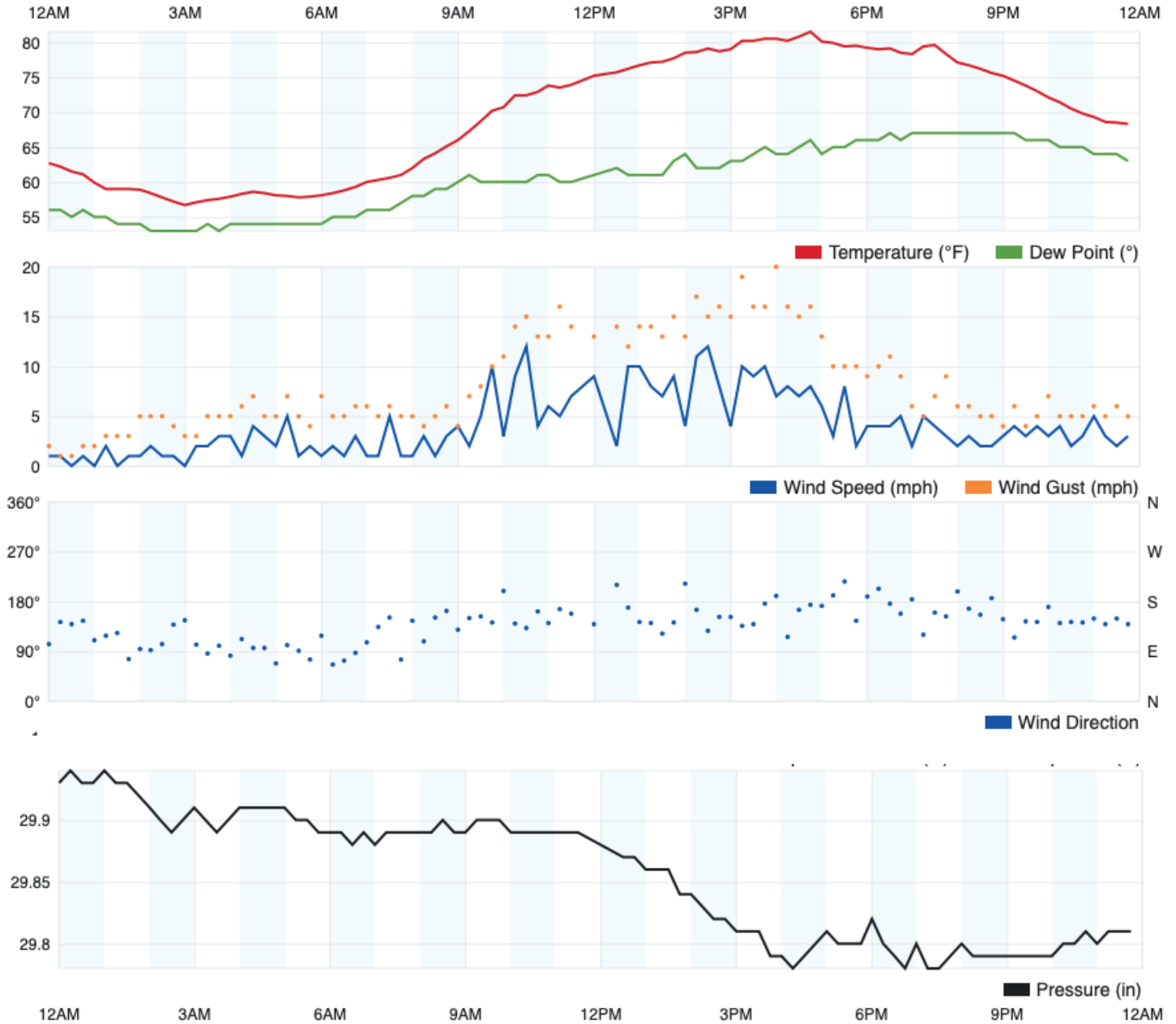
*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 85 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 79 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 89 °F



## Mostly Dry & Rapidly Heating Up

July 19, 2023  
3:01 AM

### Temperature Trends Weekend/Next Week


Today



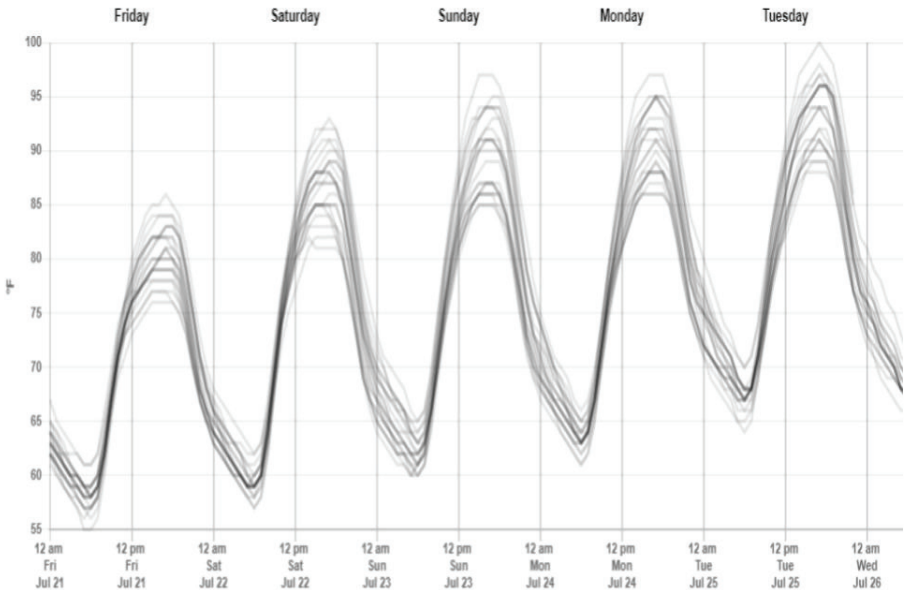
**WINDY**

**Highs: 80s**

Thurs



**Highs: About 80**



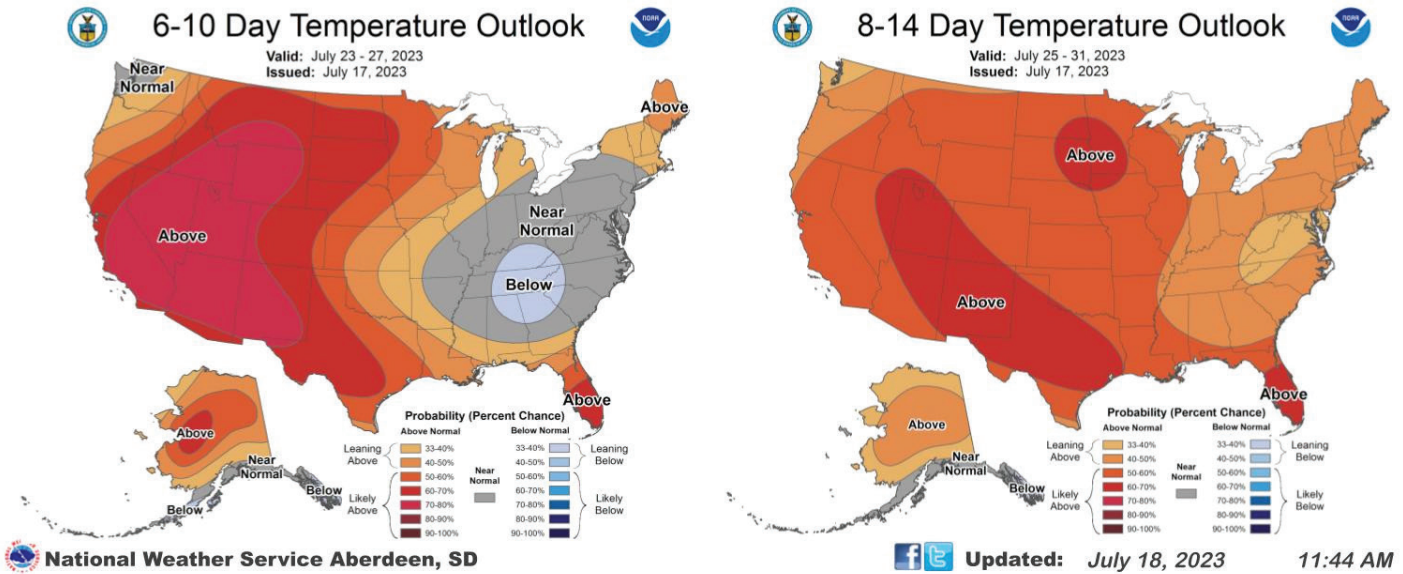
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Mostly dry conditions expected for the next few days. We'll see a front come through with a shot at cool dry Canadian air today, but as we move through the weekend, a much hotter airmass will push into the region with temperatures running about 5 to 15 degrees above normal.

## Ready For Some Heat?

The large-scale weather pattern will change to favor **hotter than normal temperatures** on the whole beginning this weekend (July 22-23), and lasting through much of the rest of July across c/ne SD and wc MN. The maps below show the probability (percent chance) for this. Normal highs from mid to late July range between ~82° & 89°F.



The large-scale weather pattern will change to favor hotter than normal temperatures on the whole beginning this weekend (July 22-23), and lasting through much of the rest of July across c/ne SD and wc MN. The maps below show the probability (percent chance) for this. Normal highs from mid to late July range between ~82° & 89°F.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 4:44 PM

Low Temp: 56 °F at 3:03 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 3:52 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 15 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1932

Record Low: 42 in 1900

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.09

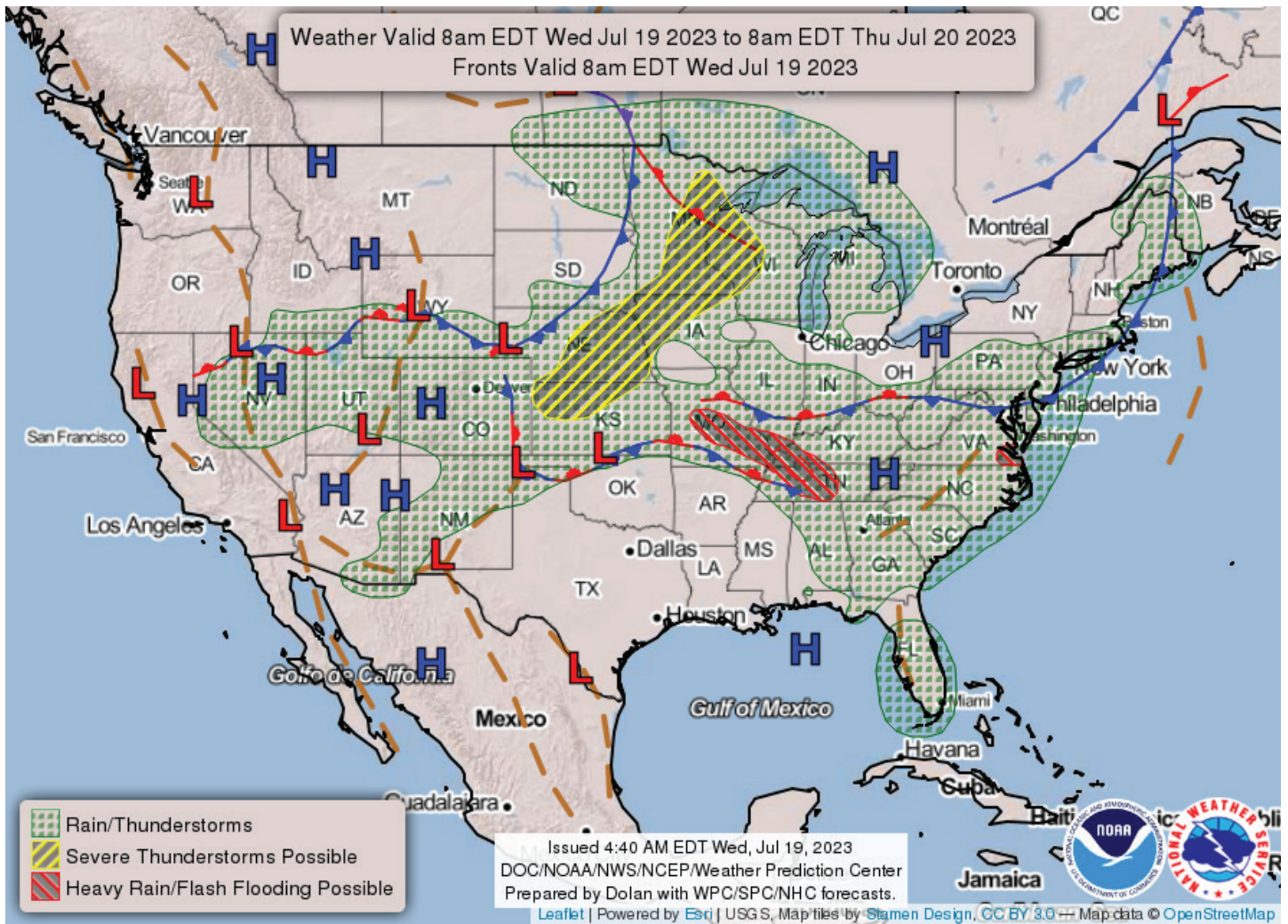
Precip to date in July.: 1.32

Average Precip to date: 13.10

Precip Year to Date: 12.67

Sunset Tonight: 9:16:43 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:01:45 AM



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## Today in Weather History

July 19, 1933: An F2 tornado moved ESE from west of Tulare to 3 miles ENE of Hitchcock. About ten farms had damage, and several barns were destroyed.

July 19, 2010: Severe storms produced a wide swath of hail and high winds from northern Butte County, through southern Meade, eastern Pennington, Jackson, and Bennett Counties. Millions of dollars in crop damage was reported, along with some damage to homes and automobiles.

1886: The 1886 Atlanta Hurricane season was a very active year with ten hurricanes, seven of which struck the United States. During the evening hours of July 18th, a category 1 storm made landfall near Homosassa Springs, Florida. Damage was slight as the area was thinly inhabited. The hurricane weakened to tropical storm status south of Gainesville and emerged on the eastern side of Florida, south of Jacksonville during the morning hours of the 19th. This was the fourth hurricane to make landfall in the United States.

1960 - Cow Creek and Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, CA, reported morning lows of 102 degrees. The afternoon high at Greenland Ranch was 124 degrees, and the high at Cow Creek that afternoon was 126 degrees. The coolest low for the entire month for both locations was 82 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1974 - A severe thunderstorm with winds to 80 mph and up to two inches of rain washed out four to five foot deep sections of roadway in Lake Havasu City, AZ. Three persons in a station wagon died as it was carried 3000 feet down a wash by a ten foot wall of water. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - Thunderstorms produced torrential rains over parts of southwestern Pennsylvania. Some places receive more than twelve inches in a seven hour period. The heavy rains cause flash flooding along streams resulting in widespread severe damage. The cloudburst floods Johnstown with up to ten feet of water resulting in 76 deaths, countless injuries, and 424 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Fifteen cities in the western and the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Winnemucca, NV, with a reading of 33 degrees. Flagstaff AZ reported a record low of 34 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in New York State and New Jersey. High winds and hail two inches in diameter injured two persons and caused considerable damage to crops in the Pine Island area of central New York State. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced more than five inches of rain at Red Cloud, including two inches in fifteen minutes. Torrid temperatures continued over California, with record highs of 115 degrees at Red Bluff and 116 degrees at Redding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Early morning thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley produced 5.50 inches of rain south of Alexander, AR, in just ninety minutes, and flash flooding which resulted claimed the life of one woman. Thunderstorms in Indiana produced 4.95 inches of rain in twelve hours east of Muncie. Eight cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Las Vegas, NV, with a reading of 115 degrees, and Phoenix, AZ, with a high of 116 degrees. The low that night at Phoenix of 93 degrees was the warmest of record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 - A severe heat wave gripped the region during early to mid-July. Las Vegas, NV tied their all-time record high temperature of 117 degrees, equalling the old record set on July 24, 1942.

2006 - The first of two severe thunderstorms hits the St. Louis area, causing the largest power outage in the city's history with over 570,000 people losing electricity.

2006: A derecho impacted a sellout crowd of almost 44,000 St. Louis Cardinals fans, packed into the new Busch Stadium. Winds of about 80 mph whirled around the St. Louis area, sending the fans running for shelter. The winds knocked out power and broke windows out of the press box. Nearly two minutes after the winds began at 100 mph, they stopped, and it started to rain. In all, about 30 people were injured at the stadium.



Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### ACORNS AND WATERMELONS

A father and his son were walking through a grove of oak trees. Suddenly the boy turned to his Dad and said, "You know, I think God really goofed. He put a watermelon on a small vine and an acorn on a big oak. I would have done it the exact opposite."

As he was about to continue his speech, an acorn fell from a tree, landed on his head and bounced to the ground. Quickly the father said, "Aren't you glad that wasn't a watermelon?"

We are often puzzled by the events that occur in our lives. We do our best to understand them only to realize that we lack wisdom and insight to interpret or understand them. Try as we might, there are some things that simply do not make sense to us. What then?

God's Word reminds us that "If any of you lack wisdom and insight, ask Me for help and I'll give them to you." Two of God's greatest gifts - wisdom and insight - are available to all of us. But they only come from reading, accepting, and trusting His Word, taking time to be with Him in prayer, meditating, and asking other Christians for ideas. He is willing and able to give us all the knowledge we need as well as the courage it will take to do whatever He asks of us. However, it will take time and discipline. His answers are always available, but we must prove to Him, through obedience to Him, that we are willing to do our part if we expect Him to do His part.

Prayer: Lord, if we are willing to seek and ask, we will surely find the wisdom and insight we need when we trust Your guidance. May we hear and obey Your instructions and find direction and protection for our lives through You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5-7



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him



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## 2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.18.23

19 22 31 37 54 18

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$720,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 4  
DRAW: Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.17.23

25 28 29 40 51 10

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$5,930,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 19 Mins 14  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.18.23

4 20 21 47 48 2

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

NEXT 15 Hrs 34 Mins 14  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.15.23

3 9 19 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 34 Mins 15  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.17.23

9 37 38 62 69 23

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

NEXT 16 Hrs 3 Mins 15  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
07.17.23

5 8 9 17 41 21

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$1,000,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 3 Mins 15  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



## News from the Associated Press

### **South Dakota lawmakers push for special session against carbon capture pipeline**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A group of South Dakota lawmakers has begun circulating a petition in hopes of forcing a special session to protect private property rights against the developers of a proposed carbon dioxide pipeline.

But the petition drive faces an uphill climb, needing the signatures of at least two-thirds of the membership of both the South Dakota House and Senate to succeed. While Republican Gov. Kristi Noem could also call a special session on her own, she said last week that it would be “fruitless” unless lawmakers reach a consensus.

Landowners and farmers in South Dakota and other states have objected to Summit Carbon Solutions’ plan to use the power of eminent domain to run pipelines across private land without the owners’ consent.

The company wants to build a \$4.5 billion, 2,000-mile network of pipelines to transport carbon dioxide from Midwest ethanol plants to a deep underground permanent storage site in North Dakota to fight climate change. The company has said it needs to use eminent domain to build the project in a timely fashion. The project would span Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska.

Cosponsors of the petition drive said in a statement Monday that they object to the use of eminent domain to strip property rights from landowners for the benefit of an out-of-state private company with foreign investors. Others have objected on safety grounds, and environmental groups are skeptical.

### **South Dakota governor prods Washington to address national drug shortages**

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

As the U.S. struggles with prescription drug shortages, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has advanced a modest plan that she hopes will prod Washington to take decisive action to address weaknesses in the international pharmaceutical supply chain.

Noem told reporters at a pharmacy in Sioux Falls last week that her state will expand its stockpiles of certain medications that have been in short supply. The Republican former congresswoman also used the occasion to turn up the heat on the federal Food and Drug Administration, urging the agency to make the U.S. less dependent on foreign suppliers like China and India.

Noem said she hopes other governors — and members of Congress — take notice of what South Dakota is doing and lend their voices to push for long-term change in Washington to fix what she called a real risk to national security.

“My hope is that those leaders in D.C. that have the ability to weigh in on this issue will,” Noem said. “We’ll continue to educate them on why it’s such a critical need for us to address it today.”

Shifting shortages of a variety of drugs predated the COVID-19 pandemic by decades and continue to complicate treatment of patients across the country. Major contributors include manufacturing problems, demand spikes, tight ingredient supplies and overreliance on foreign sources. A U.S. Senate report in March said the shortages have “cascading effects on patient care.”

Last fall, the FDA announced a shortage of the attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder drug Adderall. Stores ran out of children’s medicines due to demand during last winter’s particularly intense cold and flu season. Prominent cancer centers warned last month that a growing shortage of common cancer treatments is forcing doctors to switch medications and delay some care. Several Democratic-led states plan to stockpile abortion-inducing drugs in response to a court ruling that could limit access.

There were 309 active drug shortages in the U.S. at the end of June, according to the University of Utah Drug Information Service. That’s up from 295 at the end of last year and the highest total recorded

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since 2014.

Noem wrote to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf last week, imploring him to work with Congress on long-term solutions to fix the supply chain and reduce America's reliance on China and India.

"This is one of the issues that's still getting traction in Washington on both sides of the aisle, which is rare these days," said Stephen Schondelmeyer, a leader of the Resilient Drug Supply Project at the University of Minnesota.

South Dakota already maintains drug caches at each end of the state, at a pharmaceutical warehouse in Sioux Falls and at a Rapid City hospital. It will now add sites at partner pharmacies in five additional cities statewide. In addition to current antibiotic stockpiles, the department is adding albuterol, epinephrine, insulin, prednisone and pediatric amoxicillin to the list, which was developed by the state Department of Health as part of a study that Noem ordered in May.

"This effort is helpful, but not the whole picture," Schondelmeyer said.

He noted that South Dakota's plan focuses on outpatient medications. Serile injectables used in hospitals — ranging from drugs on crash carts to chemotherapy medications — have accounted for about 70% of the shortages over the past decade and may warrant stockpiling as well, he said.

Schondelmeyer estimated that around 15 to 20 other states, including California, also maintain some kind of drug stockpiles.

Noem said building up South Dakota's stockpiles shouldn't cause shortages or price spikes elsewhere across the country. The drugs in the stockpile will be rotated and released to pharmacies before they expire so they won't be wasted.

The Department of Health is still negotiating contracts with the five additional sites and the costs associated with the additional medication stockpile, spokesperson Tia Kafka said. The quantities will be based on epidemiological data and community size, she said, and the contracts will become public record once they're finalized later this month.

"This is an interesting solution," said Erin Fox, associate chief pharmacy officer at University of Utah Health. "Stockpiling can help buffer shortage situations and are an appropriate step to take, but they can't completely solve the shortage issue."

Tom Kraus, vice president for government relations at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, said his group supports the concept of stockpiling as South Dakota is planning — including by states and individual hospitals — as long as it's done carefully to avoid aggravating shortages.

The federal government also has its own drug and medical equipment stockpile, but its focus is different. The Strategic National Stockpile, run by the Department of Health and Human Services, assumes states will also have stockpiles and it's meant only to supplement their efforts.

Fox said the country needs to fix some of the underlying issues that cause shortages in the first place, such as intense price competition in the generic drug market that causes quality to suffer and forces suppliers out of the market. And she said the federal government could fund extra supplies of drugs for "inventory buffering" to provide a margin of safety when problems develop, similar to what South Dakota is doing on its own.

"When you need a drug, it should be at the corner drug store or the hospital when you need it, and it isn't," Schondelmeyer said. "There are real market failures in the drug supply that need solutions."

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Associated Press reporter Tom Murphy contributed to this story from Indianapolis.

## The surreal Korean border village where a US soldier crossed into the North

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Blue-roofed huts, a raised slab of concrete and some raked gravel are all that separate the rival Koreas at Panmunjom, a rare point of close contact along the most heavily armed border in the world.

People have stepped across that thin dividing line, but only under very special circumstances, passing between two nations that are still technically at war.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un did it. Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in walked hand-in-hand with Kim across the border. In 2017, a defecting North Korean soldier stumbled across nearby, under heavy gunfire, in a mad dash for sanctuary.

And this week an American soldier facing possible military discipline dashed over the line, causing an international incident that could worsen already uneasy relations on the Korean Peninsula, where the North has staged dozens of missile tests this year as it works to advance a nuclear program aimed at targeting the continental United States.

Much of the 4-kilometer-wide (2 1/2 mile-wide) Demilitarized Zone is wilderness, guarded by mines, barbed wire fences, tank traps and combat troops on both sides. It's jointly overseen by the American-led U.N. Command and by North Korea.

But Panmunjom, a once-obscure farming village inside the DMZ that now hosts a "Joint Security Area," is different. It's a tourist site, albeit one of the world's most surreal.

Seven decades of division since the end of the Korean War are made palpable by the South Korean soldiers who stand on guard, glaring across the border. North Korea soldiers are there, too, but less visible most days.

The Korean Peninsula was split at the end of World War II into a Soviet-controlled North and U.S.-backed South. It was in Panmunjom that U.S. and North Korean forces negotiated and eventually signed the 1953 truce that ended fighting in the Korean War and created the DMZ. There has never been a formal peace treaty, the village is formally administered by neither North or South Korea.

A carnival atmosphere can occasionally take hold in the area around Panmunjom, with souvenir shops, fast-food restaurants and throngs of tourists, though North Korea has been closed to tourism because of the pandemic since early 2020. The South Korean side has an amusement park not far from the village, and used to have a Popeyes chicken outlet.

Tours to the southern side reportedly drew around 100,000 visitors a year before the pandemic, when South Korea restricted gatherings to slow the spread of COVID. The tours resumed fully last year.

The area is also a throwback to the Cold War, a time of barely contained, simmering hostility between nuclear-armed rivals. There have been ax killings, U.S. bomber fly-bys and desperate defections along the border. U.S. presidents and senior officials regularly make the trip to the southern side of the DMZ for photo ops. The village is formally administered by neither North or South Korea.

The tourist area is a short drive from Seoul, which lies in easy artillery range of the estimated 70% of North Korea's 1.2 million troop arrayed along the border.

There are occasional verbal exchanges between U.S. soldiers and their North Korean counterparts, often businesslike, at the Demarcation Line in the village.

It's a thrill, perhaps, for the tourists, but it's a dangerous proposition for the soldiers keeping watch, often only meters (feet) apart.

Months and years often pass without incident, but when something happens, it can be violent.

In 1976, North Korean soldiers axed two American army officers to death, and the United States responded by flying nuclear-capable B-52 bombers toward the DMZ in an attempt to intimidate the North.

In 1984, North Korean and U.N. Command soldiers traded shots when a Soviet citizen defected by sprinting to the southern side. Three North Korean soldiers and one South Korean soldier were killed.

In 2017, when a fleeing North Korean soldier crashed his jeep and then sprinted across the border, North Korean soldiers fired handguns and rifles before southern soldiers could drag the wounded soldier



to safety. South Korean soldiers didn't return fire.

North Koreans who flee to South Korea — an estimated 30,000 since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War — have mostly used the more porous border between North Korea and China.

In 2019, during a period that saw unprecedented diplomacy between North Korea and the United States and South Korea, Trump and Kim Jong Un shook hands at the borderline. Trump stepped over the concrete slab, becoming the first U.S. president to set foot in North Korean territory.

On Tuesday, Private 2nd Class Travis King, 23, became the first known American detained in the North in nearly five years, after he bolted across the border at Panmunjom.

King, who had served nearly two months in a South Korean prison, had been held on assault charges and was being sent to Fort Bliss, Texas, on Monday, where he could have faced additional military disciplinary actions and discharge from the service. But officials say that instead of getting on the plane, he left the airport and later joined a tour of Panmunjom.

## Voting fraud claims spread ahead of Spain's pivotal election

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Days before Spain holds a pivotal election, misleading claims about mail ballots and election fraud are spreading on social media and casting doubts about the results even before the votes have been counted.

The allegations, amplified by supporters of the center-right Popular Party and the far-right Vox Party, bear striking similarities to the baseless claims spread by then-President Donald Trump ahead of his 2020 U.S. election defeat and offer a reminder that the distrust of elections that has marred U.S. politics has taken root in Europe, too.

Sunday's general election could tilt Spain in favor of the populist right, as the Popular Party looks to take power away from the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party and its far-left coalition partner, Unidas Podemos (United We Can).

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called the early election after his left-leaning coalition lost big in this year's local and regional elections that were also marked by online misinformation about voting, as well as a surge in hateful content about Muslims and immigrants.

Most polls favor the Popular Party, but it will likely need the support of the Vox to form a governing majority.

In recent weeks, debunked videos claiming to show election workers stuffing the ballot box have circulated widely on Facebook and Twitter; Facebook labeled the videos as false while Twitter has taken no action. Other videos spreading on Facebook and TikTok allege Sanchez's party will steal the election to prevent a defeat. Many bear the hashtag #pucherazo, a Spanish term for electoral fraud.

As in the United States, the use of mail ballots is a particular focus of election conspiracy theories, with some far-right voters suggesting the post office would be used to throw the election to Sanchez. It's a narrative that Alberto Feijoo, the Popular Party leader, has helped to amplify. At a rally last week, he urged Spain's postal employees to remain independent.

"I ask the postmen in Spain to work to the maximum, morning, afternoon and night," Feijoo said during a campaign rally in Murcia on Wednesday. "Regardless of your bosses, I urge you to distribute all the mail-in ballots on time."

Feijoo later said he was not trying to suggest the postal service would try to steal the election but was instead referring to the challenges of handling so many mail ballots.

"Nobody here is talking about pucherazo," Feijoo said.

Social media researchers at the nonprofit Reset identified numerous examples of election-related misinformation spreading on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok. While the specific kinds of content varies by platform — anti-Muslim hate is particularly prevalent on Twitter, for instance — election denialism was found wherever the researchers looked.

Some of the accounts spreading disinformation about the Spanish election have enormous and growing

reach. Analysts at Reset identified 88 social media accounts that have repeatedly spread extremist content in Spain that have more than 14 million followers, including about a million recent ones. Posts flagged by Reset for containing hate or election conspiracy theories have been seen nearly 100 million times since January.

“Election fraud narratives that undermine trust in democratic processes – and which also dominated the regional elections in Spain – are spread across platforms,” concluded the researchers at Reset, who shared their findings with The Associated Press. Reset is based in London and studies the ways social media affects democracies around the globe.

Spain’s contentious election comes amid a recent uptick in online hate speech directed at the country’s immigrants and Muslim residents. Some election ads run by the far-right Vox Party strike a similarly anti-immigrant chord, highlighting a conspiracy theory known as the Great Replacement, which suggests that democratic leaders in nations including Spain and the U.S. are trying to replace white residents with non-white immigrants.

“In 2070, there will be no Spanish families,” claims one online ad from Vox.

Like in the U.S., Spain has laws, audits and independent checks-and-balances designed to ferret out electoral fraud. And just as in the U.S., the cases of actual fraud that are identified and exposed are often exaggerated and taken out of context to suggest far wider problems.

In May, police arrested 10 people in the city of Melilla, a small Spanish enclave on the African coast, after investigators turned up suspected election fraud. Even though the alleged attempt to cheat was uncovered and stopped, it’s being held up on social media as evidence of far more widespread fraud.

When it comes to identifying and removing false claims, Reset’s report faulted tech platforms for inconsistency, noting that conspiracy theories or misleading claims about the election may be labeled or removed from one platform and left alone on another.

Marc Esteve Del Valle, professor at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, said the amount of false and misleading information about the Spanish election, and the many platforms spreading it, can make it difficult for voters to know what to believe. Esteve Del Valle is Spanish and has researched the far-right’s use of anti-immigrant rhetoric.

“The further we go, the more difficult it is to differentiate reliable information from mis/disinformation,” he said.

## **Firefighters battle wildfires surrounding Athens as second heat wave hits the Mediterranean country**

NEA PERAMOS, Greece (AP) — New evacuations were ordered Wednesday as wildfires raged near the Greek Capital after a second heat wave hit the Mediterranean country from the west following days of record-high temperatures that baked southern Europe.

In a round-the-clock battle to preserve forests, industrial facilities, and vacation homes, evacuations continued for a third day along a highway connecting Athens to the southern city of Corinth.

Water-dropping planes and helicopters resumed operation at first light.

Fires continued to burn on three fronts around Athens, gutting homes and farms, with strong gusts of wind advancing the flames over hilly terrain as temperatures approached 40 degrees Celsius (104F).

At Nea Peramos, a coastal industrial area west of the capital, winds picked up and rekindled a fire that threatened homes. Five firefighting planes and eight helicopters assisted ground crews.

Temperatures in southern Greece are expected to reach 44C by the end of the week, in the second heat wave to hit Europe’s Mediterranean south in two weeks – prompting a renewed warning against extreme summer heat.

The World Meteorological Organization, a United Nations body, said preliminary global figures showed the month of June to be the hottest on record.

“The extreme weather, an increasingly frequent occurrence in our warming climate, is having a major

impact on human health, ecosystems, economies, agriculture, energy and water supplies," WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said Wednesday.

"This underlines the increasing urgency of cutting greenhouse gas emissions as quickly and as deeply as possible."

Countries with borders on the Mediterranean Sea weren't alone in suffering. Authorities in North Macedonia extended a heat alert with predicted temperatures topping 43 C (109 F), while Kosovo also issued heat warnings.

## **IRS whistleblowers will testify to Congress as they claim 'slow-walking' of the Hunter Biden case**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Whistleblowers claiming the Justice Department improperly interfered with a yearslong investigation into Hunter Biden will testify before Congress on Wednesday as House Republicans accelerate their probes into the president and his family.

Leaders of the House Judiciary, Oversight and Accountability, and Ways and Means committees will lead a hearing with two Internal Revenue Service employees — Greg Shapley and an as-yet-unnamed "whistleblower x" — who claim there was a pattern of "slow-walking investigative steps" into Hunter Biden, including delayed enforcement actions in the months before the 2020 election won by Joe Biden.

It will be the first public testimony from the two IRS agents assigned to the federal case into President Joe Biden's youngest son, Hunter, which was focused on tax and gun charges. The second agent, whose name was withheld in interview transcripts released by Republicans, is expected to have his identity revealed at the hearing.

The congressional inquiry into the Justice Department's case against Hunter Biden was launched last month, days after it was announced that the younger Biden will plead guilty to the misdemeanor tax offenses as part of an agreement with federal prosecutors.

The House Ways and Means Committee voted to publicly disclose hundreds of pages of testimony from the IRS employees in which they described several roadblocks agents on the case faced when trying to interview individuals relevant to the case or issue search warrants.

One of Shapley's most explosive claims was that U.S. Attorney David Weiss in Delaware, the federal prosecutor who led the investigation, asked to be provided special counsel status in order to bring the tax cases against Hunter Biden in jurisdictions outside Delaware, including Washington, D.C., and California, but was denied.

Both Weiss and the Justice Department have vehemently denied such claims, saying that he had "full authority" of the case and never sought to bring charges in other states.

The second IRS whistleblower described his persistent frustrations with the way the case was handled, dating back to the Trump administration under Attorney General William Barr. He said he started the investigation into Hunter Biden in 2015 and began to delve deeply into his life and finances. Republicans have also sought testimony from other agents involved in the case but have been mostly unsuccessful thus far.

Republicans, including the three chairmen — Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, James Comer of Kentucky and Jason Smith of Missouri — have sought to paint the Justice Department's case as rife with political interference and bias.

They have also called the plea agreement Hunter Biden made with prosecutors to likely avoid jail time a "sweetheart deal."

Ahead of the hearing, Comer acknowledged it has been difficult for Republicans to succinctly outline Hunter Biden's tangled financial affairs or to provide convincing evidence of any specific wrongdoing by the president or his family.

"It's so hard to explain," Comer told reporters at the Capitol.

"Hopefully these IRS agents can do a better job explaining than I can," he said.

High-ranking officials at the Justice Department have countered these claims by pointing to the extraor-



dinary set of circumstances surrounding a criminal case into a subject who at the time was the son of a leading presidential candidate.

And it remains unclear how much of the conflict the whistleblowers describe amounts to internal disagreement about how to pursue the wide-ranging probe or a pattern of interference and preferential treatment. Department policy has long warned prosecutors to take care in charging cases with potential political overtones around the time of an election, to avoid any possible influence on the outcome.

In one specific case, Shapley described IRS agents' efforts to execute a search warrant of a storage facility in Virginia where the younger Biden's documents were being stored. He said that the assistant U.S. attorney involved in the case reached out to Hunter Biden's lawyers, in a move that is seen as customary in cases involving high-profile individuals, but it ruined "our chance to get to evidence before being destroyed, manipulated, or concealed."

A similar occurrence happened when the FBI officials notified Hunter Biden's Secret Service detail ahead of an effort to interview him and several of his business associates in order to avoid a potential shoot-off between two law enforcement bodies.

Democrats in the House have also pointed out that Weiss was appointed to his post by former President Donald Trump and the federal investigation into Hunter Biden was initiated by Trump's Justice Department. Biden kept Weiss on the case when he won the election.

Nonetheless, Republicans have moved full steam ahead, issuing a series of requests for voluntary testimony from senior officials at the Justice Department, FBI and Internal Revenue Service, including Weiss. They have also requested a special counsel review of supposed retaliation against the whistleblowers who came forward with the claims.

Weiss wrote in a letter to Jordan earlier this month that he would be happy to testify before the committee when he is legally able to share information with Congress without violating the longstanding department policy of discussing an ongoing investigation.

Testimony from Justice Department officials could come after Hunter Biden appears for his plea hearing next week.

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Associated Press writer Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

## **Russia launches intense nighttime attacks across Ukraine, targeting the southern port city of Odesa**

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Missiles and drones launched by Russia in an intense series of nation-wide nighttime air attacks have damaged critical port infrastructure in southern Ukraine, including grain and oil terminals, and wounded at least 12 people, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday.

The air raid targeted the southern port city of Odesa for a second night in a row, days after Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow would halt its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which enabled crucial grain exports to reach the world, including many countries facing the threat of hunger.

Meanwhile, Russian emergency officials in Crimea said that more than 2,200 people were evacuated from four villages because of a fire at a military facility. The fire also caused the closure of an important highway, according to Sergey Aksyonov, the Russia-appointed head of the peninsula, which was annexed in 2014.

He didn't specify a cause for the fire at the facility in Kirovsky district, which came two days after an attack on a bridge linking Russia to Crimea that the Kremlin has blamed on Ukraine.

"A difficult night of air attacks for all of Ukraine," Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv City Military Administration, said in a statement on Telegram. Ukrainian authorities reported more drones and missiles sent against more parts of Ukraine than in recent days.

Popko said the attacks were especially fierce in Odesa for a second consecutive night. The Ukrainian army's Operational Command South reported that at least 12 civilians sustained injuries in the attack on the Odesa region.

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Odesa's regional Gov. Oleh Kiper said the attack included "dozens of missiles and strike drones" aimed at the port and infrastructure facilities. Debris from missiles and drones that were shot down fell on apartment buildings, seaside resorts and warehouses, sparking fires and injuring several people.

Russia targeted the port and key infrastructure with Oniks and Kh-22 missiles, Kiper said. Grain and oil terminals were hit, damaging storage tanks, loading equipment and causing a fire. Emergency service workers were deployed.

Wheat prices rose more than 2.5% on Tuesday and over 3% on Wednesday amid the Russian attacks in Odesa, which is a key hub for exporting grain to the world, illustrating jitters in global markets just days after Moscow pulled out of the grain deal, which allowed Ukraine to ship grain to parts of the globe where people are going hungry.

However, Wednesday's trading price of \$6.91 a bushel was still more than 85% below last year's peak.

At least six residents of Odesa, including a 9-year-old boy, have sought medical assistance, because of injuries caused by shattered glass and other objects.

The remnants of a downed Kh-59 missile created a large crater in another part of the city, leaving three civilians injured and several buildings damaged.

Eight Shahed drones were also shot down in the wider Odesa region, where two warehouses containing tobacco and fireworks were reported damaged.

Russia also attacked Kyiv with Iranian-made Shahed drones but with "no result," said Popko. Ukrainian air defense intercepted all the drones aimed at the capital and a preliminary investigation showed there were no casualties.

The attack in Odesa was accompanied by other strikes across Ukraine. In the past 24 hours, at least one person was killed and 21 other people were wounded in Russian attacks. One person died in the northeastern Kharkiv region, near the volatile Kupyansk area. In Donestk, 10 people were injured in the shelling of seven cities, including Avdiivka, Mariinka and Chasiv Yar.

Two people were wounded in shelling in the Mykolaiv region and one person was injured in the Kherson region.

In Ukraine's Zhytomyr region, Russian drone attacks damaged some infrastructure and private homes, according to regional Gov. Vitalii Bunechko. No casualties were reported.

Officials in the Ukrainian regions of Poltava and Kirovohrad also reported attacks.

The latest barrage came one day after Russia carried out what Moscow's Defense Ministry described as a "strike of retribution" on Ukrainian military facilities near Odesa and the coastal city of Mykolaiv, using sea-launched precision weapons.

Russia blames Ukraine for a July 17 strike on the Kerch Bridge, which links Russia with the Crimea, and is a key artery for military and civilian supplies.

Ukraine's top security agency appeared to tacitly admit to a role in the July 17 attack, but stopped short of directly claiming responsibility, echoing their responses after previous similar attacks on the Kerch Bridge.

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

## Israeli president says his speech to Congress highlights an 'unbreakable bond' despite US unease

By FARNOUSH AMIRI, ZEKE MILLER and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Israel's president speaks to Congress on Wednesday in an appearance aimed at demonstrating what he calls the "unbreakable bond" between Israel and the United States, despite U.S. concerns over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's judicial overhaul and settlement construction in the occupied West Bank.

Isaac Herzog becomes the second Israeli president, after his father, Chaim Herzog, to address Congress. His speech will mark modern Israel's celebration of its 75th year.

But the visit by Israel's figurehead president also is exposing the difficulties that Democrats face in balanc-

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ing longstanding U.S. support for ally Israel with disapproval of some actions by Netanyahu's government, a coalition of ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties.

The House on Tuesday passed a Republican-led resolution reaffirming its support for Israel with strong bipartisan approval — an implicit rebuke of a leading Democrat who over the weekend called the country a "racist state" but later apologized.

The resolution, introduced by Rep. August Pfluger, R-Texas, passed with more than 400 lawmakers backing the measure. It did not mention Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., by name but was clearly a response to her recent remarks about Israel. The measure was drafted soon after she criticized Israel and its treatment of Palestinians at a conference on Saturday.

Jayapal, the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, walked back the comments the next day, insisting her comments were aimed at Netanyahu and not at Israel.

"I do not believe the idea of Israel as a nation is racist," Jayapal said in a statement. "I do, however, believe that Netanyahu's extreme right-wing government has engaged in discriminatory and outright racist policies and that there are extreme racists driving that policy within the leadership of the current government."

The GOP-led effort highlighted the divide among House Democrats over Israel, with younger progressives adopting a more critical stance toward the longtime U.S. ally than party leaders.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., the only Palestinian-American in Congress, is boycotting Herzog's speech Wednesday and criticized the resolution as normalizing violence against those living in the occupied West Bank, given the Netanyahu government's approval of expanded Jewish settlements there.

"We're here again reaffirming Congress' support for apartheid," Tlaib said during floor debate Tuesday on the Republican measure. "Policing the words of women of color who dare to speak up about truths, about oppression."

Over at the White House on Tuesday, Herzog sought to assure Biden that Israel remains committed to democracy amid deepening U.S. concerns over Netanyahu's plans to overhaul his country's judicial system.

Netanyahu and his allies say the overhaul is needed to rein in the powers of unelected judges. Opponents say the plan will destroy Israel's fragile system of checks and balances and move the country toward authoritarian rule.

Herzog has appealed for a compromise that has thus far proven elusive. Many American Jewish groups and Democratic lawmakers have expressed concerns about the plan.

Herzog's visit comes weeks after Israeli forces carried out one of their most intensive operations in the occupied West Bank in two decades, with a two-day air and ground offensive in Jenin, a militant stronghold. Senior members of Netanyahu's government have been pushing for increased construction and other measures to cement Israel's control over the occupied West Bank in response to a more than yearlong wave of violence with the Palestinians.

U.S. officials have broadly supported Israel's right to defend itself from militant attacks but have also urged restraint to minimize harm to civilians and have lobbied against additional settlements that would further diminish the chances of securing a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians.

With differences in plain view, Biden sought to stress the importance of the U.S.-Israeli relationship in his brief remarks before reporters Tuesday.

"This is a friendship I believe is just simply unbreakable," Biden said. "As I confirmed to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday, America's commitment to Israel is firm and it is ironclad."

Ahead of Herzog's visit, Biden spoke with Netanyahu by phone and invited him to meet in the U.S. this fall, although the president expressed reservations about several of the Netanyahu hard-right coalition's policies.

Herzog said the Biden-Netanyahu conversation sent an important message to the region.

"I was pleased to hear about your conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu in which you focused on our ironclad military and security cooperation because there are some enemies of ours that sometimes mistake the fact that we may have some differences as impacting our unbreakable bond," Herzog said.

The Biden administration declined to say whether Biden would host Netanyahu at the White House — as



the Israeli leader has hoped — or in New York on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly.

White House visits are typically standard protocol for Israeli prime ministers, and the delay in Netanyahu receiving one has become an issue in Israel, with opponents citing it as a reflection of deteriorating relations with the U.S.

## **North Korea stays silent on its apparent detention of a US soldier who bolted across the border**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG, TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Wednesday was silent about the highly unusual entry of an American soldier across the Koreas' heavily fortified border as some observers say North Korea is unlikely to repatriate him anytime soon amid heightened animosities between the former wartime foes.

A day after the soldier bolted into North Korea during a tour in the border village of Panmunjom on Tuesday, there was no word on the fate of Private 2nd Class Travis King, the first known American detained in the North in nearly five years. Earlier Wednesday, North Korea test-fired two ballistic missiles into the sea in an apparent protest at the deployment of a U.S. nuclear-armed submarine in South Korea the previous day.

"It's likely that North Korea will use the soldier for propaganda purposes in the short term and then as a bargaining chip in the mid- to long term," said Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in South Korea.

King, 23, was a cavalry scout with the 1st Armored Division who had served nearly two months in a South Korean prison for assault. He was released on July 10 and was being sent home Monday to Fort Bliss, Texas, where he could have faced additional military discipline and discharge from the service.

He was escorted as far as customs but left the airport before boarding his plane. It wasn't clear how he spent the hours until joining the Panmunjom tour and running across the border Tuesday afternoon. The Army released his name and limited information after King's family was notified. But a number of U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, provided additional details.

King's mother told ABC News she was shocked when she heard her son had crossed into North Korea.

"I can't see Travis doing anything like that," Claudine Gates, of Racine, Wisconsin, said.

Gates said the Army told her on Tuesday morning about her son's entrance into North Korea. She said she last heard from her son "a few days ago," when he told her he would return soon to Fort Bliss. She added she just wanted "him to come home."

King faced at least two other assault-related allegations in South Korea.

In February, a court fined him 5 million won (\$3,950) after being convicted of assaulting an unidentified person and damaging a police vehicle in Seoul last October, according to a transcript of the verdict obtained by The Associated Press.

The ruling said King had also been accused of punching a 23-year-old man at a Seoul nightclub, though the court dismissed that charge because the victim didn't want King to be punished.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that the U.S. government was working with its North Korean counterparts to "resolve this incident." The American-led U.N. Command said Tuesday the U.S. soldier was believed to be in North Korean custody.

"We're closely monitoring and investigating the situation," U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told a Pentagon news conference, noting he was foremost concerned about the soldier's well-being. "This will develop in the next several days and hours, and we'll keep you posted."

It wasn't known whether and how the U.S. and North Korea, which have no diplomatic relations, would hold talks. In the past, Sweden, which has an embassy in Pyongyang, provided consular services for other Americans detained in North Korea. But Swedish diplomatic staff reportedly haven't returned to North Korea since the country imposed a COVID-19 lockdown in early 2020 and ordered all foreigners to leave.

Some observers say North Korea and the U.S. could still communicate via Panmunjom or the North Korean mission at the U.N. in New York.

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Cases of Americans or South Koreans defecting to North Korea are rare, though more than 30,000 North Koreans have fled to South Korea to avoid political oppression and economic difficulties since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Tae Yongho, a former minister at the North Korean Embassy in London, said North Korea is likely pleased to have "an opportunity to get the U.S. to lose its face" because King's crossing happened on the same day the U.S. submarine arrived in South Korea. Tae, now a South Korean lawmaker, said North Korea won't likely return King because he is a soldier from a nation technically at war with North Korea who voluntarily surrendered to the North.

The United States and North Korea are still officially at war because the Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. The U.S. still stations about 28,000 troops in South Korea. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula run high as North Korea has carried out a barrage of missile tests, while the U.S. has responded by expanding its military drills with South Korea.

Panmunjom, located inside the 248-kilometer-long (154-mile) Demilitarized Zone, has been jointly overseen by the U.N. Command and North Korea since its creation at the close of the Korean War. Bloodshed has occasionally occurred there, but it has also been a venue for diplomacy and tourism.

Known for its blue huts straddling concrete slabs that form the demarcation line, Panmunjom draws visitors from both sides who want to see the Cold War's last frontier. No civilians live at Panmunjom. North and South Korean soldiers face off while tourists on both sides snap photographs.

A small number of U.S. soldiers went to North Korea during the Cold War, including Charles Jenkins, who deserted his army post in South Korea in 1965 and fled across the DMZ. He appeared in North Korean propaganda films and married a Japanese nursing student who had been abducted from Japan by North Korean agents. Jenkins died in Japan in 2017.

In recent years, some American civilians have been arrested in North Korea for alleged espionage, subversion and other anti-state acts, but were released after the U.S. sent high-profile missions to secure their freedom.

In May 2018, North Korea released three American detainees who returned to the United States on a plane with then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during a short period of warm relations. Later in 2018, North Korea said it expelled American Bruce Byron Lowrance. Since his deportation, there have been no reports of other Americans detained in North Korea before Tuesday's incident.

Their freedoms were a striking contrast to the fate of Otto Warmbier, an American university student who died in 2017 days after he was released by North Korea in a coma after 17 months in captivity.

The United States, South Korea and others have accused North Korea of using foreign detainees to wrest diplomatic concessions. Some foreigners have said after their release that their declarations of guilt while in North Korean custody were made under coercion.

Sean Timmons, a managing partner at the Tully Rinckey law firm, which specializes in military legal cases, said if King is trying to present himself as a legitimate defector fleeing either political oppression or persecution, he would be dependent on North Korea's leadership to decide if he can stay.

He said it will likely be up to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to decide King's fate.

"It's going to be up to the whims of their leadership, what they want to do," Timmons said.

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Copp reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

by violence.

Gangs control vast swaths of the north's rural areas, carrying out killings and abductions for ransom. There also are perennial clashes between farmers and cattle herders competing for land and water.

Zubairu has not seen his land degrade like Salisu, but he said "climate change affects me in two ways: excessive heat and rain patterns, which affect my turnout."

He harvested enough wheat to fill 20 bags last year and 18 most recently — down from 35 two years ago. "And I am not alone," Zubairu said.

Farmers being unable to reach their fields amid the violence triggers "both human security and food security crises," said Hassan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Consumers are struggling with food inflation of 24%, with wheat-based staples like bread and pasta nearly doubling in price.

"The price surge has affected me because I have to double the costs of what I normally buy, and I would still not be able to buy enough," said Chinedu Edeh, cooking gas retailer and installation technician in Nigeria's capital, Abuja. "Pasta has gone from 370 (naira) to 550 per unit."

He avoided the coarse wheat flour semolina in his last trip to the market and bought cheaper cassava flakes instead.

Last week, President Bola Tinubu released a policy statement on food and agriculture acknowledging rising food costs and declaring "a state of emergency," with a commitment to include food and water availability in the government's national security system.

Spokespeople for the president and the ministry of agriculture declined to comment or did not send answers to questions.

The government should "appreciate the full extent of how climate change fuels insecurity and food crisis and localize climate plans so that they affect real people who actually produce food for the country," Hassan said.

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## **Adrift for months, Australian and his dog lived on raw fish until Mexican fishermen rescued them**

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MANZANILLO, Mexico (AP) — Lost at sea for months on a disabled catamaran, with no way to cook and no source of fresh water but the rain, Australian Timothy Shaddock said he expected to die.

There was a lot to like about the experience, he said. Like when he would plunge into the sea for a swim, or when his dog, Bella, would stir him to keep going. "I did enjoy being at sea, I enjoy being out there," he said. He recalled the full moon in early May that illuminated his turn away from the Baja Peninsula, his last sight of land until he came ashore Tuesday.

Shaddock, 54, smiling and good humored, was the living image of a castaway, with a long blonde beard and emaciated appearance, as he joked with a group of reporters Tuesday, standing in front of the fishing boat that rescued him at a port on Mexico's Pacific coast.

He granted that there were "many, many, many bad days," but declined to elaborate.

Shaddock and his dog left northwest Mexico in a catamaran in late April, he said, planning to sail to French Polynesia. A few weeks into his voyage, he was struck by a storm, which disabled his catamaran and left him with no electronics and no way to cook. He declined to describe the storm or the damage in detail, but images of the boat taken during the rescue showed it with no sail.

He and Bella survived by fishing and eating their catch raw. Rain provided their drinking water.

Sailors, especially those travelling alone, get used to living — and sleeping — in the midst of constant work and whatever challenges the sea throws their way, and Shaddock said he spent most of his time



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fixing things on the boat. "The fatigue is the hardest part," he said.

"I would try and find the happiness inside myself, and I found a lot of that alone at sea," Shaddock said.

The tuna boat María Delia's helicopter was the first sign of humans he had seen in three months. He was 1,200 miles from the nearest land when suddenly a helicopter appeared. The pilot tossed him a drink before flying off, and a short while later, the crew reached him in a speed boat.

"It made me feel like I was going to live," he said.

Part of that encounter with sailors from the María Delia was captured on video. They circle Shaddock's bobbing catamaran, a flock of white seabirds perched on its double hulls as Shaddock scrambles to his feet in the stern. Bella wags her tail.

A crew member asks Shaddock if he speaks English, if he's okay, and if he has any drugs or weapons on board. Shaddock initially just hoarsely repeats, "Thank you, thank you."

But he's coherent, welcomes them to inspect the boat, and hands over the knife dangling from his neck.

Grupomar, the company that owns the tuna boat, said its crew gave Shaddock and Bella food and medical attention.

Shaddock said the María Delia became his "land" and the crew his family.

He said a lesson he took from the experience was a feeling that "your family is everyone, and your family is all of nature."

Bella was an immediate hit with the crew. Shaddock said he met the dog in Mexico, and even though he tried to find her a home on land she kept following him back to sea. "She's a lot braver than I am, that's for sure," he said.

Maybe that was why Bella wasn't allowed to disembark Tuesday until Shaddock had driven away. The Australian had chosen Genaro Rosales, a fisherman from Mazatlan on the María Delia's crew, to adopt Bella on condition that he took good care of her.

Shaddock planned to return to Australia to spend time with family and friends, but said that he enjoyed solitude. Still, he said, it might be a while before he goes back to sea.

People adrift at sea have occasionally survived much longer, but maritime accidents often do not end happily.

In 2014, a Salvadoran fisherman washed ashore on the tiny Pacific atoll of Ebon in the Marshall Islands after drifting at sea for 13 months. Jose Salvador Alvarenga left Mexico for a day of shark fishing in December 2012 and got lost during bad weather. He said he survived on fish, birds and turtles until his boat washed ashore 5,500 miles (8,850 kilometers) away.

In other cases, disabled boats are found without survivors, or are lost entirely.

Antonio Suárez, Grupomar's president, said Tuesday that the voyage during which the María Delia rescued Shaddock may have been its final trip, because he is modernizing the company's fleet and the boat is its smallest and more than 50 years old.

If so, it would be a "marvelous farewell, saving human lives," Suárez said.

Shaddock hugged Suárez in gratitude, and Suárez invited him to go for a meal in celebration.

When asked what he would like to eat back on land, Shaddock, smiling and jovial as he slid into a waiting car, said "tuna sushi."

## Phoenix scorches at 110 for 19th straight day, breaking big US city records in global heat wave

By SETH BORENSTEIN and ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — A dangerous 19th straight day of scorching heat in Phoenix set a record for U.S. cities Tuesday, confined many residents to air-conditioned safety and turned the usually vibrant metropolis into a ghost town.

The city's record streak of 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius) or more stood out even amid sweltering temperatures across the globe. It reached 117 degrees (47.2 Celsius) by 3 p.m.

Human-caused climate change and a newly formed El Nino are combining to shatter heat records world-

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wide, scientists say.

No other major city – defined as the 25 most populous in the United States – has had any stretch of 110-degree (43.3-degree) days or 90-degree (32.2-degree) nights longer than Phoenix, said weather historian Christopher Burt of the Weather Company.

“When you have several million people subjected to that sort of thermal abuse, there are impacts,” said NOAA Climate Analysis Group Director Russell Vose, who chairs a committee on national records.

For Phoenix, it’s not only the brutal daytime highs that are deadly. The lack of a nighttime cooldown can rob people without access to air conditioning of the break their bodies need to function properly.

With Tuesday’s low of 94 F (34.4 C), the city has had nine straight days of temperatures that didn’t go below 90 F (32.2 C) at night, breaking another record there, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Matt Salerno, who called it “pretty miserable when you don’t have any recovery overnight.”

On Monday, the city also set a record for the hottest overnight low temperature: 95 F (35 C). During the day, the heat built up so early that the city hit the 110 mark a couple minutes before noon.

Dog parks emptied out by the mid-morning and evening concerts and other outdoor events were cancelled to protect performers and attendees. The city’s Desert Botanical Garden, a vast outdoor collection of cactus and other desert plants, over the weekend began shutting down at 2 p.m. before the hottest part of the day.

In the hours before the new record was set, rivers of sweat streamed down the sunburned face of Lori Miccichi, 38, as she pushed a shopping cart filled with her belongings through downtown Phoenix, looking for a place to get out of the heat.

“I’ve been out here a long time and homeless for about three years,” said Miccichi. “When it’s like this, you just have to get into the shade. This last week has been the hottest I ever remember.”

Some 200 cooling and hydration centers have been set up across the metro area, but most shut down between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. due to staffing and funding issues.

The entire globe has simmered to record heat both in June and July. Nearly every day of this month, the global average temperature has been warmer than the unofficial hottest day recorded before 2023, according to University of Maine’s Climate Reanalyzer. U.S. weather stations have broken more than 860 heat records in the past seven days, according to NOAA.

Rome reached an all-time high of 109 (42.9 degrees Celsius), with record heat reported throughout Italy, France, Spain and parts of China. Catalonia smashed records reaching 113 (45 Celsius), according to global weather record keeper Maximiliano Herrera.

And if that’s not enough, smoke from wildfires, floods and droughts have caused problems globally.

In addition to Phoenix, Vose and others found less populous places such as Death Valley and Needles, California; and Casa Grande, Arizona, with longer hot streaks, but none in locations where many people live. Death Valley has had an 84-day streak of 110-degree temperatures.

The last time Phoenix didn’t reach 110 F (43.3 C) was June 29, when it hit 108 (42.2 C). The record of 18 days above 110 that was tied Monday was first set in 1974.

“This will likely be one of the most notable periods in our health record in terms of deaths and illness,” said David Hondula, chief heat officer for the city. “Our goal is for that not to be the case.”

Phoenix City Parks and Recreation workers Joseph Garcia, 48, and Roy Galindo, 28, tried to stay cool as they trimmed shrubs. They work from 5 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to avoid the hottest time of the day.

“It gets super hot out here and sometimes we have to take care of the public,” said Galindo, adding he sometimes find people passed out on the grass. “A lot of these people aren’t drinking water.”

Retired Phoenix firefighter Mark Bracy, who has lived in the city most of his 68 years, went on a two-hour morning climb Tuesday, up and down Piastewa Peak, which is 2,610 feet (796 meters) high.

“I’ve been going up there regularly since I was in the Cub Scouts, but it was never this hot back then,” said Bracy. “We’ve had hot spells before, but never anything like this.”

Dr. Erik Mattison, director of the emergency department at Dignity Health Chandler Regional Medical Center in metro Phoenix, recalled a hiker in his 60s who was brought in last week with a core body tem-

perature of 110 degrees (43.3 C).

"Heat makes people sick. Heat makes people die," Mattison said.

"And it's not just older people," he added. "We've seen professional athletes fall ill in the heat during training camp."

Phoenix's heat wave has both long and short-term causes, said Arizona State University's Randy Cerveny, who coordinates weather record verification for the World Meteorological Organization.

Long-term high temperatures over recent decades are due to human activity, he said, while the short-term cause is high pressure over the western United States.

That high pressure, also known as a heat dome, has been around the Southwest cooking it for weeks. When it moved, it moved to be even more centered on Phoenix, said National Weather Service meteorologist Isaac Smith.

The Southwest high pressure not only brings the heat, it prevents cooling rain and clouds from bringing relief, Smith said. Normally, the Southwest's monsoon season kicks in around June 15 with rain and clouds. But Phoenix has not had measurable rain since mid-March.

"This heat wave is intense and unrelenting," said Katharine Jacobs, director of the Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions at the University of Arizona. "Unfortunately, it is a harbinger of things to come."

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Borenstein reported from Washington. Follow Seth Borenstein and Anita Snow on Twitter at @borenbears and @asnowreports

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## 'Oppenheimer' stirs up conflicted history for Los Alamos and New Mexico downwinders

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) — The movie about a man who changed the course of the world's history by shepherding the development of the first atomic bomb is expected to be a blockbuster, dramatic and full of suspense.

On the sidelines will be a community downwind from the testing site in the southern New Mexico desert, the impacts of which the U.S. government never has fully acknowledged. The movie on the life of scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer and the top-secret work of the Manhattan Project sheds no light on those residents' pain.

"They'll never reflect on the fact that New Mexicans gave their lives. They did the dirtiest of jobs. They invaded our lives and our lands and then they left," Tina Cordova, a cancer survivor and founder of a group of New Mexico downwinders, said of the scientists and military officials who established a secret city in Los Alamos during the 1940s and tested their work at the Trinity Site some 200 miles (322 kilometers) away.

Cordova's group, the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, has been working with the Union of Concerned Scientists and others for years to bring attention to what the Manhattan Project did to people in New Mexico.

While film critics celebrate "Oppenheimer" and officials in Los Alamos prepare for the spotlight to be on their town, downwinders remain frustrated with the U.S. government — and now movie producers — for not recognizing their plight.

Advocates held vigils Saturday on the 78th anniversary of the Trinity Test in New Mexico and in New York City, where director Christopher Nolan and others participated in a panel discussion following a special



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screening of the film.

Nolan has called the Trinity Test an extraordinary moment in human history.

"I wanted to take the audience into that room and be there for when that button is pushed and really fully bring the audience to this moment in time," he said in a clip being used by Universal Studios to promote the film.

The movie is based on Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin's Pulitzer Prize-winning "American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer." Nolan has said Oppenheimer's story is both a dream and a nightmare.

Lilly Adams, a senior outreach coordinator with the Union of Concerned Scientists, participated in the New York City vigil and said it was meant to show support for New Mexicans who have been affected.

"The human cost of Oppenheimer's Trinity Test, and all nuclear weapons activities, is a crucial part of the conversation around U.S. nuclear legacy," she told The Associated Press in an email. "We have to reckon with this human cost to fully understand Oppenheimer's legacy and the harm caused by nuclear weapons."

In developing and testing nuclear weapons, Adams said the U.S. government effectively "poisoned its own people, many of whom are still waiting for recognition and justice."

Adams and others have said they hope that those involved in making "Oppenheimer" help raise awareness about the downwinders, who have not been added to the list of those covered by the federal government's compensation program for people exposed to radiation.

Government officials chose the Trinity Test Site because it was remote, flat and had predictable winds. Due to the secret nature of the project, residents in surrounding areas were not warned.

The Tularosa Basin was home to a rural population that lived off the land by raising livestock and tending to gardens and farms. They drew water from cisterns and holding ponds. They had no idea that the fine ash that settled on everything in the days following the explosion was from the world's first atomic blast.

The government initially tried to hide it, saying that an explosion at a munitions dump caused the rumble and bright light, which could be seen more than 160 miles (257 kilometers) away.

It wasn't until the U.S. dropped bombs on Japan weeks later that New Mexico residents realized what they had witnessed.

According to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, large amounts of radiation shot up into the atmosphere and fallout descended over an area about 250 miles (402 kilometers) long and 200 miles (322 kilometers) wide. Scientists tracked part of the fallout pattern as far as the Atlantic Ocean, but the greatest concentration settled about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the test site.

For Cordova and younger generations who are dealing with cancer, the lack of acknowledgement by the government and those involved with the film is inexcusable.

"We were left here to live with the consequences," Cordova said. "And they'll over-glorify the science and the scientists and make no mention of us. And you know what? Shame on them."

In Los Alamos, more than 200 miles (321 kilometers) north of the Tularosa Basin, reaction to the film has been much different. The legacy of Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project means Los Alamos is home to one of the nation's premier national laboratories and has the highest percentage of people with doctorate degrees in the U.S.

Oppenheimer Drive cuts through the heart of Los Alamos, Hoppenheimer IPA is on tap at a local brewery and the physicist is the focus of an exhibit at the science museum, where some of his handwritten notes and ID card are displayed.

The city is hosting an Oppenheimer Festival that starts Thursday and runs through the end of July.

About 200 extras used in the film were locals, many of them Los Alamos National Laboratory employees.

During breaks, conversations among the extras centered on science and world problems, said Kelly Stewart, who works with Los Alamos County's economic development division and was the film liaison when Nolan and his crew were on location at historic sites around town.

There's a pride that's woven into the town's DNA, Stewart said, and it revolves around the lab's work to address national security and global concerns.

The goal is to position Los Alamos as a place where people can begin to learn "the true stories" behind

## Climate and violence hobble Nigeria's push to rely on its own wheat after the hit from Russia's war

By TAIWO ADEBAYO Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Abubakar Salisu was terrified when he discovered arid sand in the middle of his farmland, rendering a broad strip unfit for crops. Now, extreme heat is killing his wheat before it is ready for cultivation.

Wheat normally requires heat, but in the last three years, farmers in Nigeria's far north, part of Africa's Sahel region that largely produces the country's homegrown food, have seen an "alarming" increase in heat — much more than required, said Salisu, a local leader of wheat farmers in Kaita, Katsina State. Plus, rain is irregular.

"The unpredictable rain pattern is affecting us because wheat is planted immediately after the rainy season, but sometimes we will plant it thinking the rain has stopped, only to have it start again, thereby spoiling the seeds," said Salisu, 48.

The vicious heat and rain cycle, worsened by climate change, has contributed to his wheat yield dropping in half.

He is not alone — others in northern areas ripped apart by violence suffer even more. Conflict and climate change are driving a food security crisis in Nigeria, exacerbated by supply disruptions tied to Russia's war in Ukraine. It means people are spending more for food in Africa's largest economy as it becomes more reliant on imported grain, which is priced in U.S. dollars, and its currency weakens.

Nigeria is trying to become self-sufficient: The government has launched programs to provide loans to farmers and boost domestic grain production. But extreme weather and violence from both gangs and farmers and cattle herders clashing over resources have hindered those efforts. It's left Nigeria unable to produce enough wheat to bridge a gap in supply of more than 5 million metric tons.

Russia's decision this week to back out of an accord allowing Ukraine to ship grain from the Black Sea could make things worse. Ukraine had announced a plan this year to send more wheat to the West African country at expected lower prices, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Now, that initiative in doubt.

The Nigerian program providing loans to growers "worked to a reasonable extent, but corruption played a part, as did the failure of farmers to repay the loans as climate change and insecurity undermined their production," said Idayat Hassan, senior Africa program fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Wheat is one of Nigeria's most consumed grains, and it imports largely from the U.S., South America and Europe, according to the Trade Data Monitor. Russia was a key source of affordable wheat, but its shipments have dwindled to almost nothing amid the war.

The loan program for growers failed to help increase local wheat yields, so the government has introduced new initiatives to boost how much land is harvested and distribute high-yielding seeds, pesticides and equipment to wheat farmers.

The flour milling industry, which struggles with Nigeria's weakening currency and high costs like diesel fuel, has also made a deal with farmers to source more wheat locally at competitive prices, potentially encouraging growers to increase production.

With the new efforts, the USDA projects Nigeria's wheat production to increase 42% in the 2023-2024 trading year over the year before. But the agency warned that "the challenges outweigh the opportunities."

Besides climate change creating irregular rainfall, extreme heat and dry land, "security challenges across the wheat-producing region restricts farmers' access to fields," the USDA said in this year's Nigeria grain report.

The same problems will also decrease production of rice and corn, the department said.

"Of course, insecurity is affecting our activities because sometimes we can't go to our farms even if we plant, and some of our colleagues have completely stopped farming, while some of us have reduced the number of our farmlands," said Sama'ila Zubairu, a wheat farmer in Katsina's Faskari area ravaged

the events depicted in the film, Stewart said.

The county's "Project Oppenheimer" effort began in early 2023 and has included forums, documentaries, art installations and exhibits to educate visitors about the science happening at the lab as well as the social implications of the Manhattan Project.

A special area will be set up during the festival where people can discuss the movie after seeing it.

She believes efforts to help people understand the community's history will continue.

"There's a huge interest here in our own community to keep revisiting that and discussing it," she said.

## Northwestern hazing scandal puts school in company with schools such as Penn State

By LARRY LAGE AP Sports Writer

Northwestern has been added to a long list of American universities to face a scandal in athletics and may eventually join the trend of making large payouts following allegations of sexual abuse.

A former Wildcats football player filed the first lawsuit against Pat Fitzgerald and members of the school's leadership on Tuesday, seeking damages stemming from a hazing scandal that cost the former football coach his job.

More lawsuits, filed by multiple law firms, are expected to follow from former football and baseball players as well as from student-athletes who played other sports for the private school.

The private, Big Ten institution now has another thing in common with other schools in the conference, including Penn State, Michigan State, Ohio State, Michigan and Minnesota, with a scandal tied to sexual abuse.

And, connection may be costly.

At least eight former Northwestern football players have retained attorneys following recent revelations that led to Fitzgerald's firing and sharp criticism of university leadership for its initial response to the allegations.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump and the Chicago-based Levin & Perconti law firm have scheduled a news conference Wednesday morning in Chicago with former Northwestern athletes. Crump has represented the families of George Floyd and others in high-profile civil rights cases.

Criminal charges are also possible.

Illinois, like nearly all states in recent decades, has criminalized hazing. It is typically a Class A misdemeanor, which can carry up to one year in prison. Under Illinois law, failure of a school official to report hazing is also a crime — a misdemeanor — and can carry a maximum penalty of between six months and a year in prison.

A "hazing prevention" page on Northwestern's website includes descriptions of Illinois hazing laws.

Cincinnati-based attorney Tim Burke, who has no ties to the Northwestern lawsuit, said the civil litigation can take many years to resolve because of complex legal issues, the numbers of potential plaintiffs and the voluminous evidence.

"More than a decade is not out of the range of possibilities," Burke said. "But Northwestern is not going to want this to go on that long."

In a letter to Northwestern's faculty and staff, Schill wrote that an outside firm will be hired to evaluate how the school detects threats to student-athletes' welfare and to examine the athletics culture in Evanston, Illinois, and its relationship to academics at the prestigious institution.

Northwestern fired Fitzgerald last week after a university investigation found allegations of hazing by 11 current or former players, including "forced participation, nudity and sexualized acts of a degrading nature," Schill wrote.

After the school initially suspended Fitzgerald, The Daily Northwestern published an article including allegations from a former player who described specific instances of hazing and abuse and suggested he may have been aware.

Fitzgerald, who led Northwestern for 17 seasons and was a star linebacker for the Wildcats, has main-



tained he had no knowledge of the hazing. Fitzgerald said after being fired that he was working with his agent, Bryan Harlan and his lawyer, Dan Webb, to “protect my rights in accordance with the law.” An emailed statement Tuesday from Fitzgerald’s defense team quoted Webb, as saying, “the complaint has no validity as to Coach Fitzgerald and we will aggressively defend against these allegations with facts and evidence.” Webb, a former U.S. attorney, has been one of the most sought-after private lawyers in the country for decades.

A former Northwestern football player, identified in the lawsuit as John Doe, alleged Tuesday in the Cook County Court in Chicago that Fitzgerald, Northwestern University President Michael Schill, the board of trustees and athletic director Derrick Gragg enabled and concealed sexual misconduct and racial discrimination.

The player, who was on the football team from 2018 to 2022, had his filing submitted by the Chicago-based Salvi Law Firm.

“It wasn’t just confined to one bad actor,” attorney Parker Stinar said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The lawsuit’s allegations include an accusation that Fitzgerald enabled a culture of racism, including forcing players of color to cut their hair and behave differently to be more in line with the “Wildcat Way.”

AP Legal Affairs Writer Michael Tarm, Associated Press writer Mike Householder and AP College Football Writer Ralph D. Russo contributed to this report.

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## Chinese livestreamers set their sights on TikTok sales to shoppers in the US and Europe

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Chinese livestreamers have set their sights on TikTok shoppers in the U.S. and Europe, hawking everything from bags and apparel to crystals with their eyes on a potentially lucrative market, despite uncertainties over the platform’s future in the U.S. and elsewhere.

In China, where livestreaming ecommerce is forecast to reach 4.9 trillion yuan (\$676 billion) by the year’s end, popular hosts like “Lipstick King” Austin Li rack up tens of millions of dollars in sales during a single livestream. Many brands, including L’Oreal, Nike and Louis Vuitton, have begun using livestreaming to reach more shoppers.

But the highly-competitive livestreaming market in China has led some hosts to look to Western markets to carve out niches for themselves.

Oreo Deng, a former English tutor, sells jewelry to U.S. customers by livestreaming on TikTok, delivering her sales pitches in English for about four to six hours a day.

“I wanted to try livestreaming on TikTok because it aligned with my experiences as an English tutor and my past jobs working in cross-border e-commerce,” Deng said.

Since 2019, western e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Facebook have experimented with livestreaming e-commerce after seeing the success of Chinese platforms like Alibaba’s Tmall and Taobao, and Douyin, TikTok’s Chinese counterpart in China.

TikTok started testing its live shopping feature last year. Registered merchants from the U.S., Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore, among other countries, can now sell via livestreams online.

But livestreaming e-commerce has yet to take off in the U.S. The livestreaming e-commerce market in the U.S. — the world’s biggest consumer market — is expected to grow to \$68 billion by 2026, according to research and advisory firm Coresight Research.

The relatively lukewarm reception led Facebook to shut down its live shopping feature last year. As for

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TikTok, the platform has the added risk of potentially facing U.S. restrictions due to tensions between Beijing and Washington.

TikTok, whose parent company is Chinese technology firm ByteDance, has been criticized for its Chinese ties and accused of being a national security risk due to the data it collects.

TikTok did not provide comment for this story.

Despite the scrutiny faced by TikTok, many Chinese hosts view the U.S. as a vast ocean of opportunity, an emerging market that has yet to be saturated with livestreaming hosts.

"There's more opportunity for growth to target America because the competition is so fierce in China," said Shaun Rein, founder and managing director of China Market Research Group in Shanghai. "Livestreaming in the U.S. is at a beginning starting point. There's more opportunity to grab market share."

Rein also said that Chinese merchants can often price items higher in the U.S., where customers are accustomed to paying higher prices compared to in China, where product margins are often razor-thin.

"The format is going to work, because it's been proven," said Jacob Cooke, CEO of e-commerce consultancy WPIC.

Smaller companies, including those in China that are attempting to sell on TikTok, might lack enough data on what customers want in markets like the U.S, he said. "Once they do get that figured out, they'll start to have very good success," Cooke said.

For some U.S. shoppers, the livestream format is a fascinating form of entertainment.

Freisa Weaver, a 36-year-old who lives in Florida, stumbled on a TikTok livestream selling crystals 10 months ago. It employed a popular tactic called a "lucky scoop" where buyers pay a set price to receive several random items scooped from a large container of crystals. TikTok earlier this year banned this practice from livestreams to comply with gambling laws, although some sellers still offer grab bags of goodies which appear to be scooped off-camera.

"I came across it scrolling through TikTok and at first I was entertained by the lucky scoops," Weaver said, describing livestreaming shopping as an addictive hobby. "Now I'm a regular buyer in some of the live feeds on TikTok."

"I personally enjoy the interactions with the host and the possibility of finding something special and unique just for me," she said

Her favorite channel is Meow Crystals, an account operated by Chinese streaming hosts that often does flash sales selling crystals for as little as \$2, and grab bags of crystals from \$10. TikTok has yet to roll out its in-built shopping feature on a wide scale, so many streamers, including those from Meow Crystals, often redirect viewers to place orders on an external website.

"The host is willing to go to the warehouse for you and get special items, or they remember what you like and offer it to you as soon as you are online," Weaver said.

Chinese livestreaming hosts try various tactics to stand out and build a loyal customer base. For some, it's personalized customer service, while others use quirky catchphrases and concoct flamboyant online personalities to keep their customers entertained.

"Every host is always experimenting and develops their own tactics," Deng, the livestream host said, declining to share the secrets of her own approach.

Boot camps to teach Chinese livestreamers how to increase their sales have sprung up, including a popular one hosted by Yan Guanghua, one of TikTok earliest livestreamers in China.

Like Deng, Yan is a former English tutor who turned to TikTok livestreaming after a government crackdown on the private education industry.

Yan started out hawking yoga clothes, electronics and apparel online. Finding she had a knack for selling to customers via livestreaming, she at times has racked up sales of 5,000 pounds (\$6,510) per stream selling to customers in Britain.

Now she charges about \$1,000 for two-day boot camps she holds two or three times a month, teaching people how to sell more on livestreams.

Yan says she has trained more than 600 people, mostly from China but also from the U.S. and Africa.

Like many other TikTok livestreaming hosts, she hopes the overseas livestreaming e-commerce market will take off like it has in China.

"It's hard to say what the future of this industry is. It's difficult to predict," Yan said. "But what we know is that TikTok is the most popular platform right now and there is still opportunity here."

## **Honduras wants to build West's only island prison colony and lock gangsters inside**

By MARLON GONZÁLEZ and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Honduras plans to build the only island prison colony in the Western Hemisphere and send its most-feared gangsters there, tearing a page from neighboring El Salvador's unforgiving approach to murder, robbery, rape and extortion.

Honduras's progressive president once promised to address gang violence through systemic reforms to governance and the criminal justice system. Now, President Xiomara Castro plans to build an isolated prison for 2,000 gang leaders on the Islas del Cisne archipelago 155 miles off the coast, part of a larger crackdown following the gang-related massacre of 46 women in one prison.

Island prisons once were common across Latin America, with facilities in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama and Peru. Deadly riots, brutal conditions and bold prison escapes captured filmmakers' and authors' imaginations before the last island prison closed in Mexico in 2019.

In Honduras, authorities are betting that a return to the past will help stem the wave of violence, but skeptics say such moves are little more than optics, and fail to address the root causes of endemic violence.

"A new prison is quite useless if you don't first regain control of the others you already have," said Tiziano Breda, a Latin America expert at Italy's Instituto Affari Internazionali. "Criminal gangs have shown throughout their history that they can adapt."

Last month, 46 women were killed in a fight between gang members in one prison. Many of those killed were sprayed with gunfire and hacked to death with machetes. Some inmates were locked in cells, where they were doused with flammable liquid and burned in the worst atrocity in a women's prison in recent memory.

Castro said she would "take drastic measures" in response and crack down on the Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, gangs that have terrorized the nation for years.

The only way to communicate to the Islas del Cisne is by satellite, José Jorge Fortín, the head the Honduras' armed forces, said in an interview with The Associated Press. Officials hope that will prevent gang leaders from running their operations from inside the prisons. Escape would be difficult as the island takes about a day to reach by boat from the mainland.

"It's the farthest away they can possibly be, so these gang leaders feel the pressure once they're on the island," Fortín said. "The idea is that they lose contact with everything, contact with all of society ... and they can really pay for their crimes."

Fortín would not specify the cost of the project or when officials expect it to be done, but said Castro ordered the facility built as quickly as possible.

Since the bloodshed, Castro's social media has been speckled with images of weapons seizures and men with gang tattoos sitting spread-legged, half-naked and hunched together on the ground surrounded by heavily armed police.

The images mirror those from neighboring El Salvador, where President Nayib Bukele has imprisoned one in every 100 people in the country, throwing thousands into a "mega-prison". Bukele has said inmates will never again see the light of day even as human rights group Cristosal estimates that only 30% of prisoners have clear ties with gangs, fueling allegations of human rights abuses and democratic decay.

Sharp dips in violence in El Salvador have spurred on a sort of populist pro-Bukele fervor across Latin America.

"If another country has done something well, why not copy it?" Fortín said. "We're not going to let this ... atmosphere of terror go on."

But Breda, the expert, said the move is inching the country away from policies such as stamping out corruption, demilitarizing and community policing that could make a longterm difference in addressing the roots causes of gang violence.

Honduras's security policy "has become even more reactive and short-sighted, mimicking what's going on in El Salvador to contain damage to their public image," Breda said.

The proposed measures are being well-received by many Hondurans, like 30-year-old biologist Said Santos, who said "ending the crime problem once and for all here in Honduras would be ideal for this country." But, he added, the government should proceed with caution.

Meanwhile, regional biologists worry the project will come at the expense of the island's highly biodiverse ecosystems at a time when the Caribbean is already being ravaged by the effects of climate change.

Largely uninhabited, the prison site has been designated as an environmentally protected territory for more than three decades. Last week, the Honduran Biologists Association released a statement calling the facility a "threat" to nature on the island, that's lush landscapes and glowing blue waters teem with life.

"A prison is incompatible with the ecosystems, species, scenic beauty and climate conditions of the archipelago," the organization wrote.

Lucky Medina, Honduras' secretary of natural resources and the environment, told the AP that the maximum security penitentiary will be built "in harmony with nature." He added that officials will follow environmental protections but the facility will definitely be built.

"It is totally viable," he said.

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Janetsky reported from Mexico City. AP reporter Michael Biesecker in Washington contributed to this report.

## Trump's target letter suggests the sprawling US probe into the 2020 election is zeroing in on him

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A target letter sent to Donald Trump suggests that a sprawling Justice Department investigation into efforts to overturn the 2020 election is zeroing in on him after more than a year of interviews with top aides to the former president and state officials from across the country.

Federal prosecutors have cast a wide net, asking witnesses in recent months about a chaotic White House meeting that included discussion of seizing voting machines and about lawyers' involvement in plans to block the transfer of power, according to people familiar with the probe. They've discussed with witnesses schemes by Trump associates to enlist slates of Republican fake electors in battleground states won by Democrat Joe Biden and interviewed state election officials who faced a pressure campaign over the election results in the days before the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

It is unclear how much longer special counsel Jack Smith's investigation will last, but its gravity was evident Tuesday when Trump disclosed that he had received a letter from the Justice Department advising him that he was a target of the probe. Such letters often precede criminal charges; Trump received one ahead of his indictment last month on charges that he illegally hoarded classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago property in Florida.

Though it's not known what charges Trump or anyone else might face in the election probe, the scope of the inquiry stands in stark contrast to Smith's much narrower classified documents investigation. The vast range of witnesses is a reminder of the tumultuous two months between Trump's election loss and the insurrection at the Capitol, when some lawyers and advisers aided his futile efforts to remain president while many others implored him to move on or were relentlessly badgered to help alter results.

A spokesperson for Smith declined to comment about the target letter or the interviews that prosecutors have conducted.

Even before Smith inherited the election interference probe last November, Justice Department investigators had already interviewed multiple Trump administration officials, including the chief of staff to former



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Vice President Mike Pence and former top lawyers at the White House, scrutinized post-election fundraising and seized as potential evidence the cellphones of numerous lawyers and officials.

Since then, Smith's team has questioned senior administration officials including Pence himself before the grand jury in Washington and has conducted voluntary interviews with a wide array of witnesses inside and outside the federal government. Those include election officials in states where Trump associates waged fruitless efforts to get results overturned in the Republican incumbent's favor.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who was personally lobbied by Trump to "find 11,780 votes" to overtake Biden, has been interviewed by Smith's team, as has Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver, according to their representatives.

Wisconsin's top elections administrator and election leaders in Milwaukee and Madison have spoken with federal investigators. And former Arizona Republican Gov. Doug Ducey, who silenced a call from the Trump White House as he was publicly certifying Biden's narrow victory in the state, has been contacted by Smith's team, a spokesperson said Tuesday.

A consistent area of interest for investigators has been the role played by Trump lawyers in helping him cling to power, according to people familiar with the investigation who, like others interviewed for the story, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing criminal probe.

John Eastman, a conservative law professor, advanced a dubious legal theory that said Pence could halt the certification of state electoral votes to block Biden's win. Another lawyer, Sidney Powell, promoted baseless claims of voter fraud and pushed an idea — vigorously opposed by Trump's lawyers at the White House — that Trump had the authority under an earlier executive order to seize state voting machines.

Charles Burnham, a lawyer for Eastman, said Tuesday that his client had not received a target letter. "We don't expect one since raising concerns about illegality in the conduct of an election is not now and has never been sanctionable," he said. A lawyer for Powell declined to comment.

Multiple witnesses have been asked about a heated Dec. 18, 2020, meeting at the White House in which outside advisers, including Powell, raised the voting machines idea, people familiar with the matter said. The meeting, which devolved into a shouting match, featured prominently in a separate investigation by the House Jan. 6 committee, with former White House official Cassidy Hutchinson memorably describing it as "unhinged."

Rudy Giuliani, a Trump lawyer who participated in the meeting and who spearheaded legal challenges to the election results, was asked about that meeting during a voluntary interview with Smith's team and also detailed to prosecutors Powell's involvement in failed efforts to overturn the election, according to a person familiar with his account. Giuliani has not received a target letter.

Giuliani's interview was part of what's known as a proffer agreement, the person said, in which a person agrees to speak voluntarily with investigators while prosecutors agree not to use those statements in any criminal case they might later bring. Prosecutors have worked to negotiate similar arrangements with other witnesses.

As prosecutors dig into efforts by Trump allies to thwart Biden's victory, they've focused on the creation of slates of fake electors from key states captured by Biden who were enlisted by Trump and his allies to sign false certificates stating that Trump had actually won.

Smith's team has also focused on Trump's efforts to punish officials from his administration who refused to go along with his false election fraud claims. Chris Krebs, who was fired by Trump as director of the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity agency after vouching for the integrity of the 2020 vote, was interviewed by prosecutors a couple of months ago about the perceived retaliation for his stance, according to a person familiar with the questioning.

Another person familiar with Smith's investigation also said prosecutors in recent months have expressed interest in the ordeal of Ruby Freeman, a Georgia election worker who along with her daughter recounted to the House Jan. 6 committee how their lives became upended when Trump and allies latched onto surveillance footage to level since-debunked allegations of voter fraud.

Associated Press writers Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta, Scott Bauer in Madison, Wis., Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix and Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

## California State University campuses mishandled sexual harassment allegations, audit finds

By SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press/Report for America

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A flawed policy at California State University, the largest higher education system in the country, contributed to the closure of nearly a dozen sexual harassment cases without thorough explanation, according to a state audit reviewing 40 cases over the span of seven years.

The audit, released Tuesday, examined allegations of harassment between 2016 and 2022 against employees at the university system's chancellor's office and three of 23 campuses: California State University, Fresno, San José State University and Sonoma State University. It found that the colleges failed to discipline people found responsible for misconduct, including one case where officials took no action in the five years after a faculty member was found guilty of sexual harassment, sexual violence and stalking.

"The problems and inconsistencies we found during this audit warrant systemwide changes at CSU," California State Auditor Grant Parks said in a statement. "In particular, the Chancellor's Office must take a more active approach to overseeing campuses' efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment."

Parks' office recommended the university system require colleges to find out if someone has been accused of harassment multiple times, make them clearly explain why officials didn't investigate a case, and give guidance for how to contact accusers.

Jolene Koester, California State University's interim chancellor, said in a statement that officials would comply with the recommendations. Representatives from California State University, Fresno, San Jose State University and Sonoma State University did not immediately respond to an email request for comment on the audit's findings.

Sexual harassment is among the misconduct banned by state and federal laws, but California State University's policy aimed to address it falls short, the audit found. The auditor's office says it should better guide colleges on what steps to take after an incident is reported.

"Deciding whether to conduct a formal investigation is one of the most critical steps in a campus' process for responding to an allegation," the audit says. "Nonetheless, CSU's sexual harassment policy lacks detailed guidelines about how to make and document these determinations."

There were more than 1,200 reports of sexual harassment by employees overall at California State University campuses between 2018 and 2022, the report shows. Of those, 254 were investigated.

The largest share of reports — nearly 18% — were at California State University, Fullerton, which is about 22 miles (35 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles. There were also nearly 160 employees across all 23 campuses between 2018 and 2022 who were accused of sexual harassment multiple times, according to the report.

One student alleged a faculty member made inappropriate comments to her and compared her to women he had dated. The campus declined to investigate, the audit found. It didn't specify which campus.

Seven of 21 investigations the auditor's office reviewed "contained deficiencies that caused us to question the campuses' determinations that sexual harassment had not occurred." For example, a faculty member who was found responsible of making inappropriate comments to a contract worker and hugging her, and kissing another worker without their consent was not found to have violated the sexual harassment policy, the audit says.

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This story corrects an earlier version that inaccurately stated the span of years for the 40 cases the audit reviewed. It was over seven years.

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Sophie Austin is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms

to report on undercovered issues. Follow Austin on Twitter: @sophieadanna.

## After nearly 30 years, there's movement in the case of Tupac Shakur's killing. Here's what we know

By JONATHAN LANDRUM JR. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An investigation into Tupac Shakur's unsolved killing has been revived. It took nearly three decades, but a new twist came when authorities in Nevada served a search warrant this week in connection with the rap star's shooting death, they confirmed Tuesday.

Here's what to know about one of the most infamous fatal shootings in hip-hop history:

### WHAT'S NEW IN THE INVESTIGATION?

Las Vegas police served a search warrant in connection to the killing of Shakur, who was gunned down Sept. 7, 1996.

The warrant was executed Monday in the nearby city of Henderson. It's unclear what they were looking for or where they searched.

Citing the ongoing investigation, a police spokesperson said he couldn't provide further details on the latest development in the case, including whether a suspect has been identified.

### WHAT HAPPENED THE NIGHT SHAKUR DIED?

The 25-year-old rapper was traveling in a black BMW driven by Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight in a convoy of about 10 cars, apparently headed to a nightclub, after watching Mike Tyson knock out Bruce Seldon in a championship fight at the MGM Grand. Police said no one else was in the car with them.

A white Cadillac with four men inside pulled alongside the BMW while it was stopped at a red light at an intersection near the Las Vegas Strip, and one person opened fire, riddling the passenger side of Knight's car with bullets, police said. Sitting in the passenger seat, Shakur was shot four times, at least twice in the chest. Knight was grazed by a bullet fragment or shrapnel from the car.

Shakur was rushed to a hospital, where he died six days later.

### WHAT IS THE RAPPER'S LEGACY?

Shakur is one of the most prolific figures in hip-hop, also known by his stage names 2Pac and Makaveli. His professional music career only lasted five years, but he sold more than 75 million records worldwide, including the diamond-certified album "All Eyez on Me," which was packed with hits including "California Love (Remix)," "I Ain't Mad at Cha" and "How Do U Want It."

Shakur has had five No. 1 albums including "Me Against the World" in 1995 and "All Eyez on Me" in 1996, along with three posthumous releases: 1996's "The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory," 2001's "Until the End of Time" and 2004's "Loyal to the Game."

The six-time Grammy-nominated artist was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame by Snoop Dogg in 2017.

As a rising actor, Shakur starred in several popular films such as John Singleton's "Poetic Justice" with Janet Jackson and Ernest Dickerson's "Juice." He also played major roles in "Gang Related" and "Above the Rim."

In April, a five-part FX docuseries called "Dear Mama: The Saga of Afeni and Tupac Shakur" delved into the past of the rapper's mother, Afeni Shakur, as a female leader in the Black Panther Party, while exploring Tupac's journey as a political visionary and becoming one of the greatest rap artists of all time.

Last month, Shakur received a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

"He defied the distinction between art and activism," said radio personality Big Boy, who emceed the ceremony.

Shakur has been remembered with museum exhibits, including "Tupac Shakur. Wake Me When I'm Free" in 2021 and "All Eyez on Me" at the Grammy Museum in 2015. He'll soon have a stretch of an Oakland street renamed after him.

### WHAT ABOUT HIS BIGGEST RIVALRY?

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Shakur's death came amid his feud with rap rival the Notorious B.I.G., who was fatally shot six months later. At the time, both rappers were in the middle of the infamous East Coast-West Coast rivalry, which primarily defined the hip-hop scene during the mid-1990s.

The feud was ignited after Shakur was seriously wounded in another shooting during a robbery in the lobby of a midtown Manhattan hotel in 1994. He was shot several times and lost \$40,000.

Shakur openly accused B.I.G. and Sean "Diddy" Combs of having prior knowledge of the shooting, which both vehemently denied. The shooting sparked enough of a feud that created a serious divide within the hip-hop community and fans.

The New York-born Shakur represented the West Coast after he signed with the Los Angeles-based Death Row Records. He often traded verbal jabs with New York-natives B.I.G. and Combs, who hailed from the East Coast while representing New York City-based Bad Boy Records.

Diss tracks were seemingly delivered to drive home their ferocious points across. Shakur released the aggressive single "Hit 'Em Up," which took aim at B.I.G., who on the other hand returned with "Who Shot Ya?," a record that was received as a taunt. However, B.I.G. claimed the song was not directed toward Shakur.

## MORE ON SHAKUR'S LIFE AND CAREER

Shakur was born June 16, 1971, in New York City. He later moved to Baltimore and attended the Baltimore School for the Arts, where he began writing raps. He eventually made his way to Marin City, California, near San Francisco, and continued to write and record.

As a member of the Grammy-nominated group Digital Underground, Shakur appeared on the 1991 track "Same Song" from "This Is an EP Release" and on the album "Sons of the P."

That same year, Shakur achieved individual recognition with the album "2Pacalypse Now," which spawned the successful singles "Trapped" and "Brenda's Got a Baby."

The album, with references to police officers being killed, drew notoriety when a lawyer claimed a man accused of killing a Texas trooper had been riled up by the record. Then-Vice President Dan Quayle targeted "2Pacalypse Now" in his 1992 battle with Hollywood over traditional values.

In 1993, Shakur followed up with the sophomore album, which produced songs "I Get Around," "Keep Ya Head Up" and "Papa'z Song," and he was nominated for an American Music Award as best new rap hip-hop artist.

The next year he appeared with hip-hop group Thug Life on the "Above The Rim" soundtrack and on the group's album "Volume 1." In a photo on the album liner, he framed his face between his two extended middle fingers.

Over the years, Shakur had some brushes with the law. He served several months in a New York prison for sex abuse.

While in prison, Shakur indicated he was rethinking his lifestyle. He had support from Black leaders including the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Al Sharpton, who counseled him while he was locked up.

"Thug Life to me is dead. If it's real, let somebody else represent it, because I'm tired of it," Shakur told Vibe magazine. "I represented it too much. I was Thug Life."

Shakur was up-front about his troubled life in the 1995 release "Me Against The World," a multimillion-selling album that contained the ominously titled tracks "If I Die 2Nite" and "Death Around The Corner."

"It ain't easy being me. ... Will I see the penitentiary, or will I stay free?" Shakur rapped on the album, which produced the Grammy-nominated "Dear Mama" and standout singles "So Many Tears" and "Temptations."

The Las Vegas shooting occurred as Shakur's fourth solo album, "All Eyez on Me," remained on the charts, with some 5 million copies sold.

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Associated Press writer Travis Loller reported from Nashville.



## Tupac Shakur's long-unsolved killing again under spotlight as Las Vegas police conduct search

By RIO YAMAT, JONATHAN LANDRUM JR. and MARIA SHERMAN Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Las Vegas police confirmed Tuesday that they served a search warrant this week in connection with the long-unsolved killing of Tupac Shakur, propelling the case back into the spotlight nearly 30 years after his death.

Shakur, one of the most prolific figures in hip-hop, was gunned down the night of Sept. 7, 1996, in a drive-by shooting in Las Vegas. He was 25.

No arrests have ever been made. Yet attention on the case, which has seen its share of conspiracy theories, has endured for decades.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said in a statement that the search was conducted Monday in the nearby city of Henderson, but the agency did not say whether a suspect has been identified. It's also unclear what they were looking for and where they were looking.

Citing the ongoing investigation, department spokesperson Aden OcampoGomez said in a brief phone call that he couldn't provide more details on the latest development in the case.

Nevada does not have a time limit for prosecuting homicide cases.

Shakur was shot while sitting inside a black BMW with Marion "Suge" Knight, head of Death Row Records. Police have said the two were waiting at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip when a white Cadillac pulled up next to them and gunfire erupted. Shot multiple times, Shakur was rushed to a hospital, where he died six days later.

Las Vegas police have said in the past that the investigation quickly stalled in part because witnesses refused to cooperate.

Shakur's death came amid his feud with rap rival the Notorious B.I.G., who was fatally shot six months later. At the time, both rappers were in the middle of the infamous East Coast-West Coast rivalry, which primarily defined the hip-hop scene during the mid-1990s. The feud was ignited after Shakur was seriously wounded in another shooting during a robbery in the lobby of a midtown Manhattan hotel.

Shakur openly accused B.I.G. and Sean "Diddy" Combs of having prior knowledge of the shooting, which both vehemently denied. It sparked enough of a feud that created a serious divide within the hip-hop community and fans.

The New York-born Shakur represented the West Coast after he signed with Los Angeles-based Death Row Records. He often traded verbal jabs in the media and through songs. B.I.G. and Combs hailed from the East Coast while representing New York City-based Bad Boy Records.

Largely considered one of the most influential and versatile rappers of all time, the six-time Grammy Award -nominated Shakur has had five No. 1 albums: 1995's "Me Against the World," 1996's "All Eyez on Me," and three posthumous releases: 1996's "The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory," which was recorded under the name Makaveli, as well as 2001's "Until the End of Time" and 2004's "Loyal to the Game."

His professional music career only lasted five years, but Shakur secured 21 Billboard Hot 100s, including top 10 hits "Dear Mama" and "Old School" in 1995, and his best-known track, 1996's "How Do U Want It/California Love" featuring K-Ci and JoJo. The latter spent two weeks at the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 from his final studio album and Death Row Records debut, "All Eyez on Me."

According to entertainment data company Luminate, Shakur has sold 33 million albums, 41 million when including track sale and streaming equivalents. The rapper's on-demand video and audio streams total 10.1 billion.

In 2017, Shakur was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame by Snoop Dogg. In June of this year, the rapper received a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He's also had some museum exhibits that paid homage to his life, including "Tupac Shakur. Wake Me When I'm Free," which opened in 2021.

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Landrum and Sherman reported from Los Angeles.

## Trump downplays his legal challenges on the campaign trail in Iowa after revealing new target letter

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — Former President Donald Trump joked about his legal challenges while campaigning in eastern Iowa on Tuesday night, just hours after announcing he'd received a target letter in the Justice Department's investigation into efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

Headlining a Republican county meeting, Trump attacked investigators while trying to make light of what could be his third criminal indictment since March.

"I didn't know practically what a subpoena was and grand juries. Now I'm becoming an expert," he told the audience at an Elks Lodge in Cedar Rapids.

Trump also taped an interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity in front of a live audience, where he vented his frustrations. "It bothers me," he said as he continued to cast the cases as politically motivated. "It's a disgrace what's happening to our country."

The trip to the leadoff GOP voting state was yet another indication that, when it comes to Trump, none of the rules of politics ever apply. Trump did not cancel the trip to huddle with advisers, and he was not disinvited by organizers. Instead, he carried on as he has for months, incorporating his latest legal woes into his usual stump speech mixture of grievance, lies about the 2020 election, criticism of President Joe Biden and his agenda for a second term. For Trump, indictment news is now routine.

Iowa, with its caucuses just six months away, is a critical state for Trump, his party's decisive early front-runner, and his rivals.

He set off for his latest trip just hours after announcing on his Truth Social platform that he had received a letter Sunday informing him that is the target of special counsel Jack Smith's investigation into the aftermath of the 2020 election and the events leading up to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol. Such letters often precede indictments and are used to inform individuals under investigation that prosecutors have gathered evidence linking them to a crime.

Trump has already been indicted twice — once in New York and once in Florida — and also faces potential charges in a separate election interference investigation nearing its conclusion in Georgia, a stunning and unprecedented legal onslaught as he runs for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

But the indictments have yet to damage Trump's standing. Instead, early polling shows Trump ahead of his closest rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, by 20 to 30 points, or more.

The monthly meetings of the Linn County GOP, typically lightly attended affairs, have become somewhat more popular in recent months as representatives from various Republican presidential candidates' campaigns have paid visits to build goodwill with party regulars.

But Tuesday's gathering was far from ordinary. More than 150 people — many wearing Trump's signature "Make America Great Again" red hats — squeezed into the hall of the Elks Lodge on the city's southwest side. Press covering the stop were cordoned behind the bar typically used for weddings and anniversaries.

At least as many Trump supporters remained outside the event, unable to get in, and were left on the sidewalk to greet the former president as he arrived and departed.

News of the target letter, said Linn County, Iowa, GOP chair Bernie Hayes, only emboldens the former president's supporters.

"Does something like that engender sympathy? I think certainly it does," Hayes said, as the small event room filled beyond the number of chairs set. "The man's being persecuted, so they are just thinking of another way to persecute him."

Some Iowa Republicans have said in interviews that the mounting legal battles Trump faces could make it difficult for him to govern if elected and that they have begun looking to alternatives. But Hayes said the developments have only strengthened the resolve of Trump supporters he talks to.

"If anything, people see President Trump is actually hardened by the trials he's gone through and knows what he's up against," Hayes said.

Teresa Horton-Bumgarner from small-town Solon, east of Cedar Rapids, echoed that she and Republicans

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in her circle believe strongly the Biden administration is "using the judicial system as a political weapon."

"Nothing that (Trump) did on Jan. 6, that I've ever seen that incited violence. He said to peacefully protest, and lawfully," said Horton-Bumgarner, 56, who described the indictments against Trump as so "egregious" that Republicans "tend to rally behind him."

Before his speech, Trump was interviewed on local radio, and railed against the investigations while dismissing potential negative fallout.

"The people of our great country, they fully understand what's going (on). It's election interference. It's a weaponization of justice," he said.

Speaking of his supporters, he said: "They are never leaving us because they want to make America great again. They're with us. They have a passion like nobody's ever had."

The Jan. 6 probe has centered on a broad range of efforts by Trump and allies to keep him in office, including plans for slates of fake electors in multiple battleground states won by Biden to submit false electoral certificates to Congress.

Legal experts have said potential charges could include conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstruction of an official proceeding, in this case Congress' certification of Biden's electoral victory.

In Washington, Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, said Trump's supporters would not be turned off by the developments.

"We'll see what they come up with .... but I tell you, the more they target Donald Trump? I mean, boy, the base, they just eat it up," she said. "They see two systems of justice, one for Donald Trump and one for everybody else."

Trump called a top GOP ally in the House, Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, to rally Republicans against the investigation and discuss their strategy for going on offense, according to a person familiar with the conversation and granted anonymity to discuss it. Trump also spoke with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the person said. McCarthy once criticized Trump over Jan. 6 but on Tuesday accused Democrats of trying to "weaponize government to go after their number one opponent."

Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the Senate minority whip, said that, with one indictment after the next, voters eventually "tune it out. It doesn't have the weight or the meaning that it does when you've got this many things coming at you."

"Now, on the other hand," he added, "it also creates, I think, kind of a lot of noise and distraction that always seem to surround the former president. At what point does that have some effect on people's opinions? I don't know."

Colvin reported from New York. Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report from Washington.

## Trump is notified he's a target of the US criminal probe into efforts to overturn the 2020 election

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump said Tuesday he has received a letter informing him that he is a target of the Justice Department's investigation into efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, an indication he could soon be charged by U.S. prosecutors.

New federal charges, on top of existing state and federal counts in New York and Florida and a separate election-interference investigation nearing conclusion in Georgia, would add to the list of legal problems for Trump as he pursues the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

Trump disclosed the existence of a target letter in a post on his Truth Social platform, saying he received it Sunday night and he anticipates being indicted. Such a letter often precedes an indictment and is used to advise individuals under investigation that prosecutors have gathered evidence linking them to a crime. Trump himself received one soon before being charged last month in a separate investigation into the illegal retention of classified documents.

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A spokesman for special counsel Jack Smith, whose office is leading the investigation, declined to comment.

Legal experts have said potential charges could include conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstruction of an official proceeding, in this case Congress' certification of President Joe Biden's electoral victory.

Smith's team has cast a broad net in its investigation into attempts by Trump and his allies to block the transfer of power to Biden in the days leading up to the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, when Trump loyalists stormed the building in a bid to disrupt the certification of state electoral votes in Congress. More than 1,000 people accused of participating in the riot have been charged.

Smith's probe has centered on a broad range of efforts by Trump and allies to keep him in office, including the role played by lawyers in pressing for the overturning of results as well as plans for slates of fake electors in multiple battleground states won by Biden to submit false electoral certificates to Congress.

Prosecutors have questioned multiple Trump administration officials before a grand jury in Washington, including former Vice President Mike Pence, who was repeatedly pressured by Trump to ignore his constitutional duty and block the counting in Congress of electoral votes on Jan. 6.

They've also interviewed other Trump advisers, including former Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, as well as local election officials in states including Michigan and New Mexico who were targets of a pressure campaign from the then-president to overturn election results in their states. A lawyer for Giuliani, who participated in a voluntary interview, said Tuesday that he did not receive a target letter.

In a related case, Michigan's attorney general filed felony charges Tuesday against 16 Republicans who acted as fake electors for Trump in 2020. They were accused of submitting false certificates confirming they were legitimate electors despite Joe Biden's victory in the state.

Trump has consistently denied wrongdoing and did so again in his Tuesday post, writing, "Under the United States Constitution, I have the right to protest an Election that I am fully convinced was Rigged and Stolen, just as the Democrats have done against me in 2016, and many others have done over the ages."

Trump remains the Republican party's dominant frontrunner in the 2024 presidential race, despite indictments in New York and in Florida, which appear to have had little impact on his standing in the crowded GOP field. The indictments also have helped his campaign raise millions of dollars from supporters, though he raised less after the second than the first, raising questions about whether subsequent charges will have the same impact.

A fundraising committee backing Trump's candidacy began soliciting contributions just hours after he revealed the new letter, casting the investigation as "just another vicious act of Election Interference on behalf of the Deep State to try and stop the Silent Majority from having a voice in your own country."

Meanwhile, Trump continued to campaign as usual. He traveled Tuesday to Iowa, where he criticized investigators and tried to make light of his mounting legal woes as he spoke at a local GOP meeting and taped a town hall with Fox News host Sean Hannity.

The Trump indictments have proven politically challenging for some of Trump's rivals, who must be mindful of his deep support among many of the party's primary voters as well as their distrust of federal law enforcement.

Asked about the letter during a press conference in South Carolina, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Trump's most serious challenger, said he hadn't seen it, but delivered his most forceful critique to date of Trump's inaction on Jan. 6.

"I think it was shown how he was in the White House and didn't do anything while things were going on. He should have come out more forcefully," DeSantis said. However, he added, "But to try to criminalize that, that's a different issue entirely."

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who had previously criticized Trump for his actions that day, accused Democrats of trying to "weaponize government to go after their number one opponent."

Trump, since leaving office, has increasingly downplayed the events of Jan. 6, describing the rally he held that day as a "lovefest" and "a beautiful thing." He has also embraced defendants jailed for their alleged



roles in the insurrection, including promising to pardon a "large portion" and to issue an official apology to them if he is reelected.

In June, he spoke at a fundraiser for the defendants and earlier this year collaborated on a song called "Justice for All," a version of the Star-Spangled Banner sung by a choir of Jan. 6 defendants and recorded over a prison phone line that is overlaid with Trump reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Some Trump campaign officials and allies argue the country has largely moved on from Jan. 6 and see the latest investigation as similar to others, believing it will have little impact.

One purpose of a target letter is to advise a potential defendant that he or she has a right to appear before the grand jury. Trump said in his post that he has been given "a very short 4 days to report to the Grand Jury, which almost always means an Arrest and indictment." Aides did not immediately respond to questions seeking further information.

Prosecutors in Georgia are conducting a separate investigation into efforts by Trump to reverse his election loss in that state, with the top prosecutor in Fulton County signaling that she expects to announce charging decisions next month.

In his post on Tuesday, Trump wrote that "they have now effectively indicted me three times ... with a probably fourth coming from Atlanta." He added in capital letters, "This witch hunt is all about election interference and a complete and total political weaponization of law enforcement."

Trump was indicted last month on 37 federal felony counts in relation to accusations of illegally retaining hundreds of classified documents at his Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago. He has pleaded not guilty. A pretrial conference in that case was held Tuesday in Fort Pierce, Florida, where a judge said she expected to soon decide on a trial date.

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Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in New York, Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston contributed to this report. More on Donald Trump-related investigations: <https://apnews.com/hub/donald-trump>

## Michigan charges 16 fake electors for Donald Trump with election law and forgery felonies

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan's attorney general filed felony charges Tuesday against 16 Republicans who acted as fake electors for then-President Donald Trump in 2020, accusing them of submitting false certificates that confirmed they were legitimate electors despite Joe Biden's victory in the state.

Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, announced Tuesday that all 16 people would face eight criminal charges, including forgery and conspiracy to commit election forgery. The top charges carry a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

The group includes the head of the Republican National Committee's chapter in Michigan, Kathy Berden, as well as the former co-chair of the Michigan Republican Party, Meshawn Maddock, and Shelby Township Clerk Stan Grot.

In seven battleground states, including Michigan, supporters of Trump signed certificates that falsely stated he won their states, not Biden. The fake certificates were ignored, but the attempt has been subject to investigations, including by the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

"The false electors' actions undermined the public's faith in the integrity of our elections and, we believe, also plainly violated the laws by which we administer our elections in Michigan," Nessel said in a statement.

The 16 individuals are set to appear for arraignment in Ingham County at a date provided to each by the court, according to Nessel's office.

Phone and email messages seeking comment Tuesday from several of the people charged were not immediately returned.

One of those charged, John Haggard, 82, of Charlevoix, told The Detroit News on Tuesday that he he didn't believe he did anything wrong.

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"Did I do anything illegal? No," Haggard said.

GOP state Sen. Ed McBroom, who chaired a GOP-led Senate panel to investigate Michigan's 2020 presidential election that found no wrongdoing, said he previously spoke with one of the fake electors. It was clear, McBroom said, that the effort was organized by "people who put themselves in a position of authority and posing themselves as the ones who knew what they were doing."

"They were wrong," McBroom told The Associated Press. "And other people followed them when they shouldn't have."

Berden and Mayra Rodriguez, a Michigan lawyer who was also charged Tuesday, were both questioned by congressional investigators as part of the U.S. House panel's investigation into the Jan. 6 insurrection.

In January of last year, Nessel asked federal prosecutors to open a criminal investigation into the 16 Republicans.

"Obviously this is part of a much bigger conspiracy," she said at the time.

Electors are people appointed to represent voters in presidential elections. The winner of the popular vote in each state determines which party's electors are sent to the Electoral College, which meets in December after the election to certify the outcome.

False Electoral College certificates were also submitted declaring Trump the winner of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, New Mexico, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Investigations are underway in some other states that submitted fake electors, but not all.

A Georgia prosecutor investigating possible illegal meddling in the 2020 election has agreed to immunity deals with at least eight fake electors. And Arizona's Democratic attorney general is in the very early stages of a probe. Nevada's attorney general, also a Democrat, has said he won't bring charges, while Wisconsin has no active investigation and the attorney general has deferred to the U.S. Justice Department.

There is no apparent investigation in Pennsylvania and former Attorney General Josh Shapiro, who is now governor, said he didn't believe there was evidence the actions of the fake electors met the legal standards for forgery.

A group of other Trump allies in Michigan, including former GOP attorney general candidate Matthew DePerno, are facing potential criminal charges related to attempts to gain access to voting machines after the 2020 election.

According to documents released last year by Nessel's office, five vote tabulators were taken from Roscommon and Missaukee counties in northern Michigan, and Barry County in western Michigan. The tabulators were subsequently broken into and "tests" were performed on the equipment.

A grand jury was convened in March at the request of a special prosecutor to consider indictments, according to court records. The special prosecutor, D.J. Hilson, wrote in May in a court document that "a charging decision is ready to be made."

## **A strong 6.5-magnitude earthquake in the Pacific Ocean shakes Central America**

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — A powerful 6.5 magnitude earthquake in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of El Salvador shook much of Central America from Nicaragua to Guatemala on Tuesday, sending residents in some cities streaming into the streets.

The U.S. Geological Survey reported the epicenter was 27 miles (43 kilometers) south of Intipuca, El Salvador at a depth of 43 miles (70 kilometers). That point is outside the Gulf of Fonseca where Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua all share coastline.

In El Salvador's capital, residents ran into the streets as the ground shook, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. When a radio station open its phone lines to residents around the country, there was also no immediate report of victims.

In the country's Legislative Assembly, lawmakers fled their desks to get out of the building, before returning a short time later to resume the session.

The country's Environment Ministry advised that there was no threat of a tsunami.

In Nicaragua, the quake was felt strongly in the capital and all along the Pacific coast. Nicaragua Vice President and first lady Rosario Murillo said there were no reported victims immediately in that country.

## **Adrift for 3 months, Australian and his dog lived on raw fish until Mexican fishermen rescued him**

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MANZANILLO, Mexico (AP) — An Australian sailor who was rescued by a Mexican tuna boat after being adrift at sea with his dog for three months said Tuesday that he is grateful to be alive after setting foot on dry land for the first time since their ordeal began.

Timothy Lyndsay Shaddock, 54, disembarked in the Mexican city of Manzanillo after being examined on board the boat that rescued him, the Maria Delia.

"I'm feeling alright. I'm feeling a lot better than I was, I tell ya," Shaddock, smiling, bearded and thin, told reporters on the dock in the port city about 210 miles (337 kilometers) west of Mexico City.

"To the captain and fishing company that saved my life, I'm just so grateful. I'm alive and I didn't really think I'd make it," Shaddock said, adding that he and his "amazing" dog Bella are both doing well.

Shaddock described himself as a quiet person who loves being alone on the ocean. Asked why he set out in April from Mexico's Baja Peninsula to cross the Pacific Ocean to French Polynesia, he was initially at a loss.

"I'm not sure I have the answer to that, but I very much enjoy sailing and I love the people of the sea," he said. "It's the people of the sea that make us all come together. The ocean is in us. We are the ocean."

The Sydney man's catamaran set sail from the Mexican city of La Paz but was crippled by bad weather weeks into the journey. He said the last time he saw land was in early May as he sailed out of the Sea of Cortez and into the Pacific. There was a full moon.

Shaddock said he had been well-provisioned, but a storm knocked out his electronics and ability to cook. He and Bella survived on raw fish.

"There were many, many, many bad days and many good days," he said.

"The energy, the fatigue is the hardest part," he said. He passed the time fixing things and stayed positive by going into the water to "just enjoy being in the water."

When the tuna boat's helicopter spotted Shaddock's catamaran about 1,200 miles (1,930 kilometers) from land, it was the first sign of humans he had seen in three months, Shaddock said. The pilot tossed him a drink and then flew away, returning later with a speed boat from the María Delia, he said.

Grupomar, which operates the fishing fleet, didn't specify when the rescue occurred. But it said in a statement that Shaddock and his dog were in a "precarious" state when found, lacking provisions and shelter, and that the tuna boat's crew gave them medical attention, food and hydration.

Shaddock said the tuna boat became his land and that Bella was an immediate hit with the crew. He also explained how he and the dog met.

"Bella sort of found me in the middle of Mexico. She's Mexican," he said. "She's the spirit of the middle of the country and she wouldn't let me go. I tried to find a home for her three times and she just kept following me onto the water. She's a lot braver than I am, that's for sure."

Perhaps for that reason, Bella did not leave the boat until Shaddock had driven away Tuesday. He had already chosen Genaro Rosales, a crew member from Mazatlan, to adopt her on the condition that he would take good care of the dog.

Shaddock said he'll be returning to Australia soon and that he's looking forward to seeing his family.

There have been other stories of extreme ocean survival, but they do not all end happily.

In 2016, a Colombian fisherman was rescued after spending two months adrift in the Pacific Ocean. Three of his crewmates died. He was rescued by a merchant ship more than 2,000 miles (3,220 kilometers) southeast of Hawaii. He and the others had been fishing off Colombia's coast when their skiff's motor failed, leaving them adrift.

In 2014, a Salvadoran fisherman washed ashore on the tiny Pacific atoll of Ebon in the Marshall Islands after drifting at sea for 13 months. Jose Salvador Alvarenga left Mexico for a day of shark fishing in December 2012. He said he survived on fish, birds and turtles before his boat washed ashore 5,500 miles (8,850 kilometers) away.

In other cases, boats are found, but without survivors or are lost entirely.

More than 20,000 migrants have died trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe since 2014, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Antonio Suarez, Grupomar's president, said Tuesday that this could be the María Delia's final trip because he is modernizing the company's fleet and the boat is its smallest and is more than 50 years old.

If so, it would be a "marvelous farewell, saving human lives," Suarez said.

Associated Press reporter Christopher Sherman in Mexico City contributed to this report.

## **Pennsylvania woman who used bullhorn to direct Capitol rioters is convicted of Jan. 6 charges**

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

A Pennsylvania woman who used a bullhorn to direct rioters attacking the U.S. Capitol was convicted on Tuesday of charges that she joined the mob in an attempt to keep President Joe Biden out of the White House.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth heard testimony without a jury before he convicted Rachel Marie Powell of felony charges stemming from the Jan. 6, 2021, siege. Powell, who was convicted of all nine counts in her indictment, is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 17, according to court records.

Powell, wearing a distinctive pink hat and fur-lined jacket hoodie, joined a mob of rioters who confronted police officers at bike rack barriers on the west side of the Capitol. She used her back to push against the police line, prosecutors said.

A video captured Powell using a bullhorn to encourage other rioters to "coordinate together if you're going to take this building." She also gave them "very detailed instructions" about the layout of the Capitol, according to an FBI agent's affidavit.

Powell told rioters they had "another window to break." She herself used an ice-axe and a large pipe to break a window, according to prosecutors.

Powell, 41, of Sandy Lake, Pennsylvania, waived her right to a jury trial. The judge convicted her of charges that she interfered with police and obstructed the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress for certifying Biden's 2020 electoral victory over Donald Trump.

Prosecutors asked Lamberth to jail Powell until her sentencing, but the judge agreed to let her remain free until the hearing.

A lawyer for Powell had no comment on the verdict.

Powell played a "leading role" during the riot, a prosecutor said at a February 2021 hearing.

"She is front and center in the incursion." Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Aloi added, according to a transcript.

Powell was arrested nearly a month after the riot. FBI agents found several smashed cellular telephones, gun paraphernalia and other weapons when they searched her home.

Powell and her ex-husband shared custody of six minor children in 2021. She left her children at home when she went to Washington to attend the "Stop the Steal" rally, according to prosecutors.

Shortly before her arrest, The New Yorker interviewed Powell for an article headlined, "A Pennsylvania Mother's Path to Insurrection."

"Listen, if somebody doesn't help and direct people, then do more people die?" she asked her interviewer.

Prosecutors said Powell "showed an inclination towards violence" before the Jan. 6 riot. She posted on Facebook in October 2020 that she agreed "with the possibility of civil war happening."

"Unfortunately, the only way this is probably capable of being fixed is bloodshed because I'm not so sure



our government can be fixed the political way anymore either," she wrote.

Prosecutors also said Powell described her "surveillance" of an unidentified public official's home in a November 2020 message to somebody who replied that they were "afraid to ask why" she was there.

More than 1,000 people have been charged with crimes related to the Capitol riot. Approximately 100 of them have been convicted by juries or judges. More than 600 others have pleaded guilty.

Associated Press writer Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston contributed to this report.

## Texas trooper's accounts of bloodied and fainting migrants on US-Mexico border unleashes criticism

By ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's escalating measures to stop migrants along the U.S. border with Mexico came under a burst of new criticism Tuesday after a state trooper said migrants were left bloodied from razor-wire barriers and that orders were given to deny people water in sweltering heat.

In one account, Texas Trooper Nicholas Wingate told a supervisor that upon encountering a group of 120 migrants on June 25 — including young children and mothers nursing babies — in Maverick County, a rural Texas border county, he and another trooper were ordered to "push the people back into the water to go to Mexico."

The trooper described the actions in an email dated July 3 as inhumane.

Travis Considine, a spokesperson for the Texas Department of Safety, said the accounts provided by the trooper were under internal investigation. He said the department has no directive or policy that instructs troopers to withhold water from migrants or push them back into the river.

The emails, first obtained by Hearst Newspapers, thrust Texas' sprawling border security mission back under scrutiny at a time when Abbott is expanding the mission by putting a new floating barrier on the Rio Grande. The Republican has authorized more than \$4 billion in spending on the mission, known as Operation Lone Star, which has also included busing thousands of migrants to Democratic-led cities and arresting migrants on trespassing charges.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters Tuesday that the trooper's account, if true, was "abhorrent" and "dangerous." Democrats in the Texas Capitol said they planned to investigate.

"We are talking about the bedrock values of who we are as a country and the human indecency that we are seeing," Jean-Pierre said. "If this is true, it is just completely, completely wrong."

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security condemned the reported actions in a statement but did not say whether the agency was planning to investigate the allegations.

Republican Rep. Tony Gonzales, whose sprawling south Texas congressional district includes the border, tweeted, "Border security should not equal a lack of humanity."

In one instance, according to Wingate, a 4-year-old girl attempting to cross through razor wire was "pressed back" by Texas National Guard soldiers in accordance with orders and that the child later fainted from the heat. Temperatures in Maverick County this summer have soared into the triple-digits.

Maverick County Sheriff Tom Schmerber, who has supported the state deploying workers to the border, said he was taken aback by the trooper's account.

"I don't agree with whatever they were told to do," Schmerber said. "That's not something that's part of our mission. You know, I know that we're here to protect and serve no matter who it is, you know, either immigrants or U.S. citizens. But we're not going to do any harm to anybody."

Wingate did not immediately return an email message seeking comment Tuesday. The Texas Military Department also did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

As concern and outrage over the trooper's account mounted Tuesday, Abbott's office issued a statement that said no orders have been given "that would compromise the lives of those attempting to cross the border illegally." The statement did not address Wingate's specific accounts and defended the border mission overall.

The statement said the razor wire “snags clothing” but did not address the accounts of migrants being cut and bloodied by the barrier.

“The absence of these tools and strategies—including concertina wire that snags clothing—encourages migrants to make potentially life-threatening and illegal crossings. Through Operation Lone Star, Texas continues stepping up to respond to the unprecedented humanitarian crisis at our southern border,” the statement read.

The email chain with the trooper included a log showing 38 encounters between June 25 and July 1 with migrants in need of medical assistance, ranging from weakness to lacerations, broken limbs and drownings in which life-saving measures were required. A dozen were under a year old.

Other accounts included a 19-year-old woman who was found cut by the wire and having a miscarriage. The others had cuts or broken bones as a result of where the wires were placed, according to the email.

“We need to operate it correctly in the eyes of God,” Wingate wrote.

In response to Wingate’s accounts, Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steve McCraw sent an email saying “the priority of life requires that we rescue migrants from harm and we will continue to do so.”

A separate email exchange obtained by The Associated Press dated July 14 shows McCraw receiving pictures, originally sent by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, of injuries caused by the sharp wire placed by Texas officials.

The pictures showed some injuries that required stitches as well as bloodied hands and legs.

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Associated Press reporter Valerie Gonzalez in McAllen, Texas, contributed to this report.

## House passes resolution to show support for Israel after Democrat’s comments about ‘racist’ state

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House on Tuesday passed a Republican-led resolution reaffirming its support for Israel with strong bipartisan approval — an implicit rebuke of a leading Democrat who, over the weekend, called the country a “racist state” but later apologized.

The resolution, introduced by Rep. August Pfluger, R-Texas, passed with over 400 lawmakers backing the measure. It did not mention Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., by name, but was clearly a response to her recent remarks about the Jewish state. The measure was drafted soon after she criticized Israel and its treatment of Palestinians at a conference on Saturday.

Jayapal, the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, also voted in support of the resolution. “I am not going to be bullied by their political games, and I’m not going to let them try to continue this debate,” she told reporters after the vote.

The Washington Democrat had walked back her comments from over the weekend, insisting they were aimed at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and not the Jewish state.

“I do not believe the idea of Israel as a nation is racist,” Jayapal said in a statement Sunday. “I do, however, believe that Netanyahu’s extreme right-wing government has engaged in discriminatory and outright racist policies and that there are extreme racists driving that policy within the leadership of the current government.”

The GOP-led effort highlighted the divide among House Democrats over Israel, with younger progressives adopting a more critical stance toward the longtime U.S. ally than party leaders.

“If there’s anybody in the Democrat party that does not think that antisemitism is bad, then I think this puts them on the record,” Pfluger said Monday.

Some progressive Democrats are vowing to boycott on Wednesday when Israeli President Isaac Herzog is slated to address a joint session of Congress in commemoration of Israel’s 75th anniversary. The same handful voted against the resolution Tuesday.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich. — the only Palestinian-American in Congress — who is not attending the session, criticized the resolution as normalizing violence against those living in the West Bank. “We’re here

again reaffirming Congress support for apartheid," Taib said during floor debate. "Policing the words of women of color who dare to speak up about truths, about oppression."

Over at the White House, Herzog on Tuesday sought to assure President Joe Biden that Israel remains committed to democracy amid deepening U.S. concerns over Netanyahu's controversial plans to overhaul his country's judicial system and ongoing settlement construction in the West Bank.

Top Democratic leaders in the House also reaffirmed their support for Israel ahead of the vote, responding Sunday to Jayapal's comments with a blistering joint statement.

The statement — from House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., and members of his leadership team — declared that "Israel is not a racist state." It also said America's long-held commitment to "a safe and secure Israel as an invaluable partner, ally and beacon of democracy in the Middle East is ironclad."

Hours later, more than 40 House Democrats, including a large group of Jewish members, issued a separate letter also condemning Jayapal's comments.

"Any efforts to rewrite history and question the Jewish State's right to exist, or our historic bipartisan relationship, will never succeed in Congress," the group, led by Rep. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., said Monday night.

Most Democrats supported the GOP resolution Tuesday, even as they accused Republicans of playing politics.

"These are straightforward things that we should be supporting," Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., who is Jewish, told reporters. "But I certainly questioned the intentions of the Republicans by putting it on the floor. I wish their intentions were genuine"

Schultz also called out House Republicans' efforts to condemn Jayapal's comments with a vote but their refusal to disinvite Democratic presidential hopeful Robert F. Kennedy Jr. from a hearing Thursday despite comments he made about the COVID-19 virus being engineered to spare Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese people.

"That type of vile messaging and statements should never be given those world's largest platforms to fan the flames of conspiracy theories and racial and ethnic and religious hate," she said. More than 100 Democrats have signed a letter as of late Tuesday calling for Republican leadership to remove him from the panel.

Speaker Kevin McCarthy and committee chair Jim Jordan, who is holding the hearing, have so far refused to disinvite Kennedy. Both said while they disagree with his comments, taking him off a panel about censorship would be contrary to the point Republicans are trying to make.

## **US soldier who fled to North Korea had served 2 months in South Korea prison on assault charge**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG, TARA COPP and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press  
SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An American soldier who had served nearly two months in a South Korean prison, fled across the heavily armed border into North Korea, U.S. officials said Tuesday, becoming the first American detained in the North in nearly five years.

Private 2nd Class Travis King had been held on assault charges and was released on July 10 after serving his time. He was being sent home to Fort Bliss, Texas, on Monday, where he could have faced additional military disciplinary actions and discharge from the service.

According to officials, King, 23, was taken to the airport and escorted as far as customs. But instead of getting on the plane, he left the airport and later joined a tour of the Korean border village of Panmunjom. He bolted across the border, which is lined with guards and often crowded with tourists, on Tuesday afternoon local time in Korea.

The Army released his name and limited information after King's family was notified of the incident. But a number of U.S. officials provided additional details on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. It wasn't clear how he got to the border or how he spent the hours between leaving the airport on Monday and crossing the border a day later.

At a Pentagon press conference Tuesday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed that the U.S. service

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member was likely now in North Korean custody.

"We're closely monitoring and investigating the situation," Austin said, noting he was foremost concerned about the troop's wellbeing. "This will develop in the next several days and hours, and we'll keep you posted."

According to Army spokesman Bryce Dubee, King is a cavalry scout who joined the service in January 2021. He was in Korea as part of the 1st Armored Division.

The American-led U.N. Command said he is believed to be in North Korean custody and the command is working with its North Korean counterparts to resolve the incident. North Korea's state media didn't immediately report on the border crossing.

Cases of Americans or South Koreans defecting to North Korea are rare, though more than 30,000 North Koreans have fled to South Korea to avoid political oppression and economic difficulties since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Panmunjom, located inside the 248-kilometer-long (154-mile) Demilitarized Zone, has been jointly overseen by the U.N. Command and North Korea since its creation at the close of the Korean War. Bloodshed and gunfire have occasionally occurred there, but it has also been a venue for numerous talks and is a popular tourist spot.

Known for its blue huts straddling concrete slabs that form the demarcation line, Panmunjom draws visitors from both sides who want to see the Cold War's last frontier. No civilians live at Panmunjom. North and South Korean soldiers faced off within meters (yards) of each other, while tourists on both sides snap photographs.

Tours to the southern side of the village reportedly drew around 100,000 visitors a year before the coronavirus pandemic, when South Korea restricted gatherings to slow the spread of COVID-19. The tours resumed fully last year. During a short-lived period of inter-Korean engagement in 2018, Panmunjom was one of the border sites that underwent mine-clearing operations by North and South Korean army engineers as the Koreas vowed to turn the village into a "peace zone" where tourists from both sides could move around with more freedom.

In November 2017, North Korean soldiers fired 40 rounds as one of their colleagues raced toward the South. The soldier was hit five times before he was found beneath a pile of leaves on the southern side of Panmunjom. He survived and is now in South Korea.

The most famous incident at Panmunjom happened in August 1976, when two American army officers were killed by ax-wielding North Korean soldiers. The U.S. officers had been sent to trim a 40-foot (12-meter) tree that obstructed the view from a checkpoint. The attack prompted Washington to fly nuclear-capable B-52 bombers toward the DMZ to intimidate North Korea.

Panmunjom also is where the armistice that ended the Korean War was signed. That armistice has yet to be replaced with a peace treaty, leaving the Korean Peninsula technically in a state of war. The United States still stations about 28,000 troops in South Korea.

There have been a small number of U.S. soldiers who went to North Korea during the Cold War, including Charles Jenkins, who deserted his army post in South Korea in 1965 and fled across the DMZ. He appeared in North Korean propaganda films and married a Japanese nursing student who had been abducted from Japan by North Korean agents. He died in Japan in 2017.

But in recent years, some American civilians have been arrested in North Korea after allegedly entering the country from China. They were later convicted of espionage, subversion and other anti-state acts, but were often released after the U.S. sent high-profile missions to secure their freedom.

In May 2018, North Korea released three American detainees — Kim Dong Chul, Tony Kim and Kim Hak Song — who returned to the United States on a plane with then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during a short-lived period of warm relations between the longtime adversaries. Later in 2018, North Korea said it expelled American Bruce Byron Lowrance. Since his ouster, there have been no reports of other Americans detained in North Korea before Tuesday's incident.

The 2018 releases came as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was engaged in nuclear diplomacy with then-President Donald Trump. The high-stakes diplomacy collapsed in 2019 amid wrangling over U.S.-led



sanctions on North Korea.

Their freedoms were a striking contrast to the fate of Otto Warmbier, an American university student who died in 2017 days after he was released by North Korea in a coma after 17 months in captivity. Warmbier and other previous American detainees in North Korea were imprisoned over a variety of alleged crimes, including subversion, anti-state activities and spying.

The United States, South Korea and others have accused North Korea of using foreign detainees to wrest diplomatic concessions. Some foreigners have said after their release that their declarations of guilt were coerced while in North Korean custody.

Tuesday's border crossing happened amid high tensions over North Korea's barrage of missile tests since the start of last year. A U.S. nuclear-armed submarine visited South Korea on Tuesday for the first time in four decades in deterrence against North Korea.

Sean Timmons, a managing partner at the Tully Rinckey law firm, which specializes in military legal cases, said if King is trying to present himself as a legitimate defector fleeing either political oppression or persecution, he would be dependent on North Korea's leadership to decide if he can stay.

He said it will likely be up to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to decide King's fate.

"It's going to be up to the whims of their leadership, what they want to do," Timmons said.

Copp reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Trump and his legal woes overshadow DeSantis as he rolls out military policy plan in South Carolina**

By MEG KINNARD and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WEST COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis held a brief news conference Tuesday as part of a shift in strategy for his presidential campaign, but the governor took only four questions, almost all of which centered on the party's front-runner, Donald Trump.

DeSantis' day on the campaign trail in South Carolina was supposed to be focused on his filing paperwork for South Carolina's Republican primary and on the rollout of a policy plan for the military, followed by a news conference and a CNN interview later Tuesday.

But shortly before DeSantis' event was scheduled to start, Trump, as he often does, overshadowed the day. The Republican former president broke the news on his social media network that he'd been informed he is a target of the Justice Department's investigation into efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

DeSantis' attempt to change the conversation underscored the challenges he faces in trying to overtake the former president and his command of the spotlight in the GOP presidential race. Indeed, the news that Trump could soon be charged by U.S. prosecutors, as well as his behavior surrounding the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, was the subject of two of the four questions DeSantis received at his news conference.

DeSantis, who has offered tepid criticism of Trump amid his legal troubles, made his strongest criticism yet of the former president's actions on Jan. 6.

"Look, there's a difference between being brought up on criminal charges and doing things. Like for example, I think it was shown how he was in the White House and didn't do anything while things were going on. He should have come out more forcefully, of course," DeSantis said of Trump's actions that day as rioters stormed the Capitol.

"But to try to criminalize that, that's a different issue entirely," he said.

A reporter also asked DeSantis how he planned to win in South Carolina after voters there had overwhelmingly supported Trump in the past.

DeSantis and his campaign are facing a consequential moment as the governor makes his third swing

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through South Carolina as a White House hopeful. He entered the race in May with expectations that he would become the primary threat to Trump. But DeSantis has struggled to make inroads against Trump and recently began cutting campaign staff.

Speaking to reporters earlier Tuesday as he filed his paperwork, he rejected suggestions that his campaign might have grown too big in its early stages.

"When you start, there are certain investments that you make," he said. "We really believe having an important apparatus on the ground is important in caucus states and early states."

Asked by CNN host Jake Tapper if he felt his effort to run to the right of Trump was causing him to lose support among voters who might see him as too conservative, DeSantis responded that the constant attention he's fielded since his 2022 gubernatorial reelection has yielded increased scrutiny.

"I was getting a lot of media attention at the time, coming off my victory," DeSantis said in the interview, recorded after his policy rollout and aired Tuesday afternoon. "I was basically taking fire nonstop since then because a lot of people view me as a threat."

DeSantis opened his swing through South Carolina on Monday, holding an event in Tega Cay, an affluent community on Lake Wylie near the North Carolina state line.

After about a half hour of remarks, DeSantis took a handful of questions from the crowd of about 900 people gathered to hear him. Questioners included a woman who described herself as a "hardcore Trump supporter" who said that the 2024 election represented "the most important vote that we're going to have" and that she felt DeSantis "did an excellent job" making the case for his candidacy.

In his response, DeSantis condemned what he has characterized as the "weaponization of government" in the legal cases being brought against Trump, and said, "He was treated wrong, he was treated in ways that are unconstitutional."

"Here's the thing — the question for us now is, what are we going to do about it? ... It's not about me, it's about you. It's about me standing up for you and standing up for the Constitution and restoring this country to what the Founding Fathers envisioned," DeSantis said.

On Tuesday in West Columbia, DeSantis — a former Navy officer who served in the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps in Iraq — rolled out his plans to reform a U.S. military he has argued is too "woke."

He decried the military for using electric vehicles and for focusing on diversity and inclusion in the armed forces or service academies.

"Clearly, it is not good for morale if somebody feels that they've been treated negatively based on, quote, 'white privilege' or something like that. It's just toxic," he said. "If you want to talk about that stuff, go to Berkeley."

He also criticized a past requirement that U.S. military forces receive the COVID-19 vaccine, a mandate that was lifted late last year. More than 8,400 troops who declined to get the vaccine were forced out of the military for refusing to obey a lawful order. Thousands of others sought religious and medical exemptions.

DeSantis said the mandate was wrong and that if elected, he would offer affected military members their jobs back as well as back pay.

Trump's campaign, in an apparent attempt to further step on DeSantis' message, released on Tuesday afternoon the former president's plan for "Rebuilding America's Depleted Military." Trump, in the pre-recorded video released by his campaign, focused mostly on foreign policy and repeated some criticisms he made last week of President Joe Biden's approach to the war in Ukraine.

The rollout is DeSantis' second official policy pronouncement of the campaign. In June, he outlined his immigration proposals — which call for ending birthright citizenship and finishing construction of the southern border wall — during a visit to a Texas border city.

South Carolina is set to hold its GOP presidential primary Feb. 24. The state, which also boasts two homegrown 2024 candidates — former Gov. Nikki Haley and Sen. Tim Scott — is critical for Republican presidential hopefuls and has been a strong base of support for Trump in his previous campaigns.

Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>

## Human waste leaking from truck causes crashes on Connecticut highway

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. (AP) — Human waste leaking from a tractor trailer on a Connecticut highway caused crashes including one involving two state police cruisers as vehicles spun out of control, authorities said.

No major injuries were reported in Monday night's mayhem on Interstate 95 in Bridgeport. Troopers arrested the truck driver on several charges, alleging he knew there was a leak but kept driving.

The wrecks began shortly after 11 p.m. when the leaking waste caused extremely slick conditions in the northbound lanes, state police said.

A motorcycle rider lost control and fell onto the road, ending up in a hospital with minor injuries. Vehicles crashed into other vehicles and concrete barriers.

Another tractor trailer skidded into a parked state police cruiser, which then struck a second parked cruiser in the median. Both cruisers were unoccupied as troopers were helping others involved in wrecks.

State police reports indicate 10 vehicles were in accidents. The northbound lanes were closed for several hours during the cleanup.

Troopers said they found the driver after witnesses reported the company name seen on the truck. Authorities contacted the company, H.I. Stone & Son, which then called the driver and told him to pull over and wait for police, state police said.

The driver was charged with reckless driving, reckless endangerment and failing to secure a load. He posted \$25,000 bail.

H.I. Stone & Son's owner, Harry Stone, declined to comment Tuesday.

## Israel's Herzog tells Biden its democracy remains sound amid US concerns over judicial overhaul

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Israel's figurehead president Isaac Herzog sought to assure President Joe Biden that Israel remains committed to democracy amid deepening U.S. concerns over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial plans to overhaul his country's judicial system and ongoing settlement construction in the West Bank.

Sitting by Biden's side at the start of their Oval Office meeting on Tuesday, Herzog told Biden that Israel's democracy remains "sound, strong" and "resilient" while acknowledging the country is going through a fractious moment.

Herzog's visit comes a day after Biden spoke with Netanyahu by phone and invited him to meet in the U.S. this fall, although the president expressed reservations about several of the Netanyahu hard-right coalition's policies. Netanyahu's government is pushing forward with judicial changes that have sparked widespread protest in Israel and he has authorized the construction of thousands of new housing units in the West Bank.

"We are going through pains. We are going through heated debates," Herzog said. "We have gone through challenging moments. But I truly, truly believe and I say to you Mr. President, as I've said it as head of state to the people of Israel, we should always seek to find amicable consensus, and I agree with you on that as well."

Netanyahu and his allies, a collection of ultra-Orthodox and ultranationalist parties, say the plan is needed to rein in the powers of unelected judges. Opponents say the plan will destroy Israel's fragile system of checks and balances and move the country toward authoritarian rule.

Herzog has appealed for a compromise that has thus far proven elusive. Many American Jewish groups and Democratic lawmakers have expressed concerns about the plan.

With differences in plain view, Biden sought to stress the importance of the U.S.-Israeli relationship in

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his brief remarks before reporters.

"This is a friendship I believe is just simply unbreakable," Biden said. "As I confirmed to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday, America's commitment to Israel is firm and it is ironclad."

During his U.S. visit, Herzog is also to meet Vice President Kamala Harris and congressional leaders. On Wednesday he will become the second Israeli president, after his father Chaim Herzog, to address Congress. His speech will mark Israel's celebration of its 75th year of independence.

Herzog's visit comes weeks after Israeli forces carried out one of their most intensive operations in the West Bank in two decades, with a two-day air and ground offensive in Jenin, a militant stronghold in the occupied West Bank. Senior members of Netanyahu's government have been pushing for increased construction and other measures to cement Israel's control over the West Bank in response to a more than yearlong wave of violence with the Palestinians.

U.S. officials have broadly supported Israel's right to defend itself from militant attacks but have also urged restraint to minimize harm to civilians and have lobbied against additional settlements that would further diminish the chances of securing a two-state solution between Israel and Palestinians.

The Biden administration declined to say whether Biden would host Netanyahu at the White House — as the Israeli leader has hoped — or in New York on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly.

White House visits are typically standard protocol for Israeli prime ministers, and the delay in Netanyahu receiving one has become an issue in Israel, with opponents citing it as a reflection of deteriorating relations with the U.S.

Herzog said the Biden-Netanyahu conversation sent an important message to the region.

"I was pleased to hear about your conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu in which you focused on our ironclad military and security cooperation because there are some enemies of ours that sometimes mistake the fact that we may have some differences as impacting our unbreakable bond," Herzog said.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Biden again on Monday expressed concern to Netanyahu over the judicial plan — as he did when they last spoke earlier this year — and urged the "broadest possible consensus" over the legislation that has been pushed by Netanyahu and his hard-line coalition.

Kirby said during the call that the two leaders discussed Iran's nuclear program and regional security issues. Biden also "expressed concern" over Israel's continued settlement growth in the West Bank and urged Israel to take steps to preserve the viability of a two-state solution with Palestinians.

Biden, Kirby said, also welcomed steps by the Palestinian Authority to reassert security control in Jenin and other areas of the West Bank and moves by Israel and Palestinians to move toward another round of direct talks.

Progressive lawmakers, Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Jamaal Bowman, Cori Bush and Ilhan Omar have pledged to boycott Herzog's address in protest of Israel's policies.

Herzog's visit comes days after Rep. Pramila Jayapal, chair of the influential 100-member Congressional Progressive Caucus, sparked outrage for calling Israel a "racist state," including criticism from House Democratic leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries. Jayapal later said she was criticizing Israel's government, not its existence as a country.

Kirby said Biden was glad she apologized. "We think an apology was the right thing to do," he told reporters Monday.

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians claim all three territories for a future independent state.

Israel has annexed east Jerusalem and claims it as part of its capital — a claim that is not internationally recognized. It says the West Bank is disputed territory whose fate should be determined through negotiations, while Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. Two years later, the Hamas militant group overran the territory.



## **This isn't the first time Hollywood's been on strike. Here's how past strikes turned out**

By MALLIKA SEN and JENNIFER FARRAR Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The common refrain is that there's nothing Hollywood loves so much as its own history — but that's a history inextricable from its labor movements.

As the industry comes to a momentous halt courtesy of dual strikes by its actors and screenwriters, it's worth looking back at the effects of past protests, walkouts and other actions.

The Screen Actors Guild and the Screen Writers Guild, the forerunner to today's Writers Guild of America, were each founded in 1933, though threads of collective action and solidarity run to the very beginnings of the motion picture industry.

At its founding, SAG boasted less than two dozen members. Ninety years later, 65,000 SAG-AFTRA members are on strike (the two actors unions merged in 2012).

For a few decades, strikes erupted at a regular cadence. The first actors strikes came in the 1950s, and a SWG strike in 1953 secured the first television residuals. But protests largely tapered off by the late 1980s.

Before 1950, strikes were about basic working conditions, said Kate Fortmueller, associate professor of film and media history at Georgia State University and an expert in Hollywood labor history.

"Post-1950, the concerns are more about residuals, replays, so like distribution. So it's less about sort of how we're working and more about how do we share in the profits that our work continues to generate?" she said. The 2023 strikes, Fortmueller said, marks a return to the more fundamental concerns about working conditions — and existential worries about the industry's future.

Throughout it all the guilds have faced essentially the same opponent: the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. First a conglomerate of studio heads, it evolved to include studios and networks, and now boasts streamers and other major production companies, Fortmueller said.

"These streaming companies have origins in tech. And tech is a very different labor culture than Hollywood, in part because tech is not heavily unionized. And Hollywood has been for almost 100 years," Fortmueller said, characterizing a major animating factor in AMPTP's evolution.

In a rare but major exception, the studios were not a combatant in one of Hollywood's most lurid strikes, a 227-day dispute between two so-called below-the-line unions that became defined by a single day. Whether you prefer "Bloody" or "Black" as the descriptor to that Friday in early October 1945, the resulting moniker for the melee in the Warner Bros. studio lot is appropriately weighty.

It may be tempting to prognosticate about the end of these concurrent strikes, but history is of little help here: Past strikes have spanned months and lasted minutes. Nonetheless, they're instructive for how the issues that drove the conflicts and the resolutions set the stage for today's disputes. Each success and failure has contributed to shaping the contemporary landscape.

Here's a look at some of the most significant strikes in Hollywood labor history.

2007-2008 writers strike: 100 days

KEY ISSUE: Compensation, including residual payments, for shows and movies distributed digitally

MAIN RESULTS: Jurisdiction over projects created for the internet under certain guidelines; set compensation for ad-supported streaming programs; increased residuals for downloaded shows and movies

Since it was the most significant Hollywood strike in decades, it's the one most etched in most people's memories. All told, it had an estimated \$2 billion impact on the California economy and is often credited with sending programming further into reality television's clutches (even if such gems as NBC's "My Dad Is Better Than Your Dad" didn't have much staying power).

While an analyst at the time told the AP the strike was "an unqualified success," some WGA members felt they were pressured into accepting weaker terms because the Directors Guild of America negotiated their own contract on similar issues. A specter of that discontent reared its head again 15 years later, when the DGA reached a "truly historic" tentative agreement with AMPTP a little over a month into the 2023 writers strike.

"They have all these other concerns, like with prestige and credit and authorship ... and things that are

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not as tangible," Fortmueller said of the directors guild's priorities through the ages.

1988 writers strike: 154 days

KEY ISSUE: Residuals for television shows sold to foreign markets

MAIN RESULTS: More creative control over scripts and the reacquisition of original screenplays; salary increases, though guild negotiators said they were less successful in winning larger payments for the foreign market reruns

This contract was ratified on the 154th day of the strike, making it the longest WGA strike by a margin of one day.

"It was a very difficult time. Over a period of time, some of the rancor and anger will be forgotten. I don't think the spirit will be forgotten, though. They (the writers) will remember this for a long time," WGA spokesperson Cheryl Rhoden said at the time.

Fortmueller also noted that this strike really marked the birth of reality TV as a way to fill time in vacant schedule blocks.

1981 writers strike: 96 days; 1980 actors strike: 77 days

KEY ISSUE: The fast-growing home video and pay TV markets

MAIN RESULTS: Share of producer revenues from those markets; increase in base pay

While these strikes happened nearly a year apart, the core issue was the same: Actors and writers wanted a portion of the revenue generated in quickly growing markets — there was money to be made on videocassettes.

In 1980, SAG, AFTRA and the American Federation of Musicians all went on strike. In the longest strike in their history, the actors ended up winning the industry's first pay TV concessions. The musicians had no such luck, despite striking for 167 days.

The following year, striking writers won similar concessions, and WGA spokespeople characterized it as the most extensive and precedent-setting deal the guild had negotiated in two decades.

1973 writers strike: 111 days

KEY ISSUES: Pay and benefits

MAIN RESULTS: Salary hikes, guaranteed residual pay schedules for movies on cassettes and pay TV

While the 1973 writers strike technically lasted for 16 weeks, work was not necessarily halted the entire time. The strike didn't extend to soap operas and variety shows until more than a month in — and those effects were more immediately tangible.

Around 10 weeks into the strike, the boycotts were pared back to just the major television and film studios that comprised the AMPTP. By that point, more than 150 independent producers — who controlled more than 50% of primetime television — had signed the new contract and were allowed to get back to work.

1960 writers and actors strike: 153 days (WGA), 43 days (SAG)

KEY ISSUES: Foreign and subsidiary rights on television scripts, rerun rights, proceeds from the sale of post-1948 films to television, a pension system for SAG

MAIN RESULTS: Actors and writers won salary bumps, residual payments for films released to TV and — most crucially — the establishment of pension, health and welfare funds; writers agree to waive claims on revenue from the sale of pre-1960 movies to TV

The writers quite literally struck first, and would strike longer, but it was SAG — with its starry membership — that would be first to secure pension, health and welfare funds. In a marked departure from today's raucous and punny picket lines, the guilds did not picket or demonstrate, according to contemporaneous articles that called the nature of the strikes "firm but polite."

"This is what studios were afraid of in the '20s and '30s, is nobody wants to see your stars on a picket line. It's not the optics that Hollywood wants," Fortmueller said of how the actors' decision to strike changed the calculus. Writers also tend to be on the same page, with similar responsibilities; so if a guild as diverse in roles as SAG-AFTRA is today overwhelmingly chooses to strike, she noted, that telegraphs the severity of the situation.

SAG was helmed by Ronald Reagan, who represented his fellow actors at the bargaining table alongside arguably bigger celebrities of the time, like Oscar winner Charlton Heston and James Garner, then the star

of TV ratings juggernaut "Maverick." Just two decades later, Reagan — as U.S. president — would become known as one of the most damaging figures in the country's labor history for his firing of thousands of air traffic controllers during their 1981 strike.

A 1960 AP story announcing an initial settlement for the actors underlined the magnitude of the strike as "unique in labor history because millionaires were as thick on labor's side as they were on management's."

SAG-AFTRA's chief negotiator, Duncan Crabtree-Ireland invoked the spirit — and gains — of the 1960s last week at the press conference announcing the strike.

"This is the first SAG-AFTRA strike in this contract in over 40 years," he said. "This is not a strike-happy union. This is a union that views strikes as a last resort but we're not afraid to do them when that is what it takes to make sure our members receive a fair contract."

## **Russia targets Ukraine's port of Odesa and calls it payback for a strike on a key bridge to Crimea**

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine said its forces shot down Russian drones and cruise missiles targeting the Black Sea port of Odesa before dawn Tuesday in what Moscow called "retribution" for an attack that damaged a crucial bridge to the Crimean Peninsula.

The Russians first sought to wear down Ukraine's air defenses by firing 25 exploding drones and then targeted Odesa with six Kalibr cruise missiles, the Ukrainian military's Southern Command said.

All six missiles and the drones were shot down by air defenses in the Odesa region and other areas in the south, officials said, though their debris and shock waves damaged some port facilities and a few residential buildings and injured an elderly man at his home.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its "strike of retribution" was carried out with sea-launched precision weapons on Ukrainian military facilities near Odesa and Mykolaiv, a coastal city about 50 kilometers (30 miles) to the northeast.

It destroyed facilities preparing "terror attacks" against Russia involving maritime drones, including a facility at a shipyard that was producing them, the ministry said. It added that it also struck Ukrainian fuel depots near the two cities.

It was not possible to verify the conflicting claims by both countries.

President Vladimir Putin blamed Ukraine on Monday for striking the Kerch Bridge, which links Russia with Crimea and was attacked in October 2022 and needed months of repairs. The bridge is a key supply route for the peninsula, which was illegally annexed by Moscow in 2014.

Ukrainian officials stopped short of directly taking responsibility, as they have done in similar strikes before, but Ukraine's top security agency appeared tacitly to admit to a role.

Satellite images taken Monday by Maxar Technologies showed serious damage to both eastbound and westbound lanes of the bridge across the Kerch Strait on the part nearest to the Russian mainland, with at least one section collapsed. The railroad bridge that runs parallel to the highway appeared undamaged.

The Russian military has sporadically hit Odesa and the neighboring region throughout the war, but Tuesday's barrage was one of the biggest attacks on the area.

Ukrainian forces have been targeting Crimea with drones and other attacks. Kyiv has vowed to reclaim it from Russian control, arguing that the peninsula plays a key role in sustaining the Russian invasion and is a legitimate target.

The onslaught also came a day after Russia broke off a deal that had allowed Ukraine to ship vital grain supplies from Odesa during the war. Moscow said the decision was in the works long before the bridge attack.

Even so, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov alleged, without offering evidence, that the specific shipping lanes and routes used for the grain transport under the deal were abused by Ukraine.

"Our military has repeatedly said that Ukraine has used these grain corridors for military purposes," Peskov told reporters.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said Ukraine will continue implementing the grain deal. Peskov warned that such action was risky because the region lies next to an area where there is fighting. "If they try to do something without Russia, these risks must be taken into account," Peskov told reporters.

Zelenskyy said grain exports by sea and port security topped his meeting Tuesday with senior military commanders and government officials, adding that he received reports on logistics and protection of the coastal regions.

Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential office, said Russia is endangering the lives of millions around the world who need Ukrainian grain exports. Hunger is a growing threat in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and high food prices have pushed more people into poverty.

"The world must realize that the goal of the Russian Federation is hunger and killing people," Yermak said. "They need waves of refugees. They want to weaken the West with this."

The United Nations and Ukraine's Western allies slammed Moscow for halting the Black Sea Grain Initiative. At the U.N., Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said "very active discussions" continue with the world body and other countries and entities on how to keep grain flowing, but a key issue is what would occur if Russia attacked a Ukrainian grain shipment.

Asked whether there was any talk of an international force or deployment to protect shipments, he told reporters that, "Everyone is looking for the way out, and every option is on the table."

Earlier, he urged countries at a General Assembly meeting to demand that Russia return to the deal "and stop its hunger games."

USAID is giving Ukraine a further \$250 million to support its agricultural sector as its chief, Samantha Power, visited Odesa and chided Moscow for its stance.

"Russia's disruption of maritime commerce since the beginning of its full-scale invasion, including blockading ports, delaying ship inspections, and, most recently, withdrawing from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, has severely choked the amount of grain Ukraine is able to provide to the world amid a global food crisis," a USAID statement said.

The Kremlin said the agreement would be suspended until Moscow's demands to lift restrictions on exports of Russian food and fertilizer to the world are met. Peskov reaffirmed an earlier Kremlin pledge to provide especially poor countries in Africa with grain for free, adding that the issue will be discussed at a Russia-Africa summit in St. Petersburg next week.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry also said its forces had foiled a Ukrainian attack on Crimea using 28 drones.

The ministry said 17 of the attacking drones were shot down and 11 others were jammed electronically and crashed, with no damage or casualties.

Also Tuesday, satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed that a convoy of vehicles arrived at a once-abandoned military base in Belarus, which was offered to Russia's private military contractor, Wagner. That followed a short-lived rebellion last month against the Russian Defense Ministry by Wagner's chief, Yevgeny Prigozhin.

The photos, taken Monday, show a long line of vehicles coming off a highway into the base near the Belarusian town of Osipovichi, some 75 kilometers (45 miles) northwest of the capital, Minsk.

Belaruski Hajun, an activist group that monitors troops movements in Belarus, said several convoys with Wagner fighters have entered the country since last week, including at least 170 vehicles on Tuesday. It estimated that about 2,500 Wagner mercenaries are now in Belarus.

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Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Jennifer Peltz at the United Nations contributed.

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



## A look at how the desert city of Phoenix copes with summer heat

By ALINA HARTOUNIAN Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — This summer's punishing heat wave has baked much of the U.S. in sweat-soaked misery. Records are falling as temperatures soar, and millions of people are left clamoring for relief.

The country's preeminent desert city has long sweltered through such brutal heat. And there are lessons to be learned from people who live in a city so hot it's named after the mythical bird that was born from flames.

Here are some of the ways residents in metropolitan Phoenix have learned to adapt to unruly heat.

### AIR CONDITIONING – A HOT COMMODITY

Phoenix backyards are a symphony of humming and whirring beginning in the spring as monster A/C units rattle to life.

Air conditioning is so vital in the desert that cities such as Phoenix, Tempe and Scottsdale have adopted cooling ordinances, which require landlords to keep temperatures in rental homes below a certain threshold.

Units usually are installed on rooftops with the help of cranes.

"My air conditioner right now is running almost all the time," said longtime Scottsdale resident Naomi Evelan. "And I'm worried because when I have it set on 80, for example, it actually doesn't get beyond 82 ... It's working really hard."

### BURNING HOT

If the sidewalk is hot enough to fry an egg, it's certainly hot enough to burn human feet. Last year, the Arizona Burn Center recorded 85 admissions from heat-related burns in the summer months.

Someone can faint from the heat or suffer any other medical emergency and burn themselves on hot asphalt, according to Dr. Geoff Comp, an attending emergency medicine physician.

The damage, including blistering and skin sloughing off, can happen within minutes, Comp says.

How do people avoid the ER? By wearing protective layers of clothing and understanding their own limits outside.

Foam handles protect vulnerable hands from hot metal knobs on exterior doors. Pet owners outfit their furry friends in booties to keep their paws from getting singed.

### GETTING SHADY

Arizona sizzles through more than 300 sunny days annually. Beyond slathering on sunscreen, desert dwellers have other ways to keep the UV at bay.

Some install shade screens on their windows at home — solar shades block ultraviolet light and are a booming business around Phoenix.

Car windows are tinted, shade structures tower over grocery store parking spaces, and it's rare to see a playground without a sunshade stretching over it.

There's also natural shade, better known as trees. Electric utility Salt River Project offers its customers free shade trees for their property if they sit through a Zoom course.

Mesquites, palo verdes and the desert willow are among the species that offer quick-growing, sun-thwarting canopies.

Phoenix and Tempe have tree and shade master plans with designs to cover a quarter of their cities in shade.

Some diehard sun avoiders will wear gloves while driving, with the added benefit of protection from a potentially scalding steering wheel.

### EARLY BIRDS

One of the best ways to avoid the sun is to get up before it rises. Dog parks fill before dawn with panting pets. Runners pound the pavement as cyclists sweep by on the trails in the early morning hours. Golf balls clank off clubs before most people's alarms buzz them awake.

"We rearrange our schedule," said Heather Moos, who has lived in the area for 22 summers, and was heading home from the dog park before 7 a.m. Tuesday. "We're up before the sun comes up. Basically we get to the dog park about 5:00 in the morning."

On the other side of things, some desert hot spots stay open in the dark. The Desert Botanical Garden

hosts flashlight nights, when guests can wander the gardens under the stars. Nighthawks soar overhead while scorpions fluoresce under ultraviolet lights.

The Boyce Thompson Arboretum has similar events that also feature Arizona's nocturnal critters.

"I guess we have to be vampires in this kind of weather," Moos said.

## FINDING AN OASIS

Pools are as much a part of the Phoenix landscape as the saguaro cactus. But in scalding temps, they can turn to bathwater.

Companies can install cooling systems to chill the waters, but there are simpler methods. Aerators spray water above the pool to keep them cool.

Misters that spritz water to cool diners are a common sight outside restaurants as well.

Longtime resident Sandy Fam wears a wet towel around her neck to keep cool.

"I've been doing that for years," she said.

But while Fam lives in relative comfort, she worries about those who don't.

"You know, I feel for people who struggle with" paying for air conditioning. They're the ones really suffering, she said.

## As the planet warms, scientists worry that cases of infectious diseases could spike

By ZOYA TEIRSTEIN, Grist undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — People around the world are living longer, healthier lives than they were just half a century ago.

Climate change threatens to undo that progress.

Across the planet, animals — and the diseases they carry — are shifting to accommodate a globe on the fritz. And they're not alone: Ticks, mosquitos, bacteria, algae, even fungi are on the move, shifting or expanding their historical ranges to adapt to climatic conditions that are evolving at an unprecedented pace.

These changes are not happening in a vacuum. Deforestation, mining, agriculture, and urban sprawl are taking bites out of the globe's remaining wild areas, contributing to biodiversity loss that's occurring at a rate unprecedented in human history. Populations of species that humans rely on for sustenance are dwindling and getting pushed into ever-smaller slices of habitat, creating new zoonotic-disease hotspots. Meanwhile, the number of people experiencing extreme repercussions of a warming planet continues to grow. Climate change displaces some 20 million people every year — people who need housing, medical care, food, and other essentials that put strain on already-fragile systems that are growing ever more stressed.

All of these factors create conditions ripe for human illness. Diseases old and new are becoming more prevalent and even cropping up in places they've never been found before. Researchers have begun piecing together a patchwork of evidence that illuminates the formidable threat climate-driven diseases currently pose to human health — and the scope of the dangers to come.

"This is not just something off in the future," Neil Vora, a physician with the nonprofit Conservation International, said. "Climate change is here. People are suffering and dying right now."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is part of a collaboration between The Associated Press and Grist exploring the intersection of climate change and infectious diseases.

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Research shows that climate change influences the spread of disease in a few major ways.

To escape rising temperatures in their native ranges, animals are beginning to move to higher, cooler elevations, bringing diseases with them. That poses a threat to people living in those areas, and it also leads to dangerous intermingling between animal newcomers and existing species. Bird flu, for example, has been spreading with greater ease among wild animals as rising seas and other factors push nesting bird species inland, where they're more likely to run into other species. Diseases that jump between spe-

cies tend to have an easier time eventually making the leap to humans.

Warmer winters and milder autumns and springs allow carriers of pathogens — ticks, mosquitos, and fleas, for example — to remain active for longer swaths of the year. Expanded active periods mean busier mating seasons and fewer casualties over the cold winter months. The Northeastern United States has seen a massive proliferation of Lyme disease-carrying black-legged ticks over the past decade, with warmer winters playing a decisive role in that trend.

Erratic weather patterns, such as periods of extreme drought and flooding, create conditions for diseases to spread. Cholera, a water-borne bacteria, thrives during the monsoon season in South Asian countries when flooding contaminates drinking water, especially in places that lack quality sanitation infrastructure. Valley fever, a fungal-borne pathogen that grows in the soil in the Western U.S., flourishes during periods of rain. The severe drought that tends to follow rain in that part of the world shrivels the fungal spores, which allows them to more easily disperse into the air at the slightest disturbance — a hiker's boot, say, or a garden rake — and find their way into the human respiratory system.

These climate-driven impacts are taking a serious toll on human health. Cases of disease linked to mosquitos, ticks, and fleas tripled in the U.S. between 2004 and 2016, according to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. The threat extends beyond commonly recognized vector-borne diseases. Research shows more than half of all the pathogens known to cause disease in humans can be made worse by climate change. The problem compounds as time goes on. The World Health Organization estimates that between 2030 and 2050, just a handful of climate-related threats, such as malaria and water insecurity, will claim a quarter of a million additional lives each year.

"I think we've drastically underestimated not only how much climate change is already changing disease risks, but just how many kinds of risks are changing," said Colin Carlson, a global change biologist at Georgetown University.

He noted that while connecting the dots between tick-borne illnesses and climate change, for example, is a relatively straightforward scientific endeavor, the scientific community and the general public need to be aware that the impacts of global warming on disease can also manifest in many other, less obvious ways. The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of how quickly disease can move through global populations and how deeply complicated the public health response to such threats can get.

"I think there's a lot more to worry about in terms of epidemic and pandemic threats," he said.

The world has the tools it needs — wildlife-surveillance networks, vaccines, early-warning systems — to mitigate the impacts of climate-driven disease. Some of these tools have already been deployed on a local scale to great effect. What remains to be seen is how quickly governments, NGOs, medical providers, doctors, and the public can work across borders to develop and deploy a global plan of action.

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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.

## **Tourists and residents warned to stay inside as deadly heat hits Europe during peak travel season**

By COLLEEN BARRY and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Officials warned residents and tourists packing Mediterranean destinations on Tuesday to stay indoors during the hottest hours as the second heat wave in as many weeks hits the region and Greece, Spain and Switzerland battled wildfires.

In Italy, civil protection workers monitored crowds for people in distress from the heat in central Rome, while Red Cross teams in Portugal took to social media to warn people not to leave pets or children in parked cars. In Greece, volunteers handed out drinking water, and in Spain they reminded people to protect themselves from breathing in smoke from fires.

"Heat waves are really an invisible killer," Panu Saaristo, the emergency health team leader for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said during a Geneva briefing. "We are

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experiencing hotter and hotter temperatures for longer stretches of time every single summer here in Europe.”

The new heat wave in several parts of southern Europe is expected to persist for days. The U.N. weather agency said that temperatures in Europe, amplified by climate change, could break the 48.8-degree Celsius (119.8-degree Fahrenheit) record set in Sicily two years ago.

As concerns grew the extreme heat would cause a spike in deaths., civil protection volunteers distributed reusable water bottles at 28 popular spots in Rome. Authorities also encouraged visitors and residents to take advantage of the Italian capital’s distinctive public drinking fountains, hundreds of which are located in the city’s historic center alone.

Fausto Alberetto, who was visiting Rome from northern Italy’s Piedmont region on Tuesday, asked some volunteers how to use an app to find the closest “nasone.” Reading about the heat wave before his trip did little to prepare him for the reality of Rome’s 40 C (104 F) temperatures, he said.

“We got information and we were prepared. But it is one thing to hear it or read it, it is another thing to feel it,” Alberetto said as he walked near Piazza Venezia in the heart of Rome. “Here, it is really dreadful.”

Civil protection volunteers identified four people deemed to be suffering from the heat, but none of them was in serious condition, according to Giuseppe Napolitano, Rome’s civil protection director.

In Cyprus, health authorities confirmed that a 90-year-old man died over the weekend and six other older adults were hospitalized after all seven suffered heatstroke at home last week as temperatures surpassed 43 degrees Celsius (110 degrees Fahrenheit).

Heat records are being shattered all over the world, and scientists say there is a good chance that 2023 will go down as the hottest year on record, with measurements going back to the middle of the 19th century.

Preliminary figures suggest the global average temperature last month set a new June record, according to the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service. The World Meteorological Organization predicted that a number of heat records were set to fall this summer. The U.N. weather agency said unprecedented sea surface temperatures and low Arctic sea-ice levels were largely to blame.

Human-caused climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas is making the world hotter and is being amplified by the naturally occurring El Nino weather phenomenon. But the current El Nino only started a few months ago and is still weak to moderate and isn’t expected to peak until winter.

Temperatures above 40 C (104 F) were forecast to persist not only in the Mediterranean, but across North America, Asia and North Africa.

“These are not your normal weather systems of the past. They have arrived as a consequence of climate change,” John Nairn, senior extreme heat adviser for World Meteorological Organization, said. “It is global warming, and it’s going to continue for some time.”

Nairn noted a sixfold increase in simultaneous heat waves since the 1980s, “and the trend line isn’t changing.”

A relentless summer last year saw Europe sweat through heat wave after heat wave, resulting in 61,000 heat-related deaths, scientists estimate. In 2019, as the world experienced its hottest July on record, the continent also sweltered, with even towns in the Arctic circle reaching new scorching highs.

Spain and Portugal had their temperature records shattered in 2018 when a mass of hot air moved up from Africa, igniting forest fires in the Iberian Peninsula.

The idea that hot weather could be a killer, not just an inconvenience, was impressed on much of Europe by a deadly 2003 heat wave.

France, the most-affected country, had around 15,000 heat-related deaths, many of them of older people left in city apartments and retirement homes without air conditioning. The deaths prompted the country to introduce a warning system and reassess how it dealt with extreme temperatures.

Other countries are taking steps to protect the public’s help during the sweltering summer of 2023, In Greece, authorities last week introduced changes in working hours and ordered afternoon closures of the Acropolis and other ancient sites to allow workers to cope with the high heat. A second heat wave is expected to hit Thursday, and temperatures as high as 44 C (111 F) were expected in parts of central and southern Greece by the end of the week.



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Three large wildfires burned outside Athens for a second day. Thousands of people evacuated from coastal areas south of the capital returned to their homes Tuesday when a fire finally receded after they spent the night on beaches, hotels and public facilities.

Most of Spain is under alert for high to extreme heat with forecasts calling for peak temperatures of 43 C (109 F) in areas along the Ebro River in the northeast and on the island of Mallorca. Spain is also dealing with a prolonged drought that has increased concerns about the risk of wildfires.

Some 400 firefighters assisted by nine water-dumping aircraft labored to extinguish a wildfire that burned for a fourth consecutive day on La Palma in Spain's Canary Islands. Authorities said a perimeter was established around the blaze but it remained active.

In Switzerland, some 150 firefighters, police, troops and other emergency teams backed by helicopters fanned out Tuesday to fight a wildfire that engulfed a mountainside in the southwestern Wallis region, evacuating residents of four villages and hamlets in the area.

In a report Monday, the World Meteorological Organization said a committee of experts has verified the accuracy of Europe's all-time heat record: the 48.8-degree Celsius (119.8 F) temperature reached on August 11, 2021, in Sicily. A full report has not yet been published.

The previous verified record of 48 degrees Celsius (118.4 degrees Fahrenheit) was set in Athens on July 10, 1977.

Keaten reported from Geneva. Associated Press writers Dana Beltaji in London; Derek Gatopoulos in Athens; Joseph Wilson in Barcelona; Menelaos Hadjicostis in Nicosia, Cyprus; Trisha Thomas and Frances D'Emilio in Rome contributed.

## **Mammals may have hunted down dinosaurs for dinner, rare fossil suggests**

By MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — An unusual find in China suggests some early mammals may have hunted dinosaur for dinner.

The fossil shows a badgerlike creature chomping down on a small, beaked dinosaur, their skeletons intertwined. The find comes from a site known as "China's Pompeii," where mud and debris from long-ago volcanoes buried creatures in their tracks.

"It does seem like this is a prehistoric hunt, captured in stone, like a freeze frame," University of Edinburgh paleontologist Steve Brusatte, who was not involved with the study, said in an email.

The fossil, described Tuesday in the journal *Scientific Reports*, shows two creatures from around 125 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period.

Even though the mammal is much smaller, researchers think it was attacking the dinosaur when they both got caught in the volcanic flow, said study author Jordan Mallon, a paleobiologist at the Canadian Museum of Nature. The mammal is perched on the dinosaur, its paws gripping the reptile's jaw and a hind limb while its teeth plunge into the ribcage.

"I've never seen a fossil like this before," Mallon said.

That mammals ate dinosaur meat had been proposed before: another fossil showed a mammal died with dinosaur remains in its gut. But the new find also suggests that mammals may have actually preyed on dinosaurs several times their size, and didn't just scavenge ones that were already dead, Mallon said.

"This turns the old story on its head," Brusatte said. "We're used to thinking of the Age of Dinosaurs as a time when dinosaurs ruled the world, and the tiny mammals cowered in the shadows."

The study authors acknowledged that there have been some fossil forgeries known from this part of the world, which Mallon said was a concern when they started their research. But after doing their own preparations of the skeletons and analyzing the rock samples, he said they were confident that the fossil — which was found by a farmer in 2012 — was genuine, and would welcome other scientists to study

the fossil as well.

The mammal in the fossil duo is the meat-eating *Repenomamus robustus*, about the size of a house cat, Mallon said. The dinosaur — *Psittacosaurus lujiatunensis* — was about as big as a medium-sized dog with a parrotlike beak.

This species was a plant eater, but other dinosaurs were meat eaters or ate both. In the end, dinosaurs were probably still eating mammals more often than the other way around, Mallon said.

"And yet we now know that the mammals were able to fight back, at least at times," he said.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Top US firms supplied equipment to keep Russian oil flowing after Ukraine invasion

By ED DAVEY Associated Press

Major American providers of oilfield services supplied Russia with millions of dollars in equipment for months after its invasion of Ukraine, helping to sustain a critical part of its economy even as Western nations launched sanctions aimed at starving the Russian war effort.

The largest — SLB, formerly Schlumberger — maintained and even slightly grew its business after others eventually departed. It announced on Friday it would stop exporting equipment there as The Associated Press prepared to publish a report on the companies' Russian operations.

Russia imported more than 5,500 items worth more than \$200 million from the top five U.S. firms in the sector — led by SLB, Baker Hughes and Halliburton — in the year following the invasion that began in February 2022. That's according to customs data obtained by B4Ukraine and vetted by The AP.

The technology helped keep some of the world's most challenging oilfields operating in a sector that provided nearly half of Russia's federal revenues in 2021. Baker Hughes and Halliburton wound down their Russian operations several months after the invasion, but until last week, SLB still sold technology there.

It was "deeply shocking to find a U.S. company continuing to supply equipment to Russia's oil and gas sector," said Eleanor Nichol, executive director of B4Ukraine, a coalition of more than 80 nonprofits calling for multinationals to leave the Russian market.

The AP corresponded with SLB about the exports over several months beginning in February and asked the company for final comment on Wednesday. SLB announced two days later it would halt shipments of technology and equipment to Russia from all SLB facilities worldwide. The company said it was "in response to the continued expansion of international sanctions," including new EU ones at the end of June.

In April, Ukraine categorized SLB as a "sponsor of the war," a label aimed at deterring banks, investors and customers from doing business with companies still operating in Russia. Agiya Zagrebelska, Ukraine's sanctions chief, told AP that SLB had benefited financially by remaining in Russia as competitors left.

SLB spokeswoman Moira Duff rejected the idea that SLB's operations effectively support the Russian war effort. She said SLB voluntarily curtailed some activity starting the month after the invasion.

"Where permitted by evolving international sanctions, we have continued to provide certain products," Duff said before last week's announcement.

On Monday, Duff said SLB still has employees in Russia even though it will no longer send equipment there.

Halliburton wound down its Russia operations less than six months after the invasion "while prioritizing safety," spokesman Brad Leone said. Baker Hughes announced the sale of its oilfield services business in Russia last August, six months after the invasion, and completed the deal three months later.

By contrast, oil majors including Exxon, Shell and BP scrambled to quit Russia after the invasion, announcing their decision to leave within days or weeks and writing off billions in assets. Their operations wound down over the following months, though some assets remain stranded. BP wrote off \$24.4 billion,

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Shell \$4.2 billion and Exxon \$4 billion, they said in public statements.

Oilfield services companies carry out drilling and well construction, but don't typically produce fossil fuels themselves. SLB is by far the biggest, with a market cap of about \$81 billion.

The customs data show Russia imported 3,279 items from SLB in the year after the invasion, valued at almost \$60 million. The most expensive was a \$3.5 million oil well monitoring system, which feeds operators data to optimize production.

Russia imported 712 items valued at almost \$121 million from Baker Hughes, and 1,399 objects valued at almost \$20 million from Halliburton, according to the data. The fourth-largest U.S. oilfield services provider, NOV, was far back with 153 items worth \$831,000, and the fifth-largest, Noble Corp., didn't ship any items after the invasion, according to the research.

The figures may capture some items that were in transit before the war broke out. It doesn't include the value of work done by the companies' employees or contractors in Russia. SLB, for example, had 9,000 employees there as of February.

Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, a professor of management at Yale and leader of an effort to track whether companies have left Russia since the invasion, praised the big oil producers — BP, Exxon and Shell — for moving with "remarkable speed" to withdraw.

"By contrast, the oil services companies, kicking and screaming, had to feel the sting of public exhortations to gradually move out," he said, though he added Halliburton's sale took a reasonable amount of time.

The Yale list rated all the oil majors and top U.S. oilfield services companies that were trading with Russia when the invasion began as having undertaken "Suspension" or "Withdrawal" except for SLB and France's TotalEnergies, which are rated as "Buying Time." Yale's Steven Tian said there are no plans to change SLB's rating at present because the company is still doing business in Russia, though not sending in new products or technology.

Just days after the invasion, the U.S. Department of Commerce banned companies from exporting critical oil extraction equipment, including items that could be used in deep water, the Arctic or shale formations, without a special license. A notice in the Federal Register said the move was aimed at restricting Russia's access to items to "support its military capabilities." Allies including the UK and EU followed suit.

AP's review found hundreds of items imported from SLB and Baker Hughes carrying codes that matched Commerce's restricted list, but there's no evidence the items violated the ban, which says licenses are needed except under specific circumstances. Asked about a sample of the products, SLB said their items didn't need licenses; Baker Hughes said they got all required licenses. A Commerce spokesman declined to comment on specific companies.

Whether the equipment was on restricted lists or not, oil experts said it would have been vital to Russia. Many of its oilfields are almost exhausted, offshore or under deep ice, requiring specialized equipment and expertise that American firms are known for.

Adnan Vatansever, a specialist in Russian political economy at King's College London and a former consultant for the U.S. Department of Energy, said Russia doesn't have the technology or expertise to fully exploit old fields or challenging ones that lie offshore or in Siberia. Nor does China, which might have been a potential source if it did, Vatansever said.

If all oilfield service companies had left, he said, it would have hurt Russian production more than the departure of oil producers. Russian oil firms can still find a market for their crude without the majors to buy it. But Vatansever estimated production would have fallen significantly without the American companies' equipment and expertise.

Zagrebelska said SLB benefited from departing rivals, with revenue up 25% in the third quarter of 2022 compared to the prior quarter and the company taking on 70 new employees by late in the year, including on accounts for Russian fossil fuel giants Gazprom and Rosneft. Corporate filings show Russian business rose slightly for SLB through 2022, to 6% of overall revenue compared to 5% in 2021.

SLB's Bliss said the company's workforce has actually declined 10% since the invasion, and that the rise in Russian revenue was due to normal market fluctuations.

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.

## **You always hear about the 'nuclear football.' Here's the behind-the-scenes story**

By DEL QUENTIN WILBER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The most important — and mysterious — “football” in the world isn't really a football at all.

Officially called the “ Presidential Emergency Satchel, ” the “nuclear football” is a bulky briefcase that contains atomic war plans and enables the president to transmit nuclear orders to the Pentagon. The heavy case is carried by a military officer who is never far behind the president, whether the commander-in-chief is boarding a helicopter or exiting meetings with world leaders.

Beyond those basic facts, however, not much is known about the satchel, which has come to symbolize the massive power of the presidency. Let's change that.

William Burr, a senior analyst at the nonprofit National Security Archive at George Washington University, published a report Tuesday detailing his recent research into the presidential pigskin. Among the tidbits Burr unearthed: The football once contained presidential decrees that some in the U.S. government came to believe were likely illegal and unnecessary (there would be nobody left alive to implement them in the event of a nuclear holocaust).

Burr, who has spent three decades researching and writing about nuclear war planning and history, sat down with The Associated Press recently to talk about his research and the nuclear football's history. The interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity:

**WHAT IS THE 'FOOTBALL'? WHEN DID IT FIRST GET DESCRIBED THAT WAY?**

In the beginning, there was the president's “emergency satchel” or “the black bag.” During the late 1950s, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his advisers worried about the United States' vulnerability to a nuclear surprise attack. So the president could make quick decisions on the spot, a military aide started carrying a satchel of documents that would help the president communicate with the Pentagon or other military headquarters.

The satchel also included presidential proclamations — Presidential Emergency Action Documents, or PEADS — declaring a national emergency and expanding executive power to deal with the crisis. Initially the satchel and military aide followed the President only during travel outside of Washington, D.C. Eisenhower passed the satchel on to his successor, John F. Kennedy, and sometime in the early 1960s it also became known as the football, perhaps because of the Kennedy family's liking for touch football.

**WHY SO MUCH INTEREST IN IT?**

The explanation is the secrecy and the problem of nuclear risk and danger. The idea of a military aide following the president, carrying a locked bag with secret nuclear information, is a routine for the modern U.S. presidency that has intrigued journalists and historians and the public. The idea that the president needs to be able to make speedy decisions in a perilous moment conveyed the ultimate danger of nuclear weapons. That the football system has lasted since the late 1950s adds to the mystery.

**WHAT GOT YOU STARTED?**

My research at the National Security Archive has partly focused on command-and-control arrangements for nuclear weapons. On command and control, some good information has been declassified over the years. But there are so many aspects to the nuclear problem that I did not look into the history of the football as early as I should have. Unfortunately, but not too surprising, only a smattering of information has been declassified. Even the few relevant documents from the 1960s are heavily excised.

**THE FOOTBALL CHANGED DURING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. TELL US MORE.**

The football included emergency proclamations that, as the Carter administration found out, had not



been updated for years. And there was concern about the legality of some of them. Also, White House officials recognized that the comprehensive devastation of nuclear war could make the proclamations irrelevant. By the early 1980s, the presidential directives had been revised, but how they were changed has not been disclosed. Whether there were still worries about their legality is also an open question.

AND THE VICE PRESIDENT SOMETIMES HAS ONE, TOO?

Apparently when Richard Nixon was vice president he was assigned a black bag. The next vice president, Lyndon Johnson, declined a black bag. When Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, top military commanders worried that the new president did not know what was in the football so they made sure that a White House military aide gave him a briefing after he arrived in Washington.

If any of the vice presidents from Hubert Humphrey to Nelson Rockefeller had a military aide carrying a football it has not been disclosed, so far as I know. But President Jimmy Carter was aware of the vulnerability problem and made sure that his vice president, Walter Mondale, had a military aide carrying the football.

SEEMS LIKE THE FOOTBALL IS EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE. HOW DID YOU APPROACH UNEARTHING A SECRET THAT HIDES IN PLAIN SIGHT?

You've put your finger right on the problem — everywhere and nowhere. For example, we can see the military aide carrying the bag behind Vice President Mike Pence during the Jan. 6, 2021, riots at the U.S. Capitol. But its contents remain as inscrutable as they were 50 years ago. The Archives' new posting includes photos of the military aide carrying the football, sometimes with the president in different situations. From some of the photos, you can see what looks like a little antenna projecting from the bag, suggesting that it includes communication devices. As far as the contents go, some details have been leaked and some general information has been declassified — but very little in the way of specifics.

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The Associated Press receives support for nuclear security coverage from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Outrider Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for all content. Del Wilber is the Washington investigations editor for the AP. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/delwilber>

## Archaeologists in Louisiana save artifacts 12,000 years old from natural disasters and looters

By STEPHEN SMITH and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

VERNON PARISH, La. (AP) — Long buried under the woods of west central Louisiana, stone tools, spear-points and other evidence of people living in the area as long as 12,000 years ago have become more exposed and vulnerable, due to hurricanes, flooding and looters.

This summer, archaeologists have been gingerly digging up the ground at the Vernon Parish site in the Kisatchie National Forest. They have been sifting through dirt to unearth and preserve the evidence of prehistoric occupation of the area.

"The site appears to have been continuously occupied throughout prehistory, as evidenced by a wide range of stone tools and pottery dating to each Native American cultural era up to European contact," the U.S. Forest Service said in a news release.

The site was found by surveyors in 2003, according to the Forest Service. After hurricanes Laura and Delta uprooted trees, disturbing and exposing some of the artifacts, Kisatchie National Forest officials used hurricane relief money to begin salvage excavations to learn more about the site, and to preserve it.

"Between the looting and the hurricane damage we were really in danger of losing this site over time," Forest Service archaeologist Matthew Helmer said during a media tour of the site in June.

Helmer, walked amid areas already excavated, pointing to changes in soil color and texture that, like the crude artifacts being excavated, can give clues as researchers work to determine facts about the people who occupied the area at different times over the millennia.

"We're really writing the history of these peoples that lived prior to 1492, all the way back 10,000-plus years," said Helmer.

It's a welcome opportunity for Mark Rees, a professor of archaeology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and director of the Louisiana Public Archaeology Lab.

Still, Rees laments that the work is hampered by people who have made unauthorized digs and made off with material from the site.

"It's like walking into the archive and finding a book that's so rare it's one of a kind and it predates writing itself, it's like tearing a page out of that book and walking off with it," said Rees.

The salvaged artifacts will be sorted, catalogued and examined as researchers at the archaeology lab seek to make determinations about past cultures at the site.

McGill reported from New Orleans.

## Climate envoy John Kerry meets with Chinese officials in a new US push to stabilize rocky relations

BEIJING (AP) — U.S. climate envoy John Kerry told China's top diplomat on Tuesday that President Joe Biden's administration is "very committed" to stabilizing relations between the world's two biggest economies, as the countries seek to restart high-level contacts.

On his second day of talks in Beijing, Kerry met with the ruling Communist Party's head of foreign relations Wang Yi, telling him Biden hoped the two countries could "achieve efforts together that can make a significant difference to the world."

Ties between the countries have hit a historic low amid disputes over tariffs, access to technology, human rights and China's threats against self-governing Taiwan.

In his opening remarks, Wang said the sides had suffered from a lack of communication, but that China believes through renewed dialogue "we can find a proper solution to any problems."

"Sometimes, small problems can become big problems," Wang said, adding that dialogue must be conducted on an "equal basis."

That was an apparent reference to U.S. criticism of China's aggressive foreign policy, rights abuses against Muslim and Buddhist minorities and travel sanctions against officials ranging from the Beijing-appointed leader of Hong Kong to the country's defense minister.

Coinciding with Kerry's visit, former U.S. national security adviser and secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, arrived in Beijing this week and met with Defense Minister Li Shangfu on Tuesday.

China's Defense Ministry quoted Li as praising the role the 100-year-old Kissinger played in opening up China-U.S. relations in the early 1970s, but said bilateral ties had hit a low point because of "some people on the American side who are not willing to meet China halfway."

"We are constantly striving to establish stable, predictable and constructive China-U.S. relations and hope that the U.S. side will join with the Chinese side in consolidating the consensus of the two countries' leaders and jointly advance the healthy and stable development of relations between our countries and their militaries," Li was quoted as saying.

China broke off some mid- and high-level contacts with the Biden administration last August, including over climate issues, to show its anger with then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan. China claims the island as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, threatening to draw the U.S. into a major conflict in a region crucial to the global economy.

Contacts have only slowly been restored and China continues to refuse to restart dialogue between the People's Liberation Army, the party's military branch, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

Kerry is the third senior Biden administration official in recent weeks to travel to China for meetings with their counterparts following Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

Kerry said he appreciated the opportunity to "change our relationship for the better" and that Biden is "very committed to stability within this relationship and also to achieve efforts together that can make a significant difference to the world."

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Biden "values his relationship with President Xi (Jinping), and I think President Xi values his relationship with President Biden, and I know he looks forward to being able to move forward and change the dynamic," Kerry said.

Kerry later paid a courtesy call on newly appointed Premier Li Qiang, the party's second-ranking official, who told him China and the U.S. should cooperate more closely on the "extremely large challenge" posed by global warming.

Kerry responded that "working and showing the rest of the world how we can cooperate and begin to address this with the urgency it requires is incredible."

He pointed to previous agreements on reducing the output of methane, a major contributor to global warming, as well as transitioning away from coal as a power source and addressing deforestation.

"Now, I can't tell you for sure, but you know and I know that things are changing and predictions are much more serious than they've ever been," Kerry, a former U.S. senator, secretary of state and presidential candidate, told Li.

No meeting has been announced with Xi, and China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang has been absent from public sight for three weeks.

There was no immediate comment on Kerry's Monday meeting with his counterpart Xie Zhenhua in the first extensive face-to-face climate discussions between representatives of the world's two worst climate polluters after a nearly yearlong hiatus.

China leads the world in producing and consuming coal, and has proceeded with building new plants that add tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere annually, while also expanding the use of renewables such as solar and wind power.

China has pledged to level off carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and become carbon neutral by 2060. The U.S. and the European Union have urged China to adopt more ambitious reduction targets.

As with the U.S. and Europe, China has seen record stretches of high temperatures that have threatened crops and prompted cities to open Cold War-era bomb shelters to help residents escape the heat.

U.S. lawmakers have faulted China for refusing to make bigger cuts in climate-damaging fossil fuel emissions, along with the country's insistence that it is still a developing economy that produces far less pollution per capita and should be exempted from the climate standards adopted by developed Western economies.

Biden and Xi spent days together when both were their countries' vice presidents and met in November at the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia. However, no state visits have been held following the COVID-19 outbreak and no plans have been announced for their next face-to-face meeting.

Asked about U.S. restrictions on technology transfer and the overall state of bilateral relations, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Mao Ning, said China "has always opposed the U.S. politicizing and weaponizing economic, trade and technological issues."

"We hope the U.S. will implement President Biden's promise that he has no intention of decoupling from China, obstructing China's economic development, or encircling China, so as to create a favorable environment for China-U.S. economic and trade cooperation," Mao told reporters at a daily briefing.

## Today in History: July 19, Republicans nominate Trump for president

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, July 19, the 200th day of 2023. There are 165 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 19, 2005, President George W. Bush announced his choice of federal appeals court judge John G. Roberts Jr. to replace Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. (Roberts ended up succeeding Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, who died in Sept. 2005; Samuel Alito followed O'Connor.)

On this date:

In 1812, during the War of 1812, the First Battle of Sackets Harbor in Lake Ontario resulted in an Ameri-

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can victory as U.S. naval forces repelled a British attack.

In 1969, Apollo 11 and its astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins, went into orbit around the moon.

In 1975, the Apollo and Soyuz space capsules that were linked in orbit for two days separated.

In 1979, the Nicaraguan capital of Managua fell to Sandinista guerrillas, two days after President Anastasio Somoza fled the country.

In 1980, the Moscow Summer Olympics began, minus dozens of nations that were boycotting the games because of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.

In 1989, 111 people were killed when United Air Lines Flight 232, a DC-10 which sustained the uncontained failure of its tail engine and the loss of hydraulic systems, crashed while making an emergency landing at Sioux City, Iowa; 185 other people survived.

In 1990, baseball's all-time hits leader, Pete Rose, was sentenced in Cincinnati to five months in prison for tax evasion.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton announced a policy allowing gays to serve in the military under a compromise dubbed "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue."

In 2006, prosecutors reported that Chicago police beat, kicked, shocked or otherwise tortured scores of Black suspects from the 1970s to the early 1990s to try to extract confessions from them.

In 2014, New York City police officer Daniel Pantaleo, involved in the arrest of Eric Garner, who died in custody two days earlier after being placed in an apparent chokehold, was stripped of his gun and badge and placed on desk duty. (Pantaleo was fired in August 2019.)

In 2016, Republicans meeting in Cleveland nominated Donald Trump as their presidential standard-bearer; in brief videotaped remarks, Trump thanked the delegates, saying: "This is a movement, but we have to go all the way."

In 2020, President Donald Trump refused to publicly commit to accepting the results of the upcoming election, telling Chris Wallace on "Fox News Sunday" that it was too early to make any such guarantee.

Ten years ago: In a rare and public reflection on race, President Barack Obama called on the nation to do some soul searching over the death of Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of his shooter, George Zimmerman, saying the slain black teenager "could have been me 35 years ago." A Dallas woman plunged 75 feet to her death from a Six Flags Over Texas roller coaster when her safety restraint apparently failed.

Five years ago: The White House said President Donald Trump had invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to the White House in the fall for a second get-together, just days after a Helsinki summit that brought Trump criticism from Democrats and Republicans alike. Putin said his summit with Trump had been a success, and he accused Trump's opponents in the U.S. of hampering any progress on the issues they discussed. A duck boat packed with tourists capsized and sank in high winds on a lake in the tourist town of Branson, Missouri, killing 17 people.

One year ago: Britain shattered its record for the highest temperature ever registered amid a heat wave that seared swaths of Europe. The unusually hot, dry weather triggered wildfires from Portugal to the Balkans and led to hundreds of heat-related deaths. Russian missiles struck cities and villages in eastern and southern Ukraine, hitting homes, a school and a community center. The American League beat the National League 3-2 in Major League Baseball's All-Star Game.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Helen Gallagher is 97. Singer Vikki Carr is 83. Blues singer-musician Little Freddie King is 83. Actor George Dzundza is 78. Rock singer-musician Alan Gorrie (Average White Band) is 77. International Tennis Hall of Famer Ilie Nastase is 77. Rock musician Brian May is 76. Rock musician Bernie Leadon is 76. Actor Beverly Archer is 75. Movie director Abel Ferrara is 72. Actor Peter Barton is 67. Rock musician Kevin Haskins (Love and Rockets; Bauhaus) is 63. Movie director Atom Egoyan is 63. Actor Campbell Scott is 62. Actor Anthony Edwards is 61. Actor Clea Lewis is 58. Percussionist Evelyn Glennie is 58. Classical singer Urs Buhler (Il Divo) is 52. Actor Andrew Kavovit is 52. Rock musician Jason McGerr (Death Cab for Cutie) is 49. Actor Benedict Cumberbatch is 47. Actor Erin Cummings is 46. TV chef Marcela Valladolid is 45. Actor Chris Sullivan ("This is Us") is 43. Actor Jared Padalecki is 41. Actor Trai Byers is 40. Actor Kaitlin Doubleday ("Nashville") is 39. Actor/comedian Dustin Ybarra is 37. Actor Steven Anthony Lawrence is 33.