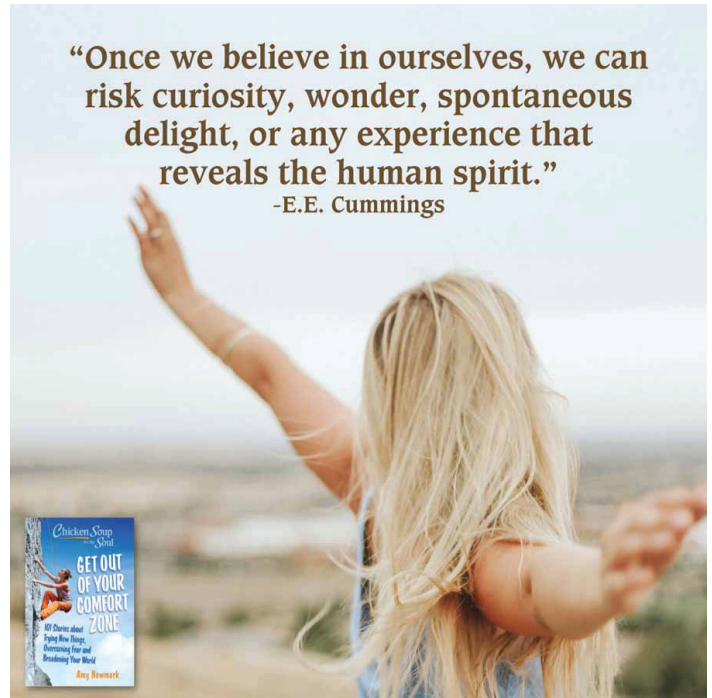


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“Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.”

-E.E. Cummings

Groton Jr Legion is taking Groton Transit to Lennox for State Tourney on Thursday and returning on Sunday! Contact the Transit for more information.

Wednesday, Aug. 2

Senior Menu: Breaded pork cutlet, scalloped potatoes, Harvard beets, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, at City Hall

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Freshmen Confirmation Info (students and parents), 6 p.m.; Youth Gathering Info (8th-12th), 7 p.m.

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

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

Thursday, Aug. 3

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, corn, Mandarin orange salad, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 4

Senior Menu: Chicken pasta salad, grape juice, muffin, watermelon, carrots.

Wine on Nine Golf Event

State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox: Groton vs. SF Christian 30 minutes after the second game.

Saturday, Aug. 5

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Lennox

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

The York Fire has burned more than 80,000 acres, destroying thousands of Joshua Trees as it tears through the Mojave National Preserve across parts of California and Nevada. The blaze is 23% contained.

New Jersey Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver, the first Black woman to serve as state Assembly speaker, has died aged 71 after being hospitalized for an undisclosed medical issue.

Three former dancers filed a lawsuit against pop star Lizzo accusing the singer of sexual harassment and creating a hostile work environment.

Houston Astros pitcher Framber Valdez completed his first career no-hitter on Tuesday night in a 2-0 win over the Cleveland Guardians at Minute Maid Park.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched an unannounced military drill on a number of disputed islands in the Persian Gulf on Wednesday, coinciding with an increase in U.S. military presence in the region.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian drone strikes damaged "facilities of the port and industrial infrastructure" of the Odesa region, regional military administration Oleh Kiper said. Ukraine struck down more than 10 drones over the capital.

TALKING POINTS

"The exploration and peaceful uses of outer space is humanity's common endeavor and should benefit all. China is committed to the peaceful uses of outer space, security of outer space and extensive cooperation with all countries. China also welcomes progress by more countries in this area. We are ready to continue to work with other countries, advance the peaceful uses of outer space, better promote economic development and social progress of all countries, and make a greater contribution to building a community with a shared future for mankind." Chinese Embassy to the United States spokesperson Liu Pengyu urging 'peaceful' cooperation on matters related to outer space as U.S. lawmakers call to release more information in line with the Pentagon's efforts to track unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs).

"Do you realize you're proliferating cultural Marxism? You're literally a pawn in helping tear down Western Civilization. Ron DeSantis is fighting the right battles." Ex-Trump attorney Jenna Ellis calling out Caitlyn Jenner over her criticism of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' LGBTQ+ messaging.

"Words are not enough to describe the infinite beauty that is Angus (Conor). I'm so grateful I got the chance to know him in this life, to call him a brother, to see his warm, kind eyes and bright smile, or hear his infectious cackle of a laugh (I'm smiling now just thinking of it). I know people use this expression often when talking about folks they love... 'they could light up any room they entered,' but boy let me tell you, he was the best at it. I'd like to remember him that way. For all of the boundless light, love and joy he always managed to give us. I'll cherish every moment." Actress Zendaya honoring her late Euphoria co-star Angus Cloud after his sudden death at the age of 25..

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

ADP employment for July is scheduled to release at 8:15 a.m. ET. Economists forecast that private employment likely rose by 173,000 jobs, down from 497,000 in June.

Qualcomm could surprise markets when it reports its third-quarter earnings. Despite near-term headwinds, JP Morgan offered a "favorable view" of the company, citing "very early signs" of recovery in the global smartphone market. Kraft Heinz, Etsy, and Shopify are among other major companies due to report their earnings reports.

Former Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff says he was "concerned" for his safety after he informed then-President Donald Trump he would not obstruct the certification of the 2020 election, according to a new indictment of Donald Trump. Read more about it below.

Fitch Ratings downgraded the U.S. government credit rating from the highest AAA to AA+, citing rising debt levels and a "steady deterioration" in governance." Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called the second downgrade in history "arbitrary."

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The Perfect DOG

This search is gonna be ruff!

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
DAVID ABBINANTI

BOOK BY
JILL ABBINANTI

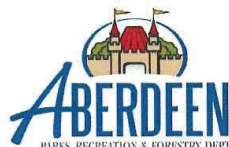
INSPIRED BY THE BOOK
"THE PERFECT DOG"
BY JOHN O'HURLEY

When: Thursday, August 10, 2023

Time: 1:00pm

Where: Groton Community Center – 109 N 3rd St

Entry Fee: \$0



Thank you!!!!!!

I would like to thank everyone involved with my benefit from the bottom of my heart. I am so humbled by the number of people who volunteered to take charge and make it such a beautiful, successful day. Thank you to everyone who showed up in person and everyone who reached out but couldn't be there. I noticed and appreciated each and every one of you.

Thank you to Thrivent, Dacotah Bank, and Venture Communications for helping with expenses. A huge thank you to my sister, Stephanie, for making this event so special and organized. Thank you to all my sweet friends and family members for helping her pull it off. The kids' activity room was great, the flyers were beautiful, and the article in the Marshall County Journal was perfect. Thank you to all my aunts, uncles, and cousins who headed up the food and made an amazing meal. Thank you to Horton's Meat Processing for the burgers and brats. Thank you to Snapper's for the beverages. Thank you to the Britton Cornhole Club for the fun tournament. Thank you to Scott Bush and everyone who helped with the live auction. Thank you to Angela Antonsen for making 350+ t-shirts! Thank you to everyone who helped set up and tear down for the event. Thank you to Burt, Todyn, and Noah for being my rock that day! Thank you to each and every one of you who donated baskets for the silent auction, raffle drawings, and the live auction. Thank you to my best girls that made the whole thing run so smoothly! There were so many amazing items I could not begin to thank you enough. If I missed anyone, I am truly sorry. I am so very thankful for it all. It was a wonderful day!

Sincerely, Angela Glover



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Trump indicted in connection with Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 1, 2023 7:48 PM

WASHINGTON — A federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., indicted Donald Trump on Tuesday, alleging that Trump and co-conspirators attempted to subvert the 2020 election to keep the former president in power through a series of illegal actions that culminated in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The former president faces four charges in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia stemming from his actions following the November 2020 election, including conspiracy to defraud the United States; conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding; obstruction of, and attempt to obstruct, an official proceeding; and conspiracy against rights.

"Each of these conspiracies — which built on the widespread mistrust the Defendant was creating through pervasive and destabilizing lies about election fraud — targeted a bedrock function of the United States federal government: the nation's process of collecting, counting and certifying the results of a presidential election," the indictment states.

Special Counsel Jack Smith said during a brief statement on Tuesday evening that Trump's lies about election fraud caused the "unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy" on Jan. 6.

"As described in the indictment, it was fueled by lies," Smith said. "Lies by the defendant aimed at obstructing a bedrock function of the U.S. government."

Smith said he would seek a speedy trial, so the evidence prosecutors have gathered can be tested in court. He added that investigations into other individuals, possibly including six unnamed co-conspirators listed in the indictment, would continue. He did not take questions.

The indictment lists Trump's false statements about election results in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The 45-page indictment says Trump knew that his statements about the election were false. Despite declarations from state leaders and elections officials that no fraud occurred, Trump continued to say vote totals were in his favor and worked with co-conspirators to influence state legislators to decertify results, according to the indictment.

"Despite having lost, the Defendant was determined to remain in power," the indictment reads. "So for more than two months following election day on November 3, 2020, the Defendant spread lies that there had been outcome-determinative fraud in the election and that he had actually won."

"These claims were false, and the Defendant knew that they were false," it reads.

The indictment later adds: "These prolific lies about election fraud included dozens of specific claims that there had been substantial fraud in certain states, such as that large numbers of dead, non-resident, non-citizen or otherwise ineligible voters had cast ballots, or that voting machines had changed votes for the Defendant to votes for Biden."

Trump is leading the field of Republicans vying to become the party's nominee for president in the 2024 election. The first GOP primary debate is scheduled for later this month. Republicans largely rebuked the indictment, with many dismissing it as partisan.

In a statement from his campaign, Trump denied wrongdoing and called his prosecution politically motivated.

"This is nothing more than the latest corrupt chapter in the continued pathetic attempt by the Biden Crime Family and their weaponized Department of Justice to interfere with the 2024 presidential election, in which President Trump is the undisputed front-runner, and leading by substantial margins," a statement

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from the Trump campaign read.

The plans for fake electors

The indictment focuses on plans by Trump and co-conspirators — four unnamed attorneys, a U.S. Justice Department official and a political consultant — to replace legitimate electors in seven key states, which Joe Biden in fact won, with fraudulent electors pledged to Trump.

Federal prosecutors listed five steps Trump took, escalating as each effort failed to bring his desired result.

According to the indictment, Trump and his co-conspirators pressured state legislators and election officials in key states to switch the legitimate election results in those states from Biden to Trump.

Trump and his team organized fraudulent slates of electors, which they sought to have replace the legitimate Biden electors, according to the indictment.

Trump ordered “sham” U.S. Justice Department investigations into election crimes in certain states, and considered having DOJ officials send letters outlining supposed concerns with the elections in those states. Those concerns could then be used as a pretext to advance the fraudulent electors, the indictment reads.

Trump and his co-conspirators then pressured Vice President Mike Pence to use his ceremonial role to certify the election results on Jan. 6 to authenticate the fraudulent electors, the indictment reads.

When Pence, who did not have the legal authority to replace the electors, declined to participate, Trump repeated to supporters who had gathered in Washington that Pence did have the authority to change the election result and “directed them to the Capitol to obstruct the certification proceeding,” the indictment said.

As the crowd turned violent, Trump and his co-conspirators used the chaos to continue launching claims of election fraud and attempting to convince members of Congress to delay the proceeding, prosecutors alleged.

False statements about election fraud

Trump “pushed officials in certain states to ignore the popular vote; disenfranchise millions of voters; dismiss legitimate electors; and ultimately, cause the ascertainment of and voting by illegitimate electors in favor of the Defendant,” the indictment says.

Trump and his co-conspirators worked to establish fraudulent electors in seven states by “attempting to mimic the procedures that the legitimate electors were supposed to follow under the Constitution and other federal and state laws,” according to the indictment.

Those false electors in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin met on the same days as legitimate electors, casting fake votes for Trump and then signing certificates where they falsely claimed they were the actual electors.

“Some fraudulent electors were tricked into participating based on the understanding that their votes would be used only if the Defendant succeeded in outcome-determinative lawsuits within their state, which the Defendant never did,” reads the indictment.

Those false election certificates were then sent to the vice president and other government officials, in an attempt for them to be counted instead of the legitimate electors when Congress convened on Jan. 6, 2021 to certify the vote.

That morning an associate of Trump’s, who isn’t named in the indictment, worked to get false election certificates from Michigan and Wisconsin to an unnamed U.S. senator, who was supposed to deliver those to Pence, according to the indictment.

A staffer for Pence later rejected efforts to put those false electors into the vice president’s hands, according to the indictment.

Trump’s pressure on Pence

The indictment details Trump’s efforts to “enlist” Pence to alter the election results, using Trump and his co-conspirators’ fraudulent slate of electors.

The vice president has a ceremonial role in certifying presidential election results.

When Pence remained unconvinced by the scheme, Trump began rallying supporters to amass in Washington, D.C., on the day Pence would preside over the certification, the indictment states.

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The indictment recounts Trump's Dec. 19, 2020, post on Twitter, in which he wrote "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!"

Days later, on Dec. 23, Trump re-posted a memo titled "Operation 'PENCE' CARD," that falsely stated Pence could disqualify electors from the states where Trump falsely claimed voter fraud. That same day, a person identified in the indictment as "co-conspirator 2," identified as John Eastman by his attorney, circulated a memo detailing plans for Pence to unlawfully declare Trump the winner.

The indictment details multiple phone calls and conversations in which Trump pressures the vice president, including a call from Pence to wish the president "Merry Christmas" that quickly turned into Trump asking Pence to reject electoral votes on Jan. 6.

"You know I don't think I have the authority to change the outcome," Pence told Trump, according to the indictment.

The two spoke by phone again on New Year's Day when Trump "berated" Pence and told him, "You're too honest" after the vice president opposed a lawsuit seeking to give him authority to reject or return votes to the states.

Within hours of the phone call, Trump again took to Twitter to promote the rally. "The BIG Protest Rally in Washington, D.C., will take place at 11:00 A.M. on January 6th. Locational (sic) details to follow. Stop-TheSteal!" according to the indictment.

The pressure campaign continued into the early days of January, including a meeting on Jan. 4 during which Trump and "co-conspirator 2" tried to convince Pence, his chief of staff and his legal counsel, that Pence should reject or return to the states Biden's legitimate electoral votes.

Pence's notes from the meeting detail Trump's false statements he "won every state by 100,000s of votes," according to the indictment.

Despite acknowledgement from both "co-conspirator 2" and Trump's senior advisor that the plan would not stand up in court, Trump ordered a second meeting on Jan. 5 between Pence's staff and Eastman.

On each meeting occasion, Trump's senior advisor and Pence's counsel respectively expressed concern of "riots in the streets," and of a "disastrous situation" where the election might "have to be decided in the streets."

Also on Jan. 5, Trump met with Pence alone and warned him that he "would have to publicly criticize him," the indictment states. Pence's chief of staff, concerned for the vice president's safety, alerted his Secret Service detail.

As Trump's supporters amassed at the Ellipse on Jan. 6, the then-president told them "I hope Mike is going to do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so. Because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election," the indictment recounts.

Trump continued to fire up the crowd, falsely telling them that the Pennsylvania Legislature wanted "to recertify their votes."

"But the only way that can happen is if Mike Pence agrees to send it back," he told them.

They began to chant "send it back."

Trump continued, telling the crowd "we fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."

"During and after the Defendant's remarks, thousands of people marched toward the Capitol," the indictment states.

Third indictment for Trump

The allegations mirror conclusions that the U.S. House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6, 2021, Attack on the U.S. Capitol made following the panel's two-year probe.

The Democratic-led committee placed Trump at the center of the attack, saying his and his close allies' consistent lies about the election and voicing of conspiracy theories inspired the armed insurrection.

The U.S. House, then under Democratic control, impeached Trump in the waning days of his presidency for inciting the attack. A majority of the U.S. Senate — 57 senators, including seven Republicans — voted to convict him, but fell short of the two-thirds required for conviction.

The indictment is the third for Trump this year.

The former president also faces criminal charges in New York state, where he's accused of falsifying business records by using campaign funds to cover up an affair, and in federal court in Florida on allegations he kept classified materials after he left office.

He has pleaded not guilty in both other cases.

A sweeping Georgia 2020 election interference probe also could lead to high-profile criminal indictments being handed down for Trump and potentially others in Fulton County Superior Court.

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.

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

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Landowners plead for their right to keep carbon pipeline off their land

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 1, 2023 7:48 PM

Landowners urged the state Public Utilities Commission on Tuesday to help them prevent a liquid carbon dioxide pipeline from crossing their land.

It was the fifth day of a hearing at the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre on Navigator CO2's application for a permit to construct the Heartland Greenway pipeline. It was also the first day of landowner testimony, after prior days of testimony from company officials, experts and representatives of pipeline construction workers.

One of the testifying landowners was state Rep. Karla Lems, R-Canton. She introduced an unsuccessful bill during last winter's legislative session that would have barred carbon pipelines from using eminent domain. That's a legal process for gaining access to land when a landowner won't grant it.

Lems' property near Canton, which is south of Sioux Falls, would be crossed not just by the Heartland Greenway pipeline, but also by another carbon pipeline proposed by Summit Carbon Solutions, which will have its permit hearing in September.

Lems said she has invested "hundreds of hours" into learning about and fighting against the projects. She said carbon pipelines provide "private gain for a private company, not for public use."

"Basically, what it comes down to is risk versus reward," Lems said. "The landowners have the risk, and the company has the reward."

Lems is particularly concerned about the potential impacts on the value of property her family intends to sell for development south of Sioux Falls, the state's fastest-growing region.

"It would prohibit us from building structures, those kinds of things that would be needed," Lems said. "It will obviously, definitely affect the economic development."

Reading from prepared remarks, Lems added, "Please search your heart, and do right by the citizens who elected you to represent them and their best interests, which is to deny this application."

The proposed 1,300-mile, approximately \$3 billion Heartland Greenway pipeline would link 21 ethanol plants (including three in South Dakota) and several fertilizer plants across five states. The project would include about 112 miles of pipeline in eastern South Dakota, in Brookings, Moody, Minnehaha, Lincoln and Turner counties.

The pipeline would capture carbon dioxide emitted by the plants and transport it in liquefied form for underground storage in Illinois, or for commercial and industrial uses. The project would be eligible for up to \$1.3 billion in annual federal tax credits, which are intended to help fight climate change by incentivizing the removal of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

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The company says it has offered landowners an average of \$24,000 per acre in negotiations for easements to cross private land. Navigator has easements with about 30% of affected landowners. The company has not yet used eminent domain.

Cross-examination

William Taylor, the attorney representing union workers who would construct the pipeline, said multiple pipelines already cross Lems' land, and those projects had the authority to use eminent domain.

Lems testified that she allowed those pipelines to cross her land without the need for eminent domain. She said that's because other pipelines carry products such as propane, natural gas and oil — "all things the public will use."

She distinguishes those uses from liquid carbon dioxide, which would either be injected underground or sold to commercial or industrial customers to be used for things like oil extraction or dry ice.

Public Utilities Commissioner Chris Nelson referenced the one-time easement payment available to affected landowners and the greater potential demand for corn created by the pipeline. "Am I to infer there are things more important to you than dollars and cents?" Nelson asked.

"It's called freedom," Lems replied. "We should be able to say we want to be part of a project or say 'no thank you.'"

More landowner testimony

Rick Bonander and other impacted landowners expressed similar concerns. Bonander lives near Valley Springs, 15 minutes from Sioux Falls. He asked the commission, "Who is going to want to live next to a CO2 pipeline?"

Some of the pipeline's opponents are concerned about toxic carbon dioxide plumes from potential leaks. In 2020, a leak in a carbon pipeline in Mississippi caused the evacuation of about 200 people and sent 45 to the hospital. In response, federal regulators are reviewing the safety standards for carbon pipelines.

Bonander talked about carbon dioxide's uses in the livestock industry and said "it's a very effective way of euthanizing animals," but not something people want to live near.

"I live in the United States of America and should be able to say no," Bonander said.

Miles Lacey is a farmer from Valley Springs with land that would be impacted by the pipeline. He testified that the proposed route is too close to his home and livestock operation for his comfort.

"We could show up one morning and everything is dead," Lacey said.

Moody County landowner Connie Beyer-Lalonde testified that if the pipeline is authorized and constructed on some of her family's land, "I could not, in good conscience, continue to rent that out."

The hearing is scheduled to continue through Saturday.

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

COMMENTARY

Cultivating the next crop of America's farmers

New farm bill is an opportunity to remove barriers

DANIELLE BROWNE

I consider my days in the sun as a young, organic farmer to be the most rewarding work I've done. The days were long, hot and unforgiving, but I felt free. Farmers have my utmost respect and I believe them to be the backbone of America.

But for young people like me, becoming a full-time farmer is nearly an impossible dream. If we truly care about the future of our food, we must unpack why — and offer solutions to preserve America's farming culture.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the median age for agricultural producers increased

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from 56.3 to 57.5 years old between 2012 and 2017 — making farmers among the oldest workforces in America. People 35 or younger account for only 9% of the country's farm producers.

Why are so few young people going into farming? The 2022 National Young Farmers Survey names access to land, funding, health care, and the cost of production as the top challenges.

The average net income for family farms in 2023 is expected to be less than \$40,000, lower in real terms than a decade ago. Meanwhile, the costs of agricultural land and machinery have skyrocketed. Even a second hand John Deere combine can easily run more than \$750,000.

Only a young person with family wealth could even get a loan for that amount — and that's if they can afford to buy farmland in the first place.

The average price per acre of cropland reached \$5,050 in 2022, nearly double the 2009 rate, according to USDA. With high inflation, prices shot up by more than 15% in the Midwest and by nearly 20% in the Northern Plains between 2021 and 2022.

The federal government spends billions every year on farm subsidies, but most of the money goes to the largest and wealthiest operators. And because of systemic racism, Black and Indigenous farmers have faced particular difficulty in accessing these funds. In 2022, white applicants for government support were approved 72% of the time — compared to just 36% of Black applicants.

In 2021, Congress set aside \$4 billion in loan forgiveness for minority farmers to address the long history of discrimination against Black farmers. But the courts blocked the program, claiming it would be unfair to white farmers.

So what can be done to address the crisis of America's aging farmers? The negotiations over the new Farm Bill are a huge opportunity to change course. Congress passes this omnibus legislation every five years.

The last one, in 2018, allocated some funding for loans and other support for a multitude of farming operations and rural health care. It supported outreach programs for beginning, veteran and historically underserved farmers, as well as youth agricultural employment. But these initiatives made up just 1% of the 2018 Farm Bill's total spending.

If we're serious about cultivating the next crop of young farmers in America, we need to do much more to clear the roadblocks stopping young farmers from taking their place in the agricultural workforce.

I've been privileged to be able to experience what it's like to work the land. At the end of every day, I slept well, partly from sheer fatigue, but also because I felt the satisfaction of knowing I was helping to put healthy food on someone's table.

I want other young people to have the opportunity to share in the experience of cultivating the earth, connecting with nature, and understanding the true value of sustainable food production.

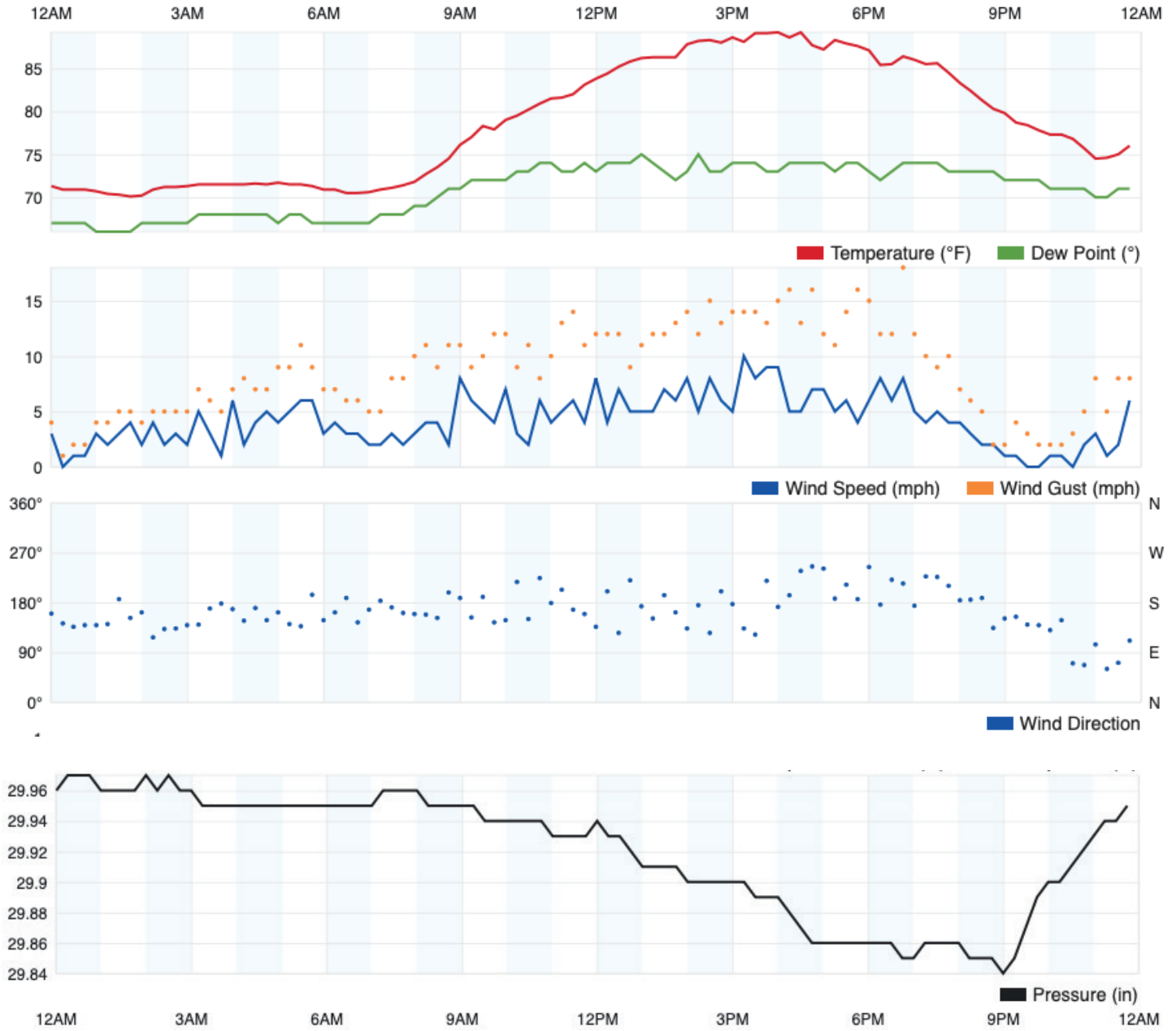
This commentary was previously published by Minnesota Reformer, which like South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Minnesota Reformer maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Patrick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

Danielle Browne is a Next Leader at the Institute for Policy Studies.

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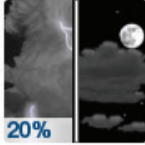



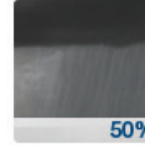
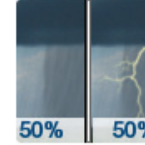
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms then Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms	Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Showers then Chance T-storms
High: 92 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 84 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 77 °F



Isolated Afternoon Storms Today

August 2, 2023
3:15 AM

Very Low Threat for Severe Weather

Today



10-20% Chance
For Moisture

Highs
88-95°

Thursday



20-40% Chance
For Moisture

Highs
85-90°

Friday



30-70% Chance
For Moisture

Highs
77-86°

We'll be looking at peak heat today with a low chance for an isolated storm or two. Over the next few days we will see temperatures closer to average and increasing chances for moisture with a slow moving system.

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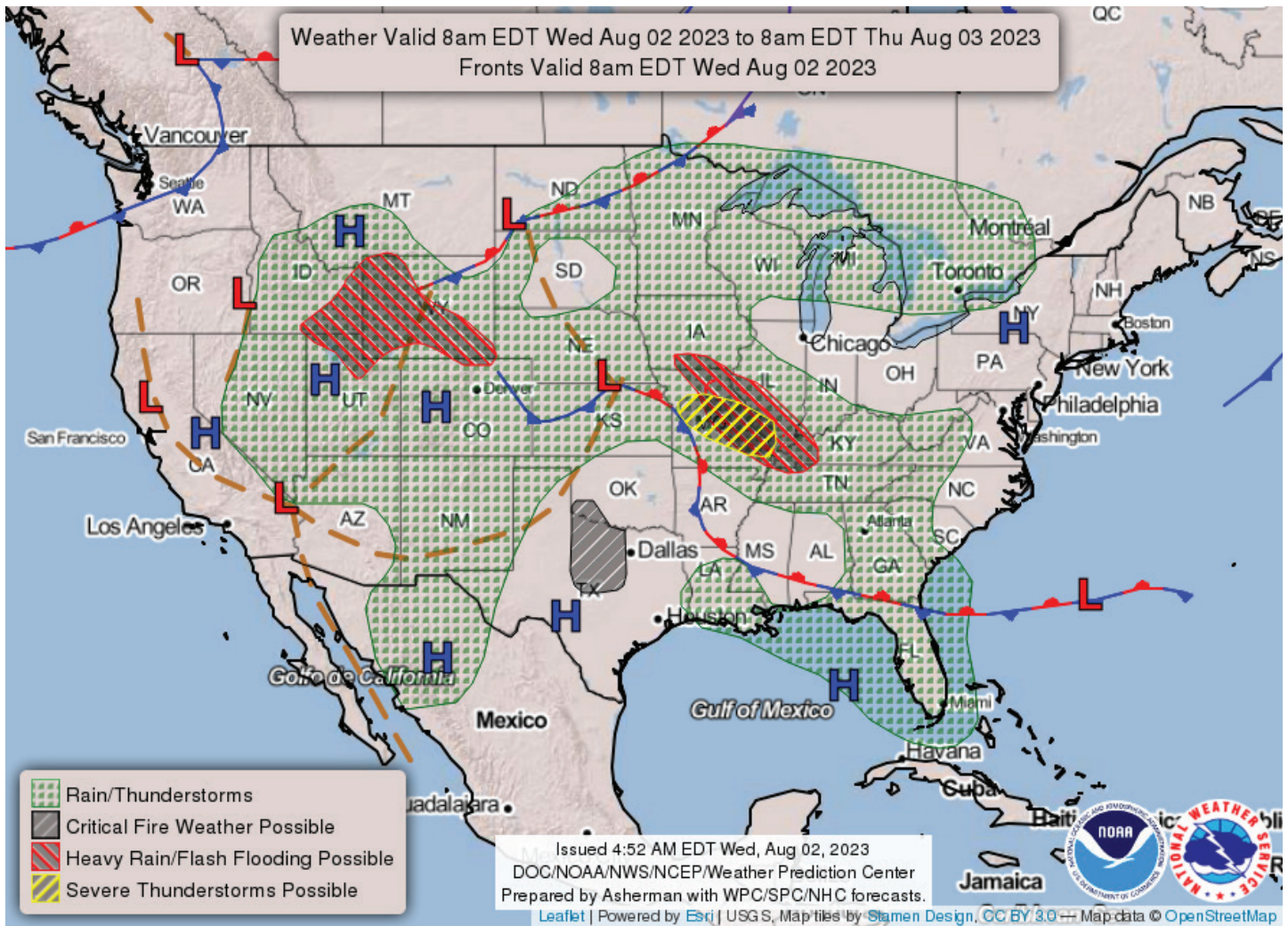
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87 °F at 2:55 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 5:20 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 10:50 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 45 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1938
Record Low: 40 in 2018
Average High: 85
Average Low: 59
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.15
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 14.25
Precip Year to Date: 12.67
Sunset Tonight: 9:01:12 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:17:19 AM



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Today in Weather History

August 2, 1960: Hail, the size of a hen egg caused moderate damage to a total loss of corn, soybean, and grain crops on 50 to 75 farms in Marshall, Roberts, and Grant Counties. High winds caused damage to buildings and uprooted trees in Britton.

1954 - Severe thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail for thirty minutes in north central Kansas. One drift measured 200 feet long, seventy feet wide and three feet deep. (The Weather Channel)

1975 - Record heat gripped New England. Highs of 104 degrees at Providence, RI, and 107 degrees at Chester and New Bedford, MA, established state records. The heat along the coast of Maine was unprecedented, with afternoon highs of 101 degrees at Bar Harbor and 104 degrees at Jonesboro. (The Weather Channel)

1985: A strong and sudden wind gusts cause a plane crash at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport in Texas that kills 135 people. The rapid and unexpected formation of a supercell, an incredibly powerful form of a thunderstorm, led to the tragedy. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1987 - Hot weather continued in the central U.S. Fifteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Concordia KS with a reading of 106 degrees, and Downtown Kansas City, MO, with a high of 105 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Ohio Valley and the north central U.S. Thunderstorms in South Dakota produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Philip, and hail two inches in diameter at Faulkton. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Searing heat continued from the Middle and Upper Mississippi Valley to the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast States. Twenty-six cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Chicago IL reported a record seven days of 100 degree heat for the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Low pressure representing the remains of Hurricane Chantal deluged north central Texas with heavy rain. Up to 6.50 inches drenched Stephens County, and Wichita Falls reported 2.22 inches of rain in just one hour. Bismarck, ND, reported a record warm morning low of 75 degrees, and record hot afternoon high of 101 degrees, and evening thunderstorms in North Dakota produced wind gusts to 78 mph at Lakota. Early evening thunderstorms in Florida produced high winds which downed trees at Christmas. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2006: Johannesburg, South Africa residents see snow flurries for the first time in at least eight years.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

MAKING GOOD TIME

The pilot of the company aircraft had been flying the corporate executives from one city to another on a whirlwind tour. After they landed, the plane serviced, and their meeting over, they would leave for another city

One day the pilot decided he would have a little fun with his passengers and made the following announcement: "Gentlemen, there's no cause for alarm, but I feel that you should know that we've been flying without a radio, compass, radar, or navigational beam for the last hour. I'm not sure where we are heading, but we are making great time." They all gasped.

All of us are on a journey - to the Kingdom of Heaven or the kingdom of darkness and hell. Jesus once said that the only way to enter into God's Kingdom is through a "narrow gate." He did not say that it is impossible to enter the Kingdom, but that there was only one way to enter His Kingdom. Many individuals believe that they can find God without following His specific directions. So, they design their own plan to suit their own interests and meet their own needs. It is like traveling without a map or compass, a GPS or road signs. What they do seems right to them but they are going in the wrong direction - even though they enjoy it and make "great time."

The "narrow gate" is coming to God through Jesus Christ as Savior and then making Him Lord.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for providing the way, the truth and life eternal through Your Son, our Savior. As citizens of Your Kingdom, may those around us see Your Son as the Lord of our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. Matthew 7:13-14



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

- 01/28/2024 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/28/2024 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/23/2024 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/20/2024 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/21/2024 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2024 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
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 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:
08.01.23

8 24 30 45 61 12

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$1,250,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 16
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.31.23

5 11 12 34 40 9

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$6,910,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 31 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.01.23

13 33 40 42 47 8

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 46 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.29.23

1 4 20 28 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 46 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.31.23

15 32 33 34 35 4

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 15 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.31.23

2 11 48 58 65 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$95,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 15 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Russian drone strikes on the Odesa region cause fires at port near Romania

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian troops hit port infrastructure in southern Ukraine with Shahed drones near the border with NATO member Romania overnight, the Ukrainian military and prosecutor-general's office said Wednesday, damaging a grain elevator and causing a fire at facilities that transport the country's crucial grain exports.

Since leaving a deal that allowed Ukraine to export grain to world markets through the city of Odesa, Russia has hammered the country's ports with strikes. Since July 17, Russian forces have fired dozens of drones and missiles at the port of Odesa and the region's river ports, which are being used as alternative routes.

The prosecutor-general's office said the strikes hit in the area of the Danube River, which forms part of the Ukraine-Romania border. It didn't immediately give further details. Three Ukrainian ports along the Danube are currently operating.

"The goal of the enemy was clearly the facilities of the ports and industrial infrastructure of the region," Ukraine's South operational command wrote in an update on Facebook. As a result of the attack, a fire broke out at industrial and port facilities, and a grain elevator was damaged.

Ukraine's air force intercepted 23 Shahed drones over the country overnight, mostly in Odesa and Kyiv, according to a morning update.

All 10 drones fired at Kyiv were intercepted, said Serhii Popko, the head of Kyiv City Administration. Numerous loud explosions were heard overnight as air defense systems were activated. Debris from felled drones hit three districts of the capital, damaging a nonresidential building, Popko said.

"Russian terrorists have once again targeted ports, grain facilities and global food security," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted Wednesday morning on Telegram. "The world must respond."

He confirmed that some drones hit their targets, with the most "significant damage" in the south of Ukraine.

Two civilians were wounded in shelling of the city of Kherson during the night, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said Wednesday. A summary from Zelenskyy's office said a doctor was killed and five medical personnel were wounded in an attack on a city hospital in Kherson, but didn't specify if the attack was on Wednesday or Tuesday.

A 91-year-old woman died in an attack on a village in the Kharkiv region, the presidential office said.

In the eastern region of Donetsk, four people were wounded in Russian shelling over the past day, according to Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko.

The area around the city of Nikopol, across the river from the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, was shelled three times, Gov. Serhiy Lysak said.

Pope Francis to find heat and hope in Portugal along with the fallout from a sex abuse scandal

By NICOLE WINFIELD, HELENA ALVES and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Pope Francis arrived in Portugal on Wednesday to open the first edition of World Youth Day since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of large gatherings, as he hopes to inspire the next generation of Catholics while coping with the church's ongoing clergy sexual abuse scandal.

More than 1 million young people from around the world were expected to attend the gathering in Lisbon, which takes place over several days.

Francis' plane arrived on a dull, warm day in the Portuguese capital, though the skies were forecast to

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clear and temperatures were expected to hit 35 C (95 F) by the weekend's final papal Mass. The pontiff, in a wheelchair, was met on the tarmac by Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa accompanied by two young children.

Busloads of pilgrims started arriving before Tuesday and braced for the high summer temperatures at the open-air events.

"Stay hydrated!" read a slogan promoted by Portuguese health authorities for the event. Prime Minister António Costa advised youth day volunteers Monday to carry a lot of water with them and a hat because of the heat.

Cardinal-elect Américo Aguiar, a Lisbon bishop who is organizing the festival, said that two years of COVID-19 lockdowns made this year's edition of World Youth Day unique. He said it was an important encounter for Catholic youths, especially with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and economic uncertainties around the globe.

"The pope always says this event is the joy and the possibility of coming together, of the culture of coming together," Aguiar said in an interview. "After such limitations and difficulties, young people from all over the world will be able to meet again, with certain freedom."

Francis arrives Wednesday and is scheduled to spend the morning meeting with Portuguese officials at the Belem National Palace, the official presidential residence west of Lisbon, from where Portugal's maritime explorers of the 15th and 16th centuries set sail.

In the afternoon, Francis makes his way to the 16th-century Jeronimos Monastery and church, arguably Portugal's greatest monument. There, he will meet with the Portuguese Catholic hierarchy, which recently began the process of reckoning with its legacy of clergy sexual abuse.

Francis is widely expected to meet in private with abuse survivors this week and could well refer to the problem in his public remarks, as he has done during past foreign trips. Portuguese bishops were widely criticized for their initial response to the findings of an independent commission, which reported in February that at least 4,815 boys and girls were abused in the country since 1950, most of them ranging in age from 10 to 14.

The bishops long insisted there were only a handful of cases, and they initially balked at suspending active members of the clergy who were named in the commission's report. They also flip-flopped on paying reparations to victims, at first insisting they would only pay if ordered to by court rulings.

The Portuguese Catholic Church also promised in March to build a memorial to victims that would be unveiled during World Youth Day, but organizers scrapped the plan a few weeks ago.

In its place, victims' advocates launched a campaign called "This is our memorial." Hours before the pope arrived, they put up a billboard in central Lisbon reading "4,800+ Children Abused." They said it was paid for by a crowdfunding campaign that was so successful they have enough money to put up more around the city. It didn't lie on the pope's route during his stay.

St. John Paul II launched World Youth Day in the 1980s as a way to invigorate the next generation of Catholics in their faith, and the event is returning to European soil for the first time since 2016.

Ukrainian and Russian youths were expected to attend, and the war in Ukraine will likely take center stage Saturday when Francis visits Fatima, the Catholic shrine which for over a century has been associated with an apocalyptic prophecy about peace and Russia.

"I think World Youth Day brings hope, after the pandemic, after being locked down, not able to live our faith as we were used to, as we wished for," Alfredo Hernández, a World Youth Day volunteer from Guatemala, said. "The event gives a ray of hope to get out on the streets again."

Hot weather could be an issue during the five-day visit, given temperatures in Lisbon are expected to hit 35 C (95 F) on Sunday. Many young people were expected to camp out in the vast, unshaded Tagus Park starting Saturday afternoon, first to participate in an evening vigil and then to be in place Sunday morning for Francis' final Mass.

Organizers said they installed 32 water tanks with 640 taps for filling water bottles, while the Lisbon City Council says it doubled the number of drinking fountains in the city to around 400.

Registered participants are receiving reusable water bottles and sunhats in their welcome knapsacks,

but some were more worried for Francis, given his weakened condition: The 86-year-old Argentine pope was hospitalized for nine days in June to repair a hernia and remove scar tissue from previous intestinal surgeries.

Francis, who travels with a doctor and nurse on his foreign trips, is likely to refer to the heat given his repeated alarm about climate change, including as recently as last week, when he urged action in the face of wildfires ravaging Greece.

"I'm going to pray that he is going to be OK," said Theresa Guettler, a nurse from Florida who is volunteering at the event.

She recommended that Francis stay hydrated and follow his medical team's advice.

"I trust that he has good doctors and good people taking care of him," Guettler said.

A powerful typhoon pounds Japan's Okinawa and injures more than 20 people as it moves toward China

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A powerful typhoon slammed Okinawa and other islands in southwestern Japan Wednesday with high winds injuring more than 20 people as it moved west making its way toward mainland China.

Typhoon Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, was heading west at speeds of 10 kph (6 mph), packing surface winds of up to 180 kph (111 mph). It was at sea southwest of Okinawa's main island, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

Twenty-two people were injured, most of them minor, according to the Okinawa prefectural government. The typhoon damaged homes and forced transportation to halt and stores to close as it slowly moved west.

In the Ogimi village in northeastern Okinawa, a man was found without vital signs after a garage collapsed on him due to violent wind, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said. Several other homes were also damaged.

Hundreds of domestic and international flights in and out of the Naha airport were canceled, and public transportation, including buses, light rail transit systems and ferries connecting the region's islands, were suspended.

Violent weather hit the region as the typhoon traveled slowly westward to the East China Sea.

Up to 20 centimeters (7.8 inches) of rainfall were expected in the Okinawa region by midday Thursday, the agency said.

Officials warned residents against flying objects due to violent winds and urged them to stay indoors and away from windows.

Foreign nationals evacuate Niger as regional tensions rise

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — Foreign nationals lined up outside an airport in Niger's capital Wednesday morning waiting for a French military evacuation flight, while a regional bloc continued talks about its response to the military coup that took place last week.

French forces in the capital, Niamey, evacuated hundreds of mostly French nationals to Paris on two flights Tuesday, following concerns that their citizens and other Europeans risked becoming trapped after soldiers detained President Mohamed Bazoum and seized power.

France, Italy and Spain all announced evacuations for their citizens and other Europeans. The United States has yet to announce plans for an evacuation, but some of its citizens have left the with the help of the Europeans.

An Italian military aircraft landed in Rome on Wednesday with 99 passengers, including 21 Americans and civilians from other countries, said the Italian defense minister.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani noted that more "non-Europeans, including an Australian" were evacuated by the Italian air force jet.

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"In some way, we were authorized by the new government, which gave permission for the operation," Tajani said.

Germany, which has encouraged its civilians in Niger to evacuate on French flights, said that it doesn't currently see any need to evacuate the approximately 100 troops it has in the country, largely connected to the U.N. mission in neighboring Mali.

Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said he spoke with the German commander at the air base in Niamey on Tuesday, "and he told me clearly they are not at all worried about their safety at the moment; they are in close contact with the Nigerien military; they are driving out accompanied by the Nigerien military." Supplies also are assured, he said.

The first of two French flights that landed in Paris overnight had 12 babies among 262 people aboard, most of them French but including evacuees from Niger and other countries, France's Foreign Ministry said.

Some 1,200 French citizens are registered at France's embassy in Niamey, and about half of them have said that they want to be evacuated, said the ministry.

Before sunrise Wednesday, hundreds of people lined up outside the terminal at Niamey's airport hoping to leave, after a French flight was canceled the night before. Some slept on the floor, while others watched television or talked on the phone.

Some parents tried to shield their children from what was happening.

"I haven't told them very much, just that they're going home," said a passenger who did not want to be named for security reasons.

"If ECOWAS (a West African regional bloc) intervenes, populations can attack ECOWAS nationals here. They've already made threats," he said.

On Sunday, ECOWAS said it would use force against the junta if it didn't release and reinstate the president within a week. The announcement was immediately rejected by neighboring Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, all of which are run by mutinous soldiers who toppled their governments.

Mali and Burkina Faso's leaders said a military intervention in Niger "would be tantamount to a declaration of war" against them.

Niger was seen as one of the region's last democracies and a partner Western countries could work with to beat back the jihadi violence that's wracked the region. The United States, France and other European countries have poured millions of dollars of military aid and assistance into the country.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of State said Secretary Antony Blinken spoke with President Bazoum and underscored that the U.S. rejects efforts to overturn the constitutional order, and stands with the people of Niger, ECOWAS, the African Union and international partners in support of democratic governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights.

The defense chiefs of ECOWAS' 15 members will meet in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, from Wednesday to Friday to discuss next steps in resolving the crisis, the bloc said in a statement.

At a virtual United Nations meeting on Tuesday night, the U.N. special envoy for West Africa and the Sahel said that efforts other than the threat of force are underway to restore democracy in Niger.

"One week can be more than enough if everybody talks in good faith, if everybody wants to avoid bloodshed," said Leonardo Santos Simao. But, he added, "different member states are preparing themselves to use force if necessary."

Others in the diplomatic community said the use of force is a real option.

ECOWAS is resolved to use military force after economic and travel sanctions have failed to roll back other coups, said a Western diplomat in Niamey who did not want to be identified for security reasons.

Niamey has calmed after protests supporting the junta turned violent Sunday when demonstrators attacked the French embassy and set fire to a door, but some say the mood is still tense.

During Tuesday's evacuation flights at the airport, a passenger who did not want to be named for security reasons said that Nigerien soldiers sped off with middle fingers raised at the passengers after escorting an Italian military convoy to the airport.

That same night, the M62 Movement, an activist group that has organized pro-Russia and anti-French

protests, called for residents in Niamey to mobilize and block the airport until foreign military forces leave the country.

"Any evacuation of Europeans (should be) conditional on the immediate departure of foreign military forces," Mahaman Sanoussi, the national coordinator for the group, said in a statement.

Beijing records 29 inches of rain from Saturday to Wednesday, its most in at least 140 years

By ANDY WONG and HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

ZHUZHOU, Hebei (AP) — China's capital has recorded its heaviest rainfall in at least 140 years over the past few days after being deluged with heavy rains from the remnants of Typhoon Doksuri.

The city recorded 744.8 millimeters (29.3 inches) of rain between Saturday and Wednesday morning, the Beijing Meteorological Bureau said Wednesday.

Beijing and the surrounding province of Hebei have been hit by severe flooding because of the record rainfall, with waters rising to dangerous levels. The rain destroyed roads and knocked out power and even pipes carrying drinking water. It flooded rivers surrounding the capital, leaving cars waterlogged, while lifting others onto bridges meant for pedestrians.

Among the hardest hit areas is Zhuozhou, a small city in Hebei province that borders Beijing's southwest. On Tuesday night, police there issued a plea on social media for lights to assist with rescue work.

It's unknown how many people are trapped in flood-stricken areas in the city and surrounding villages.

On Wednesday, waters in Gu'an county in Hebei, which borders Zhuozhou, reached as high as halfway up a pole where a surveillance camera was installed.

Gu'an county resident Liu Jiwen, 58, was evacuated from his village on Tuesday night. "There's nothing we can do. It's natural disaster," he said.

Two other people were trying to pass through the flooded areas to rescue a relative trapped in a nearby village.

Nearly 850,000 people have been relocated, local authorities in Hebei province said.

On Wednesday, the number of confirmed deaths from the torrential rains around Beijing rose to 21 after the body of a rescuer was recovered. Wang Hong-chun, 41, was with other rescuers in a rubber boat when it flipped over in a rapidly flowing river. Four of her teammates survived.

At least 26 people remain missing from the rains.

The previous record for rainfall was in 1891, the Beijing Meteorological Bureau said Wednesday, when the city received 609 millimeters (24 inches) of rain. The earliest precise measurements made by machines are from 1883.

The record rainfall from Typhoon Doksuri may not be the last. Typhoon Khanun, which was lashing Japan on Wednesday, is expected to head toward China later this week. The powerful storm, with surface winds of up to 180 kph (111 mph), may also hit Taiwan before it reaches China.

Thousands of people were evacuated to shelters in schools and other public buildings in suburban Beijing and in nearby cities. The central government is disbursing 44 million yuan (\$6.1 million) for disaster relief in affected provinces.

The severity of the flooding took the Chinese capital by surprise. Beijing usually has dry summers but had a stretch of record-breaking heat this year.

Striking writers and studios will meet this week to discuss restarting negotiations

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Union leaders told striking Hollywood writers Tuesday night that they plan to meet with representatives for studios to discuss restarting negotiations after the first official communication between the two sides since the strike began three months ago.

The Writers Guild of America sent an email to members saying that the head of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents major studios, streaming services and production companies in negotiations, requested a meeting on Friday to discuss the resumption of contract talks.

"We'll be back in communication with you sometime after the meeting with further information," the email read. "As we've said before, be wary of rumors. Whenever there is important news to share, you will hear it directly from us."

It was not immediately known whether a similar overture was made to union leaders for Hollywood actors, who have been on strike since July 14.

Asked about the prospect of talks with either guild, a spokesperson for the AMPTP in an email said only that "We remain committed to finding a path to mutually beneficial deals with both Unions."

An email to a representative from the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, which represents striking film and television actors, was not immediately returned.

Talks between screenwriters and their employers collapsed on May 1, and the first of the two strikes that have frozen production in Hollywood began a day later. Issues behind the strike include pay rates amid inflation, the use of smaller writing staffs for shorter seasons of television shows, and control over artificial intelligence in the screenwriting process.

"I had hoped that we would already have had some kind of conversations with the industry by now," SAG-AFTRA Executive Director Duncan Crabtree-Ireland told The Associated Press earlier Tuesday, before the email was sent to writers. "Obviously, that hasn't happened yet, but I'm optimistic."

Some of Niger's neighbors defend the coup there, even hinting at war. It's a warning for Africa

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Not everyone is hostile to the coups in Niger and other African nations in the past few years that have worried the West. In the "family photo" for last week's Russia-Africa Summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin stood next to Ibrahim Traore, the young military officer who seized power in Burkina Faso in September.

It was an uncomfortable moment for many leaders elsewhere in Africa. "The normalization and dignifying of military takeovers must trouble our great continent," Kenya's principal secretary for foreign affairs wrote while sharing the photo this week.

Now Burkina Faso and another military junta-led country friendly with Russia, Mali, have taken the unusual step of declaring that foreign military intervention in neighboring Niger after last week's coup would be considered a declaration of war against them, too.

They are defying the West African regional body known as ECOWAS, which said on Sunday it could use force if Niger's coup leaders don't reinstate the democratically elected president, Mohamed Bazoum, within a week. Another coup-affected nation, Guinea, in a separate statement supported Niger's junta and urged ECOWAS to "come to its senses."

Their defense of the events in Niger complicates the world's response as the resolve of partners is tested. It also reflects what a United Nations study warned last month after surveying thousands of citizens of African countries that recently went through coups or other undemocratic changes of government.

"A possible regional-level scenario might see the military juntas in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso team up" to challenge the region's traditional response to coups, the report said. It warned they could defy sanctions and stand for elections, with help from "new international alliances."

The report said that "paradoxically," popular support for the recent military coups in Africa is "symptomatic of a new wave of democratic aspiration that is expanding across the continent" as overwhelmingly young populations grow frustrated with existing economic and political systems and press for change more rapid than what elections can deliver.

Many just want to feel secure as Islamic extremists expand their range in the Sahel, the arid region south of the Sahara Desert. "I think that a military power in Niger will better coordinate its military actions with

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Mali and Burkina Faso to fight terrorism," Harber Cisse, a Malian citizen living in Guinea, told The Associated Press. He believes Niger's democratically elected president, Mohamed Bazoum, had been "turning a blind eye" and allowing extremists to cross into Mali.

Those with memories of past coups in the region are not necessarily shocked by the hastily assembled military announcements and unrest in the streets. The U.N. survey found optimism and excitement along with anxiety for the future, plus an impatience that has led to multiple coups within months in more than one country. The four coups in Africa in 2021 were the most in a single year in two decades.

Many people said they believed the army should take over when a civilian government is incompetent. "These findings highlight the risk of a return to an era of close military involvement in African politics," the U.N. report said.

Certain international responses to coups can be seen as an insult, especially if some foreign partners were seen as prioritizing security instead of African governments' accountability for alleged misconduct. "In some scenarios, these geopolitically driven interventions have compounded the very factors that heighten coup risk," the U.N. report said.

Niger had been seen by the United States and allies as the last major counterterrorism partner in the immediate region after Mali and Burkina Faso kicked out French troops and Mali ordered a 15,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping mission to leave, claiming it had failed in its mission.

Post-coup economic sanctions and cuts in assistance programs threaten to worsen the living situation for many in some of the world's poorest countries, while well-off foreigners board evacuation flights to more comfortable places.

To help counter the "epidemic of coups," international partners shouldn't downplay people's grievances against national authorities, and their engagement should extend beyond the security sector and "national elites," the director of the Amani Africa think tank, Solomon Dersso, wrote Monday.

"There's a small number of people profiting from the riches of Niger," one coup supporter, Seydou Moussa, said in the capital, Niamey. "Nigeriens cannot live like that. It's time that change comes. And change has come."

Part of the frustration in Niger and its neighbors over government weaknesses in addressing corruption and the threat from Islamic extremism has been aimed at France, the former colonizer of present-day Mali, Guinea, Niger, Burkina Faso and others in west and central Africa. The French embassy was attacked in Niger shortly after the coup, and the one in Burkina Faso was attacked last year.

Some in West Africa have been upset by France's warning shortly after the coup in Niger against those threatening "French interests" in the country, seeing it as an example of the alleged priorities that have long driven outsiders' involvement, notably natural resources.

Russia has played into such sentiments by framing itself to African nations as a country that never colonized the continent, winning support in Mali and other vulnerable nations for Moscow and the Russian mercenary group Wagner.

The Russian flag has been seen in the streets of Niger's capital in the days after the coup, even as the Kremlin called for Niger "to restore constitutional order as soon as possible."

Moscow also has emphasized its role as the top arms supplier to Africa, which Burkina Faso's military leader embraced during the Russia-Africa Summit.

"Thank God, Russia is a country that refuses nothing," Traore said in an interview with the Russian media outlet Sputnik, asserting that Moscow imposes no restrictions on weapons purchases and even is ready to deliver some for free to help the fight against extremism. "In fact, everything we want to buy, Russia agrees to sell to us. This is not the case with other countries."

As the summer breezes fade, sweltering Europeans give air conditioning a skeptical embrace

By COLLEEN BARRY and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — During Europe's heat wave last month, Floriana Peroni's vintage clothing store had to close for a week. A truck of rented generators blocked her door as they fed power to the central Roman neighborhood hit by a blackout as temperatures surged. The main culprit: air conditioning.

The period — in which temperatures hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) — coincided with peak electricity use that came close to Italy's all-time high, hitting a peak load of more than 59 gigawatts on July 19. That neared a July 2015 record.

Intensive electricity use knocked out the network not only near the central Campo de Fiori neighborhood, where Peroni operates her shop, but elsewhere in the Italian capital. Demand in that second July week surged 30%, correlating to a heat wave that had persisted already for weeks, according to the capital's electricity company ARETI.

Like many Romans, Peroni herself does not have AC either in her home or her shop. Rome once could count on a Mediterranean breeze to bring down nighttime temperatures, but that has become an intermittent relief at best.

"At most, we turn on fans," Peroni said. "We think that is enough. We tolerate the heat, as it has always been tolerated."

In Europe, though, that is starting to change.

AIR CONDITIONING IS LESS A PART OF THE CULTURE IN EUROPE

Despite holdouts like Peroni, rising global temperatures are dropping air conditioning from luxury to a necessity in many parts of Europe, which long has had a conflicted relationship with energy-sucking cooling systems deemed by many to be an American indulgence.

Europeans look with disdain at overcooled U.S. buildings, kept to near meat-locker temperatures, where a blast of cold air can shoot across city sidewalks as people come and go, and where extended indoor appointments necessitate a sweater even in the height of summer.

By contrast, event organizers in Europe may offer hand fans if events are expected to overheat. Shoppers can expect to sweat in under-cooled grocery stores, and movie theaters are not guaranteed to be climate-controlled. Evening diners have typically opted for outside tables to avoid stuffy restaurants, which rarely offer AC.

To deal with the heat, Italy and Spain typically shut down for several hours after lunch, for a riposo or siesta, and most vacation in August, when many businesses shut down completely so families can enjoy a holiday at the seaside or in the mountains. Italians in particular are happy to abandon overheated art cities to foreign tourists, which reduces the urgency for a home AC investment.

Still, European AC penetration has picked up from 10% in 2000 to 19% last year, according to the International Energy Agency. That is still well shy of the United States, at around 90%. Many in Europe resist due to cost, concern about environmental impact and even suspicions of adverse health impacts from cold air currents, including colds, a stiff neck, or worse.

Cooling systems remain rare in Nordic countries and even Germany, where temperatures can nudge above 30 degrees (into the 90s Fahrenheit) for extended periods.

But even those temperate climates may cross the threshold of discomfort if temperatures increase beyond 1.5 degrees C to 2 degrees C, according to a new study by the University of Cambridge. In that scenario, people living in northern climes like Britain, Norway, Finland and Switzerland will face the greatest relative increase in uncomfortably hot days.

Nicole Miranda, one of the study's authors, said their estimate, which would mean surpassing the international goal of limiting future warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, are conservative.

"They don't take into account the urban island effects," she said, when cities are unable to cool at night and surfaces become radiators. "From a scientific point of view, if we all run to the go-to solution, which is air conditioning, we are going to get into a different type of problem, because there is high energy

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consumption and high carbon emissions related to air conditioning.”

Cities should consider less intensive solutions, like shading buildings, and incorporating cooling bodies of water, she said. She also advocated a trend toward cooling individuals, instead of spaces, using personal devices like ice packs in jackets or high-tech textiles that dissipate body heat more efficiently.

THERE'S A GROWING — IF RELUCTANT — DEMAND

In Italy, sales of air conditioning units grew from 865,000 a year in 2012 to 1.92 million in 2022, mostly for business and not residential use, with growth reported in the first quarter of this year, according to the industry association Assoclimate. Most are split heat air pump systems, which can heat spaces in the winter, which Assoclimate said can reduce gas consumption as prices spike during the war in Ukraine. That dual use attracts consumers.

France, with a slightly larger population, is showing more resistance, selling 1 million units a year. Air conditioning was rare in France until a 2003 heat wave killed thousands, mainly among the elderly. Still, most private homes and apartments there aren't air conditioned, and many restaurants and other businesses aren't either. Businesses with AC will often advertise to attract customers on hot days.

AC aversion persists, both among French conservatives who see it as a frivolous American import and French people on the left who see it as environmentally irresponsible.

Cécile de Munck and Aude Lemonsu, meteorologists at France's national weather service, warned this summer that if the number of AC units doubles in Paris by 2030, the city temperature would rise by 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) because of heat released by the pump systems.

Despite the concerns over energy costs, air conditioning is rapidly conquering homes in Spain, a country that traditionally bent towards the use of fans and drawing heavy blinds, a very Spanish fixture. A study by Ca' Foscari University projects that half of Spanish households will have AC by 2040, up from just 5% in 1990.

With the cooler indoor air come disputes as neighbors complain about noise from external units. That means problems for Spain's real estate managers. "Some people can't open a window because they get a puff of fire," said Pablo Abascal, president of Spain's council of real estate managers. "With the increase of AC systems in homes, many buildings will soon have nowhere to place the devices."

Air conditioning and cooling was found to be key for older populations in extreme heat, reducing strain on cardiovascular functions in a heat wave of 37 degrees Celsius (99 degrees Fahrenheit), according to a study at the University of Ottawa in Canada. But even in countries like Cyprus, where heat waves of 40 degree Celsius have become the norm, the sustained use of AC isn't an affordable option for many elderly people living on fixed incomes.

Many on the Mediterranean island nation restrict usage to the hottest times of day, sometimes confining themselves to a single room.

"Undoubtedly, this scenario significantly impacts their mental well-being as well," said Demos Antoniou, director of the Cyprus Third Age Observatory, a seniors-rights group. "The prevailing fear is that refraining from using air conditioners could potentially lead to heat stroke."

At 83, Angeliki Vassiliou thinks both about her energy bill and future generations before she hits the "on" button.

"There's no sense in wasting energy. Waste is unfair," Vassiliou said. "Waste of any resource is wrong, because what would happen to our planet because of all this waste?"

Mideast countries that are already struggling fear price hikes after Russia exits grain deal

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Ahmed Salah grew anxious when he heard the news that Russia had suspended a crucial wartime grain deal. The bakery owner in Egypt's capital is concerned it could mean global food prices soar.

"There mightn't be immediate impact," the 52-year-old said last week as he oversaw workers baking bread in his shop in Cairo, "but if they didn't find a solution soonest, things would be very difficult."

Russia pulled out of the deal brokered by the U.N. and Turkey to allow Ukraine's grain to flow during a global food crisis. It helped stabilize food prices that soared last year after Russia invaded Ukraine — two countries that are major suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food to developing nations.

Egypt, the world's largest wheat importer, and other lower-income Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon and Pakistan worry about what comes next. Struggling with economic woes that have driven more people into poverty, they fear rising food prices could create even more pain for households, businesses and government bottom lines.

Many have diversified their sources of wheat, the main ingredient for flatbread that is a staple of diets in many Mideast countries, and don't expect shortages. Pakistan has even seen a bumper crop despite unprecedented flooding last year.

But the end of the grain deal is creating uncertainty about price hikes, a major driver of hunger.

It "is an unnecessary shock for the 345 million acutely food insecure people around the world," said Abeer Etefa, a spokeswoman for the U.N.'s World Food Program.

Russia also has launched attacks on Ukrainian ports and agricultural infrastructure following the collapse of the accord, leading global wheat prices to zigzag. Despite the volatility, the costs are below what they were before Russia invaded Ukraine, and there is enough production to meet worldwide demand, said Joseph Glauber, senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

But for low-income countries like war-torn Yemen or Lebanon that are big wheat importers, finding suppliers that are farther away will add costs, he said. Plus, their currencies have weakened against the U.S. dollar, which is used to buy grain on world markets.

"It's one reason why you see food price inflation lingering in a lot of countries — because even though world prices I mentioned are at prewar levels, that's in dollars. And if you put it in, say, the Egyptian pound, you'll see that Egypt wheat prices are actually up," said Glauber, former chief economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"They're certainly as high as they were during the high points of 2022," he said.

That packs pressure on governments, which will have to pay more to keep subsidizing bread at the same level and avoid raising costs for households, he said. With many also seeing their foreign currency reserves dwindle, it could put countries in the Middle East and elsewhere in a more precarious financial situation.

Salah, the bakery owner, fears that if wheat prices spike, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government could respond by hiking prices of bread.

"Such move would have heavy toll on ordinary people," he said.

El-Sissi and other leaders raised concerns about higher food prices at a summit Russia hosted for African nations last week. He called for reviving the Black Sea deal through a "consensual solution" that takes into consideration "all parties' demands and interests and put an end to the continued surge in grain prices."

Homegrown grain doesn't meet even half of Egypt's demand, particularly wheat and corn. It buys over 10 million tons of wheat — mostly from Russia and Ukraine — and that is expected to grow.

Local wheat production is expected to remain at 9.8 million tons, while consumption increases by 2% to 20.5 million tons in 2023-2024, according to a USDA report from April.

However, the government said the impact of the end of the grain deal is minimal so far. Supply Minister Ali Moselhi said last week that Egypt has diversified its sources of imported wheat and that its stockpile would cover the country's needs for five months.

Its wheat purchases from Ukraine have declined by 73.6% over the 2021-2022 period as Egypt tapped

other sources, the USDA said.

Any increase in wheat prices would further strain Egypt's economy, which has struggled from decades of mismanagement and outside shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine. That could force the government to cut nonsubsidy spending and push up inflation, Capital Economics said.

Food costs already are fueling a cost-of-living crisis. Annual inflation hit a record 36.8% in June, with food prices skyrocketing by 64.9%.

In Lebanon, the grain deal's collapse could be an additional hurdle as the tiny Mediterranean country relies on Ukraine for at least 90% of its wheat, flour millers say.

The agreement helped resolve supply shortages that shocked the market during the onset of the war, causing large breadlines and rationing. Caretaker Economy Minister Amin Salam said any negative impact on wheat prices following the deal's collapse will "certainly" affect prices at home.

The country of some 6 million is in the throes of an economic crisis that has impoverished three-quarters of its population. Its main wheat storage silos were destroyed in the Beirut port blast in 2020, so its grain reserves lie entirely in private mills' storage.

"We currently have two months' worth of wheat reserves, and we have one month's worth on the way," said Wael Shabarek, owner of Shahba Mills. "While I expect some price increase, it won't be the same as before — as the beginning of the war — when it was a total shock for us."

However, Lebanon's economy keeps shrinking, its currency has lost 90% of its value since 2019 and the World Food Program says local food prices are among the highest in the world.

Pakistan, meanwhile, is a bright spot. It was a major importer of Ukrainian wheat but this year had the highest domestic production in a decade despite disastrous flooding in 2022. The bumper crop is attributed to providing seed and other aid to farmers.

The government still calls for restoration of the grain deal to ensure global food security and avoid surging prices. Pakistan, whose ailing economy is getting a \$3 billion International Monetary Fund bailout, was hit hard when food prices surged after Russia's invasion.

"The Ukraine conflict has also brought difficulties for developing countries and the Global South, particularly in terms of fuel, food and fertilizer shortages. Pakistan is no exception," Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said.

Drone attacks in Moscow's glittering business district leave residents on edge

By EMMA BURROWS Associated Press

The glittering towers of the Moscow City business district dominate the skyline of the Russian capital. The sleek glass-and-steel buildings -- designed to attract investment amid an economic boom in the early 2000s -- are a dramatic, modern contrast to the rest of the more than 800-year-old city.

Now they are a sign of its vulnerability, following a series of drone attacks that rattled some Muscovites and brought the war in Ukraine home to the seat of Russian power.

The attacks on Sunday and Tuesday aren't the first to hit Moscow — a drone even struck the Kremlin harmlessly in May. But these latest blasts, which caused no casualties but blew out part of a section of windows on a high-rise building and sent glass cascading to the streets, seemed particularly unsettling.

"It's very frightening because you wake up at night hearing explosions," said a woman who identified herself only as Ulfiya as she walked her dog, adding that she lived in a nearby building. Like other Muscovites interviewed by The Associated Press, she did not identify herself further out of fear of retribution or for her personal safety.

Another resident, who gave her name as Ekaterina, said Tuesday's blast "sounded like thunder."

"I think for the first time, I got really scared," she said. "I don't understand how people in a war zone can live like this every day and not go mad."

The Russian Defense Ministry said it shot down two Ukrainian drones outside Moscow and had electroni-

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burned through more than 125 square miles (323.7 square kilometers) of land but showed little growth during the day and was 23% contained, fire officials said.

Humid monsoonal weather conditions brought brief but heavy rain, especially on the south end of the fire, and kept its spread to a minimum, fire officials said.

However, the 400 or so firefighters battling the blaze had to balance their efforts with concerns about disrupting the fragile ecosystem in California's Mojave National Preserve,

Crews used a "light hand on the land," clearing and carving fire lines without the use of bulldozers in order to reduce the impact in the ecologically-sensitive region, which is home to some 200 rare plants.

"You bring a bunch of bulldozers in there, you may or may not stop the fire, but you'll put a scar on the landscape that'll last generations," said Tim Chavez, an assistant chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The blaze erupted near the remote Caruthers Canyon area of the vast wildland preserve, crossed the state line into Nevada on Sunday and sent smoke further east into the Las Vegas Valley.

The fire started on private lands within the preserve, but the cause remains under investigation. Less than 3% of the land in the 2,500-square mile (6,475-square kilometer) preserve is privately owned.

While it's one of the largest national park units outside of Alaska and Hawaii, the vast majority of the Mojave National Preserve's 880,000 visitors last year were just passing through on their way between Southern California and Las Vegas.

The territory is a varied desert landscape — mountains and canyons, sand dunes and mesas, Joshua tree forests and volcanic cinder cones — and features about 10,000 threatened desert tortoise within its boundaries.

Some of the preserve's plants can take centuries to recover from destruction. It could take the pinyon-juniper woodlands alone roughly 200 to 300 years to return, while the blackbrush scrub and Joshua trees — which grow only in the Mojave Desert — are unlikely to regrow after this catastrophic blaze, said Ileene Anderson, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity.

The 2020 Dome Fire in a different part of the national preserve destroyed an estimated 1 million Joshua trees.

But fire itself isn't the only worry. On federal lands, with few people and little property at risk from flames, firefighters sometimes forgo certain equipment like bulldozers, chainsaws and aircraft.

"You don't disturb any more soil than you absolutely have to; you don't cut trees unless they absolutely have to come down," said Chavez, speaking about the tactics in general.

When there are ecological and cultural sensitivities at stake, firefighters negotiate with federal officials to determine what equipment can and cannot be used.

"It's not just going out there and throwing everything we've got at it," Chavez said.

In Nevada, the fire has entered the state's newest national monument, Avi Kwa Ame, said Lee Beyer, a spokesperson for the U.S. Forest Service. But Beyer said the number of acres burned within the boundaries of the vast monument in southern Nevada wasn't yet known.

President Joe Biden established the monument in March, permanently protecting the desert mountain region considered sacred by some tribes. The area stretches more than 500,000 acres (202,300 hectares) and includes Spirit Mountain, a peak northwest of Laughlin called Avi Kwa Ame (ah-VEE' kwa-meh) by the Fort Mojave Tribe and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

More teachers are quitting their jobs. Educators of color often are more likely to leave

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Rhonda Hicks could have kept working into her 60s. She loved teaching and loved her students in Philadelphia's public schools. As a Black woman, she took pride in being a role model for many children of color.

But other aspects of the job deteriorated, such as growing demands from administrators over what and how to teach. And when she retires in a few weeks, she will join a disproportionately high number of Black and Hispanic teachers in her state who are leaving the profession.

"I enjoy actually teaching, that part I've always enjoyed," said Hicks, 59. "Sometimes it's a little stressful. Sometimes the kids can be difficult. But it's the higher-ups: 'Do it this way or don't do it at all.'"

Teachers are leaving jobs in growing numbers, state reports show. The turnover in some cases is highest among teachers of color. A major culprit: stress — from pandemic-era burnout, low pay and the intrusion of politics into classrooms. But the burdens can be heavier in schools serving high-poverty communities that also have higher numbers of teachers of color.

In Philadelphia, a city with one of the highest concentrations of Black residents in the U.S., the proportion of Black teachers has been sliding. Two decades ago, it was about one-third. Last fall, it fell to below 23%, according to district figures.

In the school buildings where Hicks taught, most teachers were white. She said she and other teachers of color were expected to give more of themselves in a district where half the students are Black.

"A lot of times when you see teachers that are saving Black and brown kids on TV, it's always the white ones," Hicks said. "There are Black teachers and Hispanic teachers out there that do the same thing in real life, all the time."

Nationally, about 80% of American public school teachers are white, even though white students no longer represent a majority in public schools. Having teachers who reflect the race of their students is important, researchers say, to provide students with role models who have insight into their culture and life experience.

The departures are undoing some recent success that schools have had in bringing on more Black and Hispanic teachers. Turnover is higher among newer teachers. And researchers have found that teachers of color, who tend to have less seniority, often are affected disproportionately by layoffs.

In Pennsylvania, Black teachers were more than twice as likely to leave the profession as white teachers after the 2021-22 school year, according to a data analysis by Ed Fuller, an education professor at Penn State. Hispanic and multiracial teachers had a similar ratio, of around twice as likely.

Black and Hispanic teachers are more likely to be uncertified or teaching in an underfunded district, all of which is associated with someone leaving the profession at a higher rate, Fuller said.

"They're in more precarious teaching positions, meaning you're in a position with less resources and worse working conditions, so you're more likely to quit no matter who you are," Fuller said.

Sharif El-Mekki, a former Philadelphia teacher who leads the Center for Black Educator Development, said schools around the country come to him seeking help in recruiting teachers of color. But they don't have plans to retain them, such as providing opportunities to help shape policies and curricula.

To address the problem, schools can start by ensuring students of color have better experiences in school themselves and offering them opportunities to consider teaching, El-Mekki said. Black teachers also are more likely stay on in school systems that have Black leaders, he said, as well as a culture and approaches to teaching that are anti-racist.

"We need to think about, 'How are they experiencing my school?'" he said. "If they are having a better experience with us, they are more likely to stay."

Attrition by teachers of color can vary greatly by state or region. Overall, it has been higher compared with white teachers for two decades, since around the time federal policies began encouraging the closure of schools with low test scores, said Travis Bristol, a professor of teacher education and education policy

at the University of California-Berkeley.

In underfunded schools with large populations of Black and Hispanic children, teachers say they can expect more responsibilities, fewer resources and more children troubled by poverty and violence.

"I'm still in the classroom because this is my version of resistance and pushing back on a system that was not designed for folks that look like me and kids that look like me," said Sofia Gonzalez, a 14-year teacher of Puerto Rican heritage in Chicago-area public schools. "We as teachers of color have to find so much inner strength inside of us to sustain our careers in education."

The last few years have been a trying stretch for teachers everywhere. They've had to navigate COVID-19, a pivot to distance learning and the struggles with misbehavior and mental health that accompanied students' return to classrooms.

Then there's the pay: Educators' salaries have been falling behind their college-educated peers in other professions.

Teachers unions have warned of flagging morale, and there are signs lately that more educators are heading for the exits. Data from at least a handful of states — including Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Texas and Washington — is showing an increase in teacher attrition.

Black teachers reported significantly higher rates of burnout and being significantly more likely to leave their job than white teachers, according to research sponsored by two national teachers unions and published in June by the Rand Corp. think tank.

Chantle Simpson, 36, taught her last day of school this spring in Frisco, Texas, ending her 11-year career as a teacher.

She described an exodus of her fellow teachers of color from the profession amid growing expectations from administrators, who put more work on teachers by repeatedly appeasing demands from parents.

Administrators — including those who are Black or Hispanic — put more pressure on Black and Hispanic teachers, she said.

"They believe we can handle more," Simpson said. "Because we develop relationships better, the kids understand us more, so they're more likely to behave for us or do what we ask them to. So we get fitted with the children who are more challenging or have more requirements. It's crazy."

That leaves those teachers with less time for the rest of their better-behaved students, Simpson said.

"I always was conflicted by it," Simpson said. "It's mixed with praise, but it's a punishment. 'Oh, you're so great at building relationships, the kids really appreciate being with you, they respond to you.' But at the same time, you're increasing my workload, you're increasing the amount of attention I have to give to one child versus my whole class."

Takeaways from the Trump indictment that alleges a campaign of 'fraud and deceit'

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, BRIAN SLODYSKO and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal indictment of Donald Trump on Tuesday marks the first time that the former president has been formally held accountable for his efforts to overturn his 2020 election defeat. And it adds new details to what was already known about his actions, and those of his key allies, in the weeks leading up to the violent Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection.

The newest charges — Trump's third criminal indictment this year — include conspiracy to defraud the United States government and conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, the congressional certification of President Joe Biden's victory. It describes how Trump repeatedly told supporters and others that he had won the election, despite knowing that was false, and how he tried to persuade state officials, his own vice president and finally Congress to overturn the legitimate results.

Due to the "dishonesty, fraud and deceit" by Trump and some of his closest allies, the indictment says, his supporters "violently attacked the Capitol and halted the proceeding." In the attack, his supporters beat and injured police officers and broke through windows and doors, sending lawmakers running for

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their lives.

Some takeaways from Tuesday's indictment:

TRUMP KNEW

As Trump schemed to overturn the 2020 election, many of his aides and allies were under no illusion that Trump — a longtime provocateur — had actually won.

Some aides directly refuted conspiracy theories stirred by Trump and his lawyer, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Others told him point blank he had lost.

"There is no world, there is no option in which you do not leave the White House (o)n January 20th," a unnamed deputy White House counsel told Trump, according to the indictment. Another wrote in an email: "I'll obviously hustle to help on all fronts, but it's tough to own any of this when it's all just conspiracy s--- beamed down from the mothership."

But Trump continued to tell "prolific lies," the indictment says, about the outcome of the election, even after being warned of his false statements by top government officials — citing thousands of dead voters in Georgia, an overcount in Pennsylvania and tens of thousands of noncitizen voters in Arizona. Those theories had been disputed by state and federal officials and even his own staff.

"These claims were false, and the Defendant knew that they were false," the indictment states.

At the same time, Trump privately acknowledged his loss. After the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged Trump to not take action on a national security issue, Trump agreed, according to the indictment.

"Yeah, you're right, it's too late for us," Trump said during a Jan. 3 meeting. "We're going to give that to the next guy."

All the while, he repeatedly tweeted and encouraged his supporters to come to Washington on Jan. 6.

PENCE'S MEMOS

The indictment includes new details from former Vice President Mike Pence, who had fought efforts to answer questions about his role in presiding over the congressional certification.

Prosecutors cite Pence's "contemporaneous notes" about his interactions with Trump as the former president tried to convince him to delay or reject the legitimate election results on Jan. 6.

The indictment lists several conversations between Trump and Pence in those weeks, including some that were previously unknown. On Dec. 25, Pence called Trump to wish him a Merry Christmas, prosecutors said. But Trump "quickly turned the conversation to January 6 and his request that the Vice President reject electoral votes that day." The vice president pushed back, telling Trump he didn't have the authority.

In another of the calls, on Jan. 1, Trump told Pence, "You're too honest," according to the indictment.

LATE NIGHT CALLS

The indictment says that Trump "redoubled" his efforts even in the late night hours after his supporters attacked the Capitol. It lays out several attempts by Trump, through his aides and co-conspirators, to contact multiple senators and at least one House member just before the two chambers reconvened to finally certify Biden's win.

At 7:01 p.m. that night, the indictment says, as Trump's allies were making calls, White House counsel Pat Cipollone called Trump to ask him to withdraw any objections and allow the certification. Trump refused, the indictment says.

"As violence ensued, the Defendant and co-conspirators exploited the disruption by redoubling efforts to levy false claims of election fraud and convince Members of Congress to further delay the certification based on those claims," the indictment says.

FAKE ELECTORS DUPED INTO 'CRAZY PLAY'

Early on, Trump's team orchestrated a scheme to enlist officials in seven states he had lost — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Mexico, Wisconsin — to have them submit alternate election certificates saying he had actually won when Congress met to certify the vote Jan. 6.

The conspirators told most of the local officials that the certificates they were signing saying Trump won the election in their states would only be used if the court cases being waged over the election results showed that outcome.

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But prosecutors allege that's not true.

What started as a legal strategy quickly evolved into a corrupt plan to stop Biden's count on Jan. 6, the indictment said.

Told by a colleague what was going on, Trump's deputy campaign manager called it a "crazy play." They refused to put their names on a statement about it, because none of them could "stand by it."

THE CO-CONSPIRATORS

The indictment alleges Trump enlisted six people to help him try to overturn the 2020 election. The six people are not explicitly named, but the indictment includes details that make it possible to identify most of them.

As "Co-Conspirator 1" and "Co-Conspirator 2," lawyers Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman are quoted from their remarks at the "Stop the Steal" rally prior to the riot urging Pence to throw out the votes of valid electors.

A third lawyer, Sidney Powell, named as "Co-Conspirator 3," filed a lawsuit in Georgia that amplified false or unsupported claims of election fraud. The indictment quotes Trump as privately conceding Powell's claims sounded "crazy."

Jeffrey Clark, a Justice Department official who championed Trump's false claims of election fraud, is described as "Co-Conspirator 4."

"Co-Conspirator 5" is lawyer Kenneth Chesebro, who the indictment says "assisted in devising and attempting to implement a plan to submit fraudulent slates of presidential electors to obstruct the certification proceeding."

"Co-Conspirator 6" is an unknown political consultant who also assisted with the fake electors plan.

There are no known charges against the listed co-conspirators.

Giuliani aide Ted Goodman said in a statement that "every fact" the former New York City mayor had "establishes the good faith basis President Donald Trump had for the actions he took during the two-month period charged in the indictment." Eastman lawyer Harvey Silverglate said his client denied any wrongdoing.

CONGRESSIONAL INSPIRATION

Much of the evidence in the indictment — including repeated efforts by White House advisers to tell Trump that he lost the election — was first laid out by the Democrat-led House Jan. 6 committee last year.

In its final report issued in December, the committee said it was making several so-called criminal referrals for Trump to the Justice Department, including obstruction of an official proceeding and conspiracy to defraud the United States.

A criminal referral from Congress is not binding, but it is a formal notification from Congress to the Justice Department that lawmakers believe they have found criminal activity.

The panel's final report asserted that Trump criminally engaged in a "multi-part conspiracy" to overturn the results and failed to act to stop his supporters from attacking the Capitol.

TRUMP'S MOUNTING LEGAL BILLS

The sheer number of investigations, criminal cases and lawsuits brought against Trump are unprecedented for a former president. The same could be said for the tens of millions of dollars in legal fees paid out to attorneys representing him and his allies, straining the finances of his campaign.

An Associated Press analysis of recent fundraising disclosures shows Trump's political committees have paid out at least \$59.2 million to more than 100 lawyers and law firms since January 2021.

The threat posed by the colossal drain of resources has led Trump's allies to establish a new legal defense fund, the Patriot Legal Defense Fund.

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cally jammed another, sending it crashing into the IQ-Quarter skyscraper that houses government offices like the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications, and the Ministry of Industry and Trade — the same building that was hit Sunday.

A cordon went up around the building and personnel from the fire department and the Russian Investigative Committee were at the scene. Hours later, residents strolled through the district along the Moscow River or sat on benches in the sunshine. By about 1 p.m. Tuesday, workers were already starting to replace damaged windows.

The business district, a 10-minute subway ride west of the Kremlin, is home to some of Moscow's flashiest restaurants, offering far-reaching views of the capital and a menu of upscale fare like three types of caviar, shellfish from Russia's Far East and French cuisine.

But there was no escaping the grim news.

While Russian state television has largely played down the strikes, one channel sandwiched a segment on how Moscow's air defenses successfully intercepted the drones in between reports highlighting Russian attacks on Ukraine.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said in Ukraine that Moscow "is rapidly getting used to a full-fledged war," without confirming or denying Kyiv's involvement in the drone attacks that in recent days have struck from the capital to the Crimean Peninsula.

After Sunday's strike, the Kremlin said security would be ramped up.

Still, the size of the drone that hit the Moscow City district led analysts to question the effectiveness of the capital's air defenses, suggesting it could have been launched from Ukraine.

"If this is the case, this would be rather embarrassing for Russia's air defenses. If a drone has been in Russian airspace for hours, air defenses should have picked it up earlier and shot it down earlier," said Ulrike Franke, an expert in drones and military technology at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

While they haven't caused much physical damage, bringing the drone campaign to Moscow "blows holes in Russia's narrative that the war on Ukraine is successful and that it is being prosecuted far away from any consequences for the Russian people themselves," said Keir Giles, a Russia expert at the Chatham House think tank in London.

"That is something which is going to be harder and harder for Russia's propaganda machine to explain away," he said.

A Muscovite who identified himself to the AP only as Eldar summed up the strikes this way: "We attack them, they attack us. And it's obvious that they will succeed somewhere, and we will succeed somewhere. We should try to strengthen the defense."

In Odintsovo, where some of the drones were downed about 30 kilometers (18 miles) southwest of the capital, some residents discussed the events on their local Telegram channel.

One woman talked about hearing noises that turned out to be a car or improperly closed trash containers, and seeing what she thought were drones but actually were a flock of birds, a plane and a wind-blown plastic bag.

"How is it possible to live like this?" she asked the group.

"Stop creating panic," one member admonished her.

"If you hear a noise, be happy because it hasn't hit you," added another.

Progress made against massive California-Nevada wildfire but flames may burn iconic Joshua trees

By TY O'NEIL, STEFANIE DAZIO and RIO YAMAT undefined

MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters aided by afternoon rain fought to contain a massive blaze that swept through the California desert into Nevada and could threaten the region's famous spiky Joshua trees.

The York Fire that erupted last Friday was California's largest wildfire this year. As of Tuesday night it had

Framber Valdez throws 16th no-hitter in Astros history in 2-0 victory over Guardians

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Framber Valdez was determined to improve this month after a subpar July where he posted a 7.29 ERA.

On the first day of August he certainly did that.

Valdez threw the 16th no-hitter in Houston Astros history in a 2-0 victory over the Cleveland Guardians on Tuesday night.

"The last couple of games I just wasn't as focused as I could have been and I'll be the first to admit that," Valdez said in Spanish through a translator. "But today I just came very focused, very positive and just ready to leave it all out on the field."

Hours after the Astros reacquired ace Justin Verlander from the New York Mets, Valdez allowed just one baserunner on a walk in the fifth inning, but still faced the minimum thanks to a double play in that frame.

"It's a wonderful day," manager Dusty Baker said. "(Valdez) started out with a bang. He had his breaking ball from the very beginning ... and you could tell he was on and he stayed on."

Gabriel Arias grounded out to start the ninth before Myles Straw lined out to center field. Cam Gallagher then lined out to Jeremy Pena to end it and set off the celebration.

Valdez (9-7) raised his arms above his head and then clapped as a huge smile crossed his face. He's the first left-hander to throw a no-hitter for Houston.

"When I got to the seventh inning I thought to myself, 'OK, I can finish this game without any hits,'" Valdez said. "Got to the eighth inning and still felt good, felt like it was still the first inning so I said. 'I'm just going to continue attacking the hitters, trying to do my best out there.'"

The 29-year-old from the Dominican Republic had pitched five complete games, including two complete game shutouts before Tuesday's gem.

Catcher Martín Maldonado caught the third no-hitter of his career. He said he could tell from Valdez's warmup that he would have a good night.

"I noticed from the bullpen, he wasn't joking around," Maldonado said. "He was straight business from the moment he walked out there."

Maldonado had a simple answer as to what made Valdez so special Tuesday night.

"Just Framber being Framber," he said.

Indeed, Valdez relies heavily on getting groundouts, and this game was no different. Valdez entered the game first in the AL in groundball percentage at 54.7 and 12 of his outs against the Guardians were on groundouts.

"It's easy to see the two-seam movement, but his curveball — man just so good and he threw a couple changeups," Cleveland manager Terry Francona said. "But his curveball was really good."

The no-hitter was the third in the majors this season. New York Yankees right-hander Domingo Germán pitched a perfect game at Oakland on June 28, and Matt Manning, Alex Lange and Jason Foley of the Detroit Tigers threw a combined no-no against Toronto on July 8.

It's Houston's first no-hitter in the regular season since Cristian Javier, Hector Neris and Ryan Pressly combined to no-hit the Yankees on June 25, 2022, and the first by a single pitcher since Verlander against Toronto on Sept. 1, 2019.

The Astros made the move for Verlander as they chase the Texas Rangers for first place in the AL West. Texas beat the White Sox 2-0 on Tuesday to leave Houston a half-game back.

Baker thought it was special that Valdez threw the first individual no-hitter for the Astros since Verlander's on the day Verlander was traded back to Houston.

"It was sort of destined to be," Baker said. "And I'm sure Justin is smiling right now on his way here and he'll be the first one to congratulate Framber when he gets here. It's a great day."

Javier also started a combined no-hitter in Game 4 of last year's World Series against the Phillies on Nov. 2, 2022. Bryan Abreu, Rafael Montero and Pressly also pitched in that game.

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Kyle Tucker provided the offense in this one with a two-run single in the third inning.

Valdez retired the first 12 batters, with six strikeouts, before Oscar Gonzalez walked to open the fifth. But Valdez still faced the minimum in that inning thanks to that double play.

Arias grounded out to start the sixth before a lineout by Straw. Gallagher then grounded out to end the sixth.

Valdez retired all three batters in the seventh on groundouts. The first two were routine. But Valdez deflected a high chopper hit by José Ramírez and Peña's throw to first barely beat Ramírez there for the third out.

Valdez struck out Gonzalez to start the eighth and retired David Fry and Will Brennan on groundouts to end the inning.

Valdez threw 93 pitches, with 65 strikes.

The strong start comes after he allowed eight hits and six runs — both season highs — in 3 2/3 innings of a 13-5 loss to Texas in his last outing.

Jake Meyers singled to start Houston's third but was caught stealing after Maldonado struck out.

Jose Altuve singled and Jeremy Peña walked before a wild pitch by Williams allowed both runners to advance a base.

Tucker then singled to center field to send both runners home and put the Astros up 2-0.

Cleveland's rookie starter Gavin Williams (1-3) allowed four hits and two runs in five innings for the loss.

Josh Bell was originally in Cleveland's lineup Tuesday but was scratched after the team made a late deal to send him to Miami for infielder Jean Segura and infield prospect Kahlil Watson.

UP NEXT

RHP Tanner Bibee (7-2, 3.11 ERA) starts for Cleveland in the series finale Wednesday. Houston hasn't announced a starter.

Niger crisis deepens as European nations evacuate and coup leaders get support from other juntas

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — A French military transport plane carrying Europeans from Niger arrived in Paris Wednesday, in the first such evacuation flight since mutinous soldiers ousted the country's democratically elected president nearly a week ago and shut its borders.

France, Italy and Spain all announced evacuations from Niger for their citizens and other European nationals, concerned that they risked becoming trapped by the coup that won backing Tuesday from three other West African nations also ruled by mutinous soldiers.

About 600 French nationals want to leave, along with 400 people of other nationalities from Belgians to Danish, French officials said. The first flight carried mostly French nationals, and officials hope to finish the evacuation flights by Wednesday.

With Niger's air space closed, France coordinated the evacuations with the regime that ousted the nation's leader, but without withdrawing its support for democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum, diplomatic officials said.

The ministry cited recent violence that targeted its embassy in Niamey, the capital, as one of the reasons for its decision to offer evacuation flights to its citizens and other Europeans. Spain's Defense Ministry announced preparations to evacuate more than 70 nationals, and Italy also said it was arranging a flight.

The evacuations come during a deepening crisis sparked by the coup last week against Bazoum. His apparent overthrow is a blow for Western nations that were working with Niger against West African extremists.

In Niamey hotels, Europeans and other nationalities, including some Americans, packed bags. At the airport, hundreds of people lined up for hours waiting to leave on French evacuation flights.

A former French military official who had been training the Nigerien army as a civilian told The Associated Press that he was departing even though his "job is not finished." Speaking on condition of anonymity for

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security reasons, he said the military takeover took many people by surprise.

The West African regional body known as ECOWAS announced travel and economic sanctions against Niger on Sunday and said it could use force if coup leaders don't reinstate Bazoum within one week.

The U.N, special envoy for West Africa and the Sahel, Leonardo Santos Simão, held out hope that bloodshed could be avoided.

He said during a virtual news conference Tuesday he expects ECOWAS to go ahead with the deployment of troops to Niger if Bazoum isn't restored to power. But "I believe that other efforts are underway, so I hope the use of force will not be necessary," if "everybody talks in good faith (and) wants to avoid bloodshed."

The new junta got backing from the military governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea.

Mali and Burkina Faso said in a joint statement that "any military intervention against Niger will be considered a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali." The two countries also denounced ECOWAS' economic sanctions as "illegal, illegitimate and inhumane" and refused to apply them.

ECOWAS suspended all commercial and financial transactions between its member states and Niger, as well as freezing Nigerien assets held in regional central banks. Niger relies heavily on foreign aid, and sanctions could further impoverish its more than 25 million people.

Mali and Burkina Faso have each undergone two coups since 2020, as soldiers overthrew governments claiming they could do a better job fighting increasing jihadi violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. ECOWAS has suspended them from the bloc, but never threatened to use force.

Guinea, another country under military rule since 2021, also issued a statement in support of Niger's junta and urged ECOWAS to "come to its senses."

The evacuations followed violence Sunday that targeted the French Embassy, with protesters burning down a door and smashing windows before the Nigerien army dispersed them. Thousands of pro-junta supporters took to Niamey's streets. Some waved Russian flags along with signs reading "Down with France" and supporting Russian President Vladimir Putin and telling the international community to stay away.

There has been no clear explanation of the references to Russia, but some demonstrators regard it as a symbol of anti-Western feelings. Some may also reflect support for the Russian mercenary group Wagner's reputation for ruthlessly suppressing militants.

Niger could be following in the same footsteps as Mali and Burkina Faso, both of which saw protesters waving Russian flags after their coups, analysts say.

Niger's coup could also embolden jihadi violence, some say.

Boubacar Moussa, a former member of an al-Qaida linked group known as JNIM, said the military overthrow is exactly what the jihadis want because it will distract and weaken the army. "Jihadis are very supportive of this coup that happened in Niger, because it will allow them to become very strong," he said.

Moussa, who spoke to AP in Niamey, is part of a nationwide program to bring back jihadis, reintegrate them into society and use their help in counterterrorism efforts. It was spearheaded by Bazoum when he was minister of interior and is intended as an alternative to a military solution to stem violence across the country. The AP cannot verify that Moussa actively fought for JNIM.

If ECOWAS uses force, it could also trigger violence between civilians supporting the coup and those against it, Niger analysts say.

Niger's prime minister, who was appointed by Bazoum and was out of the country when the coup took place, urged the international community to help roll back the coup in order to defend democracy in West Africa.

"For the ECOWAS countries, it's a question of survival. For the international community too, it's a question of credibility. Niger must remain a democratic state," Prime Minister Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou said in an interview with The Associated Press in France.

"Niger is a key country in terms of security for the rest of Africa, but also for the rest of the world," he said.

Observers believe Bazoum is being held at his house in Niamey. The first photos of him since the coup

appeared Sunday evening, sitting on a couch smiling beside Chad President Mahamat Deby, who had flown in to try to mediate.

Both the United States and France have sent troops and hundreds of millions of dollars of military and humanitarian aid in recent years to Niger, which was a French colony until 1960. In the capital, many people live in makeshift shelters and scramble daily to make enough money to feed their children. Niger was seen as the last partner working with the West against extremism in a Francophone region where anti-French sentiment opened the way for the Russian private military group Wagner.

The U.S. will consider cutting aid if the coup is successful, the State Department said Monday. Aid is "very much in the balance depending on the outcome of the actions in the country," said department spokesman Matt Miller. "U.S. assistance hinges on continued democratic governance in Niger."

Trump indicted for efforts to overturn 2020 election and block transfer of power

By ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump was indicted on felony charges Tuesday for working to overturn the results of the 2020 election in the run-up to the violent riot by his supporters at the U.S. Capitol, with the Justice Department acting to hold him accountable for an unprecedented effort to block the peaceful transfer of presidential power and threaten American democracy.

The four-count indictment, the third criminal case against Trump, provided deeper insight into a dark moment that has already been the subject of exhaustive federal investigations and captivating public hearings. It chronicles a months-long campaign of lies about the election results and says that, even when those falsehoods resulted in a chaotic insurrection at the Capitol, Trump sought to exploit the violence by pointing to it as a reason to further delay the counting of votes that sealed his defeat.

Even in a year of rapid-succession legal reckonings for Trump, Tuesday's indictment, with charges including conspiring to defraud the United States government that he once led, was stunning in its allegations that a former president assaulted the "bedrock function" of democracy. It's the first time the defeated president, who is the early front-runner for next year's Republican presidential nomination, is facing legal consequences for his frantic but ultimately failed effort to cling to power.

"The attack on our nation's Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, was an unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy," said Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith, whose office has spent months investigating Trump. "It was fueled by lies, lies by the defendant targeted at obstructing a bedrock function of the U.S. government: the nation's process of collecting counting and certifying the results of the presidential election."

The Trump campaign called the charges "fake" and asked why it took two-and-a-half years to bring them.

Trump was the only person charged in Tuesday's indictment. But prosecutors obliquely referenced a half-dozen co-conspirators, including lawyers inside and outside of government who they said had worked with Trump to undo the election results. They also advanced legally dubious schemes to enlist slates of fake electors in battleground states won by Democrat Joe Biden to falsely claim that Trump had actually won them.

The indictment accuses the defeated president and his allies of trying to "exploit the violence and chaos" by calling lawmakers into the evening on Jan. 6 to delay the certification of Biden's victory.

It also cites handwritten notes from former Vice President Mike Pence that give gravitas to Trump's relentless goading to reject the electoral votes. Pence, who is challenging Trump for the GOP presidential nomination, declined overtures from a House panel that investigated the insurrection and sought to avoid testifying before the special counsel. He appeared only after losing a court fight, with prosecutors learning that Trump in one conversation derided him as "too honest" to stop the certification.

Trump is due in court Thursday, the first step in a legal process that will play out in a courthouse situated between the White House he once controlled and the Capitol his supporters once stormed. The case is already being dismissed by the former president and his supporters — and even some of his rivals — as

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just another politically motivated prosecution.

Yet the case stems from one of the most serious threats to American democracy in modern history.

The indictment centers on the turbulent two months after the November 2020 election in which Trump refused to accept his loss and spread lies that victory was stolen from him. The turmoil resulted in the riot at the Capitol, when Trump loyalists violently broke into the building, attacked police officers and disrupted the congressional counting of electoral votes.

In between the election and the riot, Trump urged local election officials to undo voting results in their states, pressured Pence to halt the certification of electoral votes and falsely claimed that the election had been stolen — a notion repeatedly rejected by judges. Among those lies, prosecutors say, were claims that more than 10,000 dead voters had voted in Georgia along with tens of thousands of double votes in Nevada. Each claim had been rebutted by courts or state or federal officials, the indictment says.

Prosecutors say Trump knew his claims of having won the election were false but he “repeated and widely disseminated them anyway — to make his knowingly false claims appear legitimate, to create an intense national atmosphere of mistrust and anger, and to erode public faith in the administration of the election.”

The document carefully outlined arguments that Trump has been making to defend his conduct, that he had every right to challenge the results, to use the courts, even to lie about it in the process. But in stark detail, the indictment outlines how the former president instead took criminal steps to reverse the clear verdict voters had rendered.

The indictment had been expected since Trump said in mid-July that the Justice Department had informed him he was a target of its investigation. A bipartisan House committee that spent months investigating the run-up to the Capitol riot also recommended prosecuting Trump on charges, including aiding an insurrection and obstructing an official proceeding.

The indictment includes charges of conspiring to defraud the U.S., conspiring to obstruct an official proceeding, obstructing an official proceeding and violating a post-Civil War Reconstruction Era civil rights statute that makes it a crime to conspire to violate rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution — in this case, the right to vote.

The mounting criminal cases are unfolding in the heat of the 2024 race. A conviction in this case, or any other, would not prevent Trump from pursuing the White House or serving as president, though Trump as president could theoretically appoint an attorney general to dismiss the charges or potentially try to pardon himself.

In New York, state prosecutors have charged Trump with falsifying business records about a hush money payoff to a porn actor before the 2016 election. The trial is set to begin in March.

In Florida, the Justice Department has brought more than three dozen felony counts, accusing him of illegally possessing classified documents after leaving the White House and concealing them from investigators. That trial begins in May.

Prosecutors in Georgia are also investigating efforts by Trump and his allies to reverse his election loss to Biden there. The district attorney of Fulton County is expected to announce charging decisions within weeks.

Smith’s team has cast a broad net as part of his federal investigation, with his team questioning senior Trump administration officials, including Pence, before a grand jury in Washington. Prosecutors also interviewed election officials in Georgia, Wisconsin, Michigan and other battleground states won by Biden who were pressured by the Trump team to change voting results.

Rudy Giuliani, a Trump lawyer who pursued post-election legal challenges, spoke voluntarily to prosecutors. Giuliani was not named in the indictment, but appears to match the description of one of the co-conspirators. A spokesman for Giuliani said Tuesday night that Trump had a “good-faith basis” for the actions he took.

Attorney General Merrick Garland last year appointed Smith, an international war crimes prosecutor who also led the Justice Department’s public corruption section, as special counsel to investigate efforts to undo the election as well as Trump’s retention of classified documents at his Florida home, Mar-a-Lago. Although Trump has derided him as “deranged” and called him politically motivated, Smith’s past experi-

ence includes overseeing significant prosecutions against high-profile Democrats.

The Justice Department's investigations began well before Smith's appointment, proceeding alongside separate criminal probes into the rioters themselves. More than 1,000 people have been charged in connection with the insurrection, including some with seditious conspiracy.

The election-meddling indictment against Trump is sprawling. Here's a breakdown of the case

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Donald Trump for years has promoted baseless claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him. In truth, Trump was the one who tried to steal the election, federal prosecutors said Tuesday in a sprawling indictment that paints the former president as desperate to cling to power he knew had been stripped away by voters.

The Justice Department indictment accuses Trump of brazenly conspiring with allies to spread falsehoods and concoct schemes intended to overturn his election loss to President Joe Biden as his legal challenges floundered in court.

The felony charges brought by special counsel Jack Smith are built around the words of White House lawyers and others in his inner circle who repeatedly told Trump there was no fraud.

It's the third time this year the early front-runner in the 2024 Republican presidential primary has been charged in a criminal case. But it's the first case to try to hold Trump responsible for his efforts to remain in power during the chaotic weeks between his election loss and the attack by his supporters on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Trump has said he did nothing wrong, and has accused Smith and the Justice Department of trying to harm his 2024 campaign.

Here's a look at the charges Trump faces and other key issues in the indictment:

WHAT IS TRUMP CHARGED WITH?

Trump is charged with four counts: obstruction of an official proceeding, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, conspiracy to defraud the U.S. and conspiracy to prevent others from carrying out their constitutional rights.

In the obstruction charge — which carries penalties of up to 20 years in prison — the official proceeding refers to the Jan. 6, 2021, joint session of Congress at which electoral votes were counted in order to certify Biden as the official winner. Conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding also carries a maximum of 20 years in prison.

That obstruction charge has been brought against hundreds of the more than 1,000 people charged in the Jan. 6 riot, including members of the far-right Oath Keepers and Proud Boys extremist groups. More than 100 people have been convicted at trial or pleaded guilty to the offense.

Conspiracy to defraud the U.S., which is punishable by up to five years in prison, prohibits efforts to obstruct or interfere with government functions "by deceit, craft or trickery, or at least by means that are dishonest," the Supreme Court has held. The indictment alleges that Trump used "dishonesty, fraud and deceit" to obstruct the counting and certifying of the election results.

Trump had the right to contest the election — and even falsely claim that he had won, indictment says. The charges, however, stem from what prosecutors say were illegal efforts to subvert the election results and block the peaceful transfer of power.

The indictment alleges a weeklong plot that began with pressure on state lawmakers and election officials to change electoral votes from Biden to Trump, and then evolved into organizing fake slates of pro-Trump electors to be sent to Congress.

Trump and his allies also attempted to use the Justice Department to conduct bogus election-fraud investigations in order to boost his fake electors' scheme, the indictment says.

As Jan. 6 approached, Trump and his allies pressured Vice President Mike Pence to reject certain electoral

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votes, and when that failed, the former president directed his supporters to go to the Capitol to obstruct Congress' certification of the vote, the indictment alleges.

Finally, the indictment says, Trump and his allies tried to exploit his supporters' attack on the Capitol by redoubling their efforts to spread election lies and convince members of Congress to further delay the certification of Biden's victory.

"Each of these conspiracies — which built on the widespread mistrust the Defendant was creating through pervasive and destabilizing lies about election fraud — targeted a bedrock function of the United States federal government: the nation's process of collecting, counting, and certifying the results of the presidential election," the indictment says.

WHAT IS THE 'CONSPIRACY AGAINST RIGHTS' CHARGE?

Trump is accused of violating a post-Civil War era civil rights statute that makes it a crime to conspire to interfere with rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution, in this case: the right to vote and have one's vote counted. It's punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

The provision was originally part of a set of laws passed in 1870 in response to violence and intimidation by members of the Ku Klux Klan aimed at keeping Black people from the polls.

But it has been used over the years in a wide-range of election fraud cases, including to prosecute conspiracies to stuff ballot boxes or not count certain votes. The conspiracy doesn't have to be successful, meaning the fraud doesn't have to actually affect the election.

WAS ANYONE ELSE CHARGED?

Trump is the only defendant charged in the indictment, which mentions six co-conspirators. The six people are not explicitly named, but the indictment includes details that make it possible to identify some of them. It's unclear why they weren't charged or whether they will be added to the indictment at a later date.

The co-conspirators include an attorney "who was willing to spread knowingly false claims and pursue strategies" that Trump's 2020 campaign attorneys would not, and an attorney whose "unfounded claims of election fraud" Trump privately acknowledged to others sounded "crazy." Another co-conspirator is a political consultant who helped submit fake slates of electors for Trump.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The case was filed in Washington's federal court, where Trump is expected to make his first appearance on Thursday.

For more than two years, judges in that courthouse — which sits within sight of the Capitol — have been hearing the cases of the hundreds of Trump supporters accused of participating in the Jan. 6 riot — many of whom have said they were deluded by the election lies pushed by Trump and his allies.

Trump has signaled that his defense may rest, at least in part, on the idea that he truly believed the election was stolen, saying in a recent social media post, "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."

But prosecutors have amassed a significant amount of evidence showing that Trump was repeatedly told he had lost.

Trump "was notified repeatedly that his claims were untrue — often by the people on whom he relied for candid advice on important matters, and who were best positioned to know the facts and he deliberately disregarded the truth," the indictment says.

Trump is already scheduled to stand trial in March in the New York case stemming from hush-money payments made during the 2016 campaign and in May in the federal case in Florida stemming from classified documents found at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

Smith said prosecutors will seek "a speedy trial" in the latest case.

Unlike in Florida, where Republicans have made steady inroads in recent years, Trump will likely face a challenging jury pool in overwhelmingly Democratic Washington, D.C. Of the roughly 100 people who have gone to trial in the Jan. 6 attack, only two people have been cleared of all charges and those cases were decided by judges, not juries.

Astros reacquire Justin Verlander from Mets, a deal owner Jim Crane tells AP was an easy decision

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Astros owner Jim Crane texted Justin Verlander with a simple message moments after they reacquired him Tuesday from the New York Mets in a blockbuster trade.

"I said: 'Welcome back. We missed you,'" Crane said. "We'll see you in New York. Hope you pitch well for us against the Yankees."

Verlander is back with Houston, rejoining the team he helped to two World Series titles, and expected to start Friday or Saturday in the Bronx.

In a tight race with Texas atop the AL West, the Astros shipped outfield prospects Drew Gilbert and Ryan Clifford to New York for the three-time Cy Young Award winner.

It turned out to be just the start of a momentous day for Houston's rotation — left-hander Framber Valdez pitched a no-hitter against Cleveland hours later.

Crane told The Associated Press the Mets could send more than \$50 million to the Astros to help pay off Verlander's contract. The 40-year-old right-hander signed an \$86.7 million, two-year deal with the Mets in December that includes a vesting option for 2025 at \$35 million.

"(General manager) Dana (Brown) and his team worked on it hard," Crane told the AP. "After we looked at the numbers — it's always tough to give up prospects, but I think they determined that it was the right move. We needed starting pitching. He's been throwing well. And I think the other factor is they ate a lot of the contract. So it wasn't a really hard decision. It was just, would we give up enough prospects?"

The underperforming Mets dismantled the most expensive roster in major league history over the past few days. They dealt fellow ace Max Scherzer to the Texas Rangers in a trade announced Sunday and followed up Tuesday by shedding Verlander, among a flurry of other moves.

Veteran closer David Robertson, reliever Dominic Leone and outfielders Tommy Pham and Mark Canha also were sent packing since last Thursday.

Crane said he and Brown didn't think there was any chance Verlander would be traded until Scherzer was dealt. After he was moved, the Astros figured they'd be a frontrunner if the Mets wanted to trade Verlander, too.

"We knew he had (the no-trade clause) and I think we felt strongly if given the opportunity, there were only a few landing spots and we were one of them," Crane said.

Brown said once they learned the Mets were open to moving Verlander they put on a "full-court press."

"We think he stabilizes our rotation," Brown said. "We're really fired up. ... I had a chance to speak to Justin and he's very excited about coming back."

Crane believes his past relationship with the pitcher was important in making the deal.

"Justin and I always got along," Crane said. "We've had direct contact with each other on a number of things. Certainly not this one, but I know him well, and every time he was here, we did what we said we were going to do. So I think he had some trust in coming back here, certainly. And he's had great successes. So I think that certainly helped."

Verlander earned his 250th career victory on Sunday, and 61 of those came with Houston. He was first acquired from the Detroit Tigers during the 2017 season, when he helped pitch the Astros to their first World Series title.

"It gives a boost to the fans," Crane said. "It gives a boost to the locker room. I know (manager) Dusty (Baker) will be happy. So it's a big day when you have your Cy Young guy come back."

Baker couldn't quit smiling as he discussed Verlander's return Tuesday.

"It improves my heart's function, you know what I mean?" Baker said. "And for a guy who's had a stroke, heart function is very, very important. And that does my heart well."

Verlander won his third Cy Young Award and second World Series championship with Houston last season, then became a free agent.

He opened the season on the injured list and struggled upon his return in early May. But he's been back

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in top form recently, going 4-1 with a 1.49 ERA in his past seven starts. He's 6-5 with a 3.15 ERA in 16 starts overall this season, striking out 81 in 94 1/3 innings.

Verlander signed a \$66 million contract with the Astros in March 2019 that covered the 2020 and 2021 seasons. He was hurt on opening day of the 2020 season and made just one start in the two seasons covered by the deal before his brilliant comeback last year.

"The last contract he had was we were paying about \$33 (million) and that didn't work out so good," Crane said. "But I think there was enough cushion in this one to make it palatable. And being in the position we're at right now, a little weak on the starting pitching side, he will be a big anchor in there."

The Astros have won the AL West in five of the past six seasons but currently trail the first-place Rangers by a half-game.

"It's definitely going to provide a huge boost, not only energy-wise, but also just to be able to have a guy like him in here who's been in here before. And we know how much he brings, not only to the mound but the clubhouse," third baseman Alex Bregman said.

The Astros have managed to stay close to the Rangers despite dealing with a spate of injuries, including losing starting pitchers Lance McCullers Jr. and Luis García to season-ending injuries.

"We've lost a lot of key players to injuries," Crane said. "But we're used to being there. We want to stay there. So we want to get back, win the division and get in the playoffs."

New York at one point had a projected payroll of \$365 million bolstered by aggressive owner Steve Cohen, but the club entered Tuesday 50-55 and six games out of the final NL wild-card spot. Cohen paid off around \$35 million remaining on Scherzer's contract to facilitate the deal with the Rangers, which returned top prospect Luisangel Acuña, the younger brother of Braves star Ronald Acuña Jr.

Gilbert, 22, was a first-round draft pick by Houston in 2022 who ranks 68th on MLB.com's Top 100 prospects list. He's a potential five-tool player who dominated at Class A early this season — hitting .360 with a 1.107 OPS in 21 games — before slumping after a promotion to Double-A. He's hitting .241 with six homers and a .713 OPS in 60 games at Double-A.

The 20-year-old Clifford was an 11th-round selection in 2022 whose stock has risen since. He's hitting .291 with 18 home runs and a .919 OPS at two A-ball stops this season.

The Mets will send Houston around \$35.5 million at least, covering a majority of the remaining roughly \$57.5 million Verlander is guaranteed. New York will pay around \$4.2 million this year and \$31.3 million in 2024.

If Verlander pitches 140 innings next year and triggers his \$35 million conditional player option for 2025, the Mets would pay another \$17.5 million if Verlander exercises the option.

The Mets will save around \$19 million in 2023 with the trade — \$10 million in salary and \$9 million in lowered luxury tax payments.

The judge assigned to Trump's Jan. 6 case is a tough punisher of Capitol rioters

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal judge assigned to the election fraud case against former President Donald Trump has stood out as one of the toughest punishers of rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol in an attack fueled by Trump's baseless claims of a stolen election. She has also ruled against him before.

U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, a former assistant public defender who was nominated to the bench by President Barack Obama, will oversee the case accusing Trump of trying to overturn his 2020 election loss in the two months leading up to the violent assault on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.

Chutkan has often handed down prison sentences in Jan. 6, 2021, riot cases that are harsher than Justice Department prosecutors recommended.

Chutkan has also ruled against Trump before in a separate Jan. 6 case. In November 2021, she refused his request to block the release of documents to the U.S. House's Jan. 6 committee by asserting execu-

tive privilege.

She rejected his arguments that he could hold privilege over documents from his administration even after President Joe Biden had cleared the way for the National Archives to turn the papers over. She wrote that Trump could not claim his privilege "exists in perpetuity."

In a memorable line from her ruling, Chutkan wrote, "Presidents are not kings, and Plaintiff is not President."

Trump will make his first court appearance on Thursday before Magistrate Judge Moxila A. Upadhyaya. Such judges handle initial matters in federal cases.

Chutkan has sentenced at least 38 people convicted of Capitol riot-related crimes. All 38 received prison terms, ranging from 10 days to over five years, according to an Associated Press analysis of court records.

She is one of two dozen judges in Washington, D.C., who collectively have sentenced nearly 600 defendants for their roles in the Jan. 6 siege. More than one third of them avoided sentences that included incarceration.

Other judges typically have handed down sentences that are more lenient than those requested by prosecutors. Chutkan, however, has matched or exceeded prosecutors' recommendations in 19 of her 38 sentences. In four of those cases, prosecutors weren't seeking any jail time at all.

Chutkan has said prison can be a powerful deterrent against the threat of another insurrection.

"Every day we're hearing about reports of anti-democratic factions of people plotting violence, the potential threat of violence, in 2024," she said in December 2021 before sentencing a Florida man who attacked police officers to more than five years behind bars. At the time, that sentence was the longest for a Jan. 6 case.

"It has to be made clear that trying to violently overthrow the government, trying to stop the peaceful transition of power and assaulting law enforcement officers in that effort is going to be met with absolutely certain punishment," she said.

Judge Trevor McFadden, a Trump nominee, suggested during a hearing in 2021 that the Justice Department was being too hard on those who broke into the Capitol compared with the people arrested during racial injustice protests following George Floyd's 2020 murder.

Without naming her colleague, Chutkan criticized McFadden's suggestion days later.

"People gathered all over the country last year to protest the violent murder by the police of an unarmed man. Some of those protesters became violent," Chutkan said during an October 2021 hearing.

"But to compare the actions of people protesting, mostly peacefully, for civil rights, to those of a violent mob seeking to overthrow the lawfully elected government is a false equivalency and ignores a very real danger that the Jan. 6 riot posed to the foundation of our democracy."

Fitch downgrades US credit rating, citing mounting debt and political divisions

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fitch Ratings has downgraded the United States government's credit rating, citing rising debt at the federal, state, and local levels and a "steady deterioration in standards of governance" over the past two decades.

The rating was cut Tuesday one notch to AA+ from AAA, the highest possible rating. The new rating is still well into investment grade.

The decision illustrates one way that growing political polarization and repeated Washington standoffs over spending and taxes could end up costing U.S. taxpayers. A lower credit rating, over time, could raise borrowing costs for the U.S. government.

It's only the second time in the nation's history that its credit rating has been cut. In 2011, the ratings agency Standard & Poor's stripped the U.S. of its prize AAA rating after a prolonged fight over the government's borrowing limit. The Government Accountability Office, in a 2012 report, estimated that the 2011 budget standoff raised Treasury's borrowing costs by \$1.3 billion that year.

At the same time, the huge size of the U.S. economy and historic stability of the federal government has kept its borrowing costs low. Global investors often flock to U.S. Treasury securities during periods of economic turmoil, lowering the interest rate paid by the U.S. government.

Fitch had warned May 24 that it could remove the government's triple-A rating as Congress again struggled to raise the borrowing limit. A deal was reached nearly a week later that suspended the limit and cut about \$1.5 trillion from the government deficit over the next decade.

Fitch cited the worsening political divisions around spending and tax policy as a key reason for its decision. It said U.S. governance has declined relative to other highly rated countries and it noted "repeated debt limit standoffs and last-minute resolutions."

Biden administration officials strongly criticized Fitch's move. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said it was "arbitrary" and "based on outdated data."

Yellen noted that the U.S. economy has rapidly recovered from the pandemic recession, with the unemployment rate near a half-century low and the economy expanding at a solid 2.4% annual rate in the April-June quarter.

Fitch informed Biden administration officials that the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection was a factor in its decision to downgrade because it indicated an unstable government, according to a person familiar with the discussions between the administration and the rating agency. Fitch produced a report last year that showed government stability declined from 2018 to 2021, but increased since Biden assumed the presidency, said the person, who was granted anonymity to disclose private conversations.

Another factor in Fitch's decision is that it expects the U.S. economy to tumble into a "mild recession" in the final three months of this year and early next year. Economists at the Federal Reserve made a similar forecast this spring but then reversed it in July and said growth would slow but a recession would likely be avoided.

Prosecutors in Gilgo Beach killings are giving Rex Heuermann's defense a vast trove of evidence

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (AP) — Weeks after charging a Long Island architect in a string of killings known as the Gilgo Beach murders, prosecutors said Tuesday that they've begun providing his lawyer with reams of evidence including autopsy findings, DNA reports and crime scene photos.

Suffolk County prosecutors said at a brief court hearing that they've given Rex Heuermann's lawyer at least 8 terabytes of material — equivalent to about 2,500 pages of records, along with about 100 hours of surveillance video recorded outside Heuermann's home and office prior to his July 13 arrest.

District Attorney Ray Tierney said that's a fraction of the evidence amassed since the bodies of four women were found buried along a remote beach highway in 2010 and 2011. More evidence will be turned over on a rolling basis, he said. This kind of evidence sharing, called discovery, is routine in criminal cases and is intended to help ensure a fair trial.

"You're talking about 13 years of investigation," Tierney said. "It's a massive amount of material."

Heuermann, 59, is charged with killing Melissa Barthelemy, Megan Waterman and Amber Lynn Costello, who disappeared over a 14-month span prior to the discovery of their bodies.

Prosecutors say Heuermann is also the prime suspect in the death of a fourth woman, Maureen Brainard-Barnes, who vanished in 2007. Her remains were found in the same quarter-mile stretch of Ocean Parkway as the other women, across a bay from the town where Heuermann grew up and lived for decades in his childhood home.

Heuermann did not speak at the hearing, which began about a half-hour late as prosecutors met his lawyer and the judge, Timothy Mazzei, behind closed doors. Tierney said afterward that they had been discussing the logistics and timetable for turning over evidence.

Prosecutors and Heuermann's lawyer, Michael Brown, also reached a confidentiality agreement that prohibits sharing copies of the evidence with the public. Some of the evidence includes sensitive photo-

graphs of the women's remains as they were found, wrapped in burlap and buried in thick underbrush on a barrier island off Long Island's southern coast.

Heuermann, wearing a charcoal sport coat and blue button-down shirt, was brought to court through an underground tunnel from the jail across the street, where he's been held since his July 13 arrest. He pleaded not guilty at his first court appearance and was ordered jailed without the possibility of bail. His lawyer said Heuermann denied committing the crimes.

"The press has convicted my client without seeing a shred of evidence," Brown told reporters after the hearing, suggesting that prosecutors "very well could have the wrong guy."

Brown said he received the first wave of evidence before Tuesday's hearing — five manila envelopes, each containing a 2 terabyte hard drive — and that he has yet to review any evidence collected in the investigation.

"Today was the first time I was handed any evidence in this case and it was in the form of terabytes," Brown said. "I can't read terabytes with my hands or my eyes."

Heuermann is due back in court on Sept. 27.

All of the women Heuermann is accused of killing were sex workers whose remains were discovered near each other. Investigators say they cracked the case with the help of sophisticated cell phone location data analysis, DNA evidence and an old tip about a vehicle seen parked outside the home of one of the victims.

Investigators spent nearly two weeks combing through Heuermann's home in Massapequa Park, across a bay from where the remains were found, yielding yet more evidence that will eventually be turned over to his lawyer.

The search included digging up the yard, dismantling a porch and a greenhouse and removing many contents of the house for testing.

Robert Macedonio, an attorney for Heuermann's wife, Asa Ellerup, said the home was essentially "destroyed" along the way, with investigators cutting through the bathtub, ripping up floors, and leaving cat litter strewn around the house.

Ellerup filed for divorce after her husband was arrested. She and her two adult children, who also live at the house, returned last week after bouncing between relatives' homes and a rental car, where they were forced to spend multiple nights, according to the lawyer.

"These people are also innocent victims in this," Macedonio added. "They're the unknown victims because no one cares about them."

An attorney for the adult children, Vess Mitev, said his clients were considering legal action against police for the "deplorable and roughshod handling of the investigation."

Henrietta Lacks' family settles lawsuit with a biotech company that used her cells without consent

By LEA SKENE and SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — More than 70 years after doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital took Henrietta Lacks' cervical cells without her knowledge, a lawyer for her descendants said they have reached a settlement with a biotechnology company that they accused of reaping billions of dollars from a racist medical system.

Tissue taken from the Black woman's tumor before she died of cervical cancer became the first human cells to continuously grow and reproduce in lab dishes. HeLa cells went on to become a cornerstone of modern medicine, enabling countless scientific and medical innovations, including the development of the polio vaccine, genetic mapping and even COVID-19 vaccines.

Despite that incalculable impact, the Lacks family had never been compensated.

Lacks' cells were harvested in 1951, when it was not illegal to do so without a patient's permission. But lawyers for her family argued that Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., of Waltham, Massachusetts, continued to commercialize the results long after the origins of the HeLa cell line became well known. The company unjustly enriched itself off Lacks' cells, the family argued in their lawsuit, filed in 2021.

The settlement came after closed-door negotiations that lasted all day Monday inside the federal court-

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house in Baltimore. Some of Lacks' grandchildren were among the family members who attended the talks. Attorney Ben Crump, who represents the family, announced the settlement late Monday and said the terms are confidential.

In a joint statement, Thermo Fisher representatives and attorneys for the Lacks family said they were pleased to resolve the matter and declined to comment further on the agreement.

A poor tobacco farmer from southern Virginia, Lacks got married and moved with her husband to Turner Station, a historically Black community outside Baltimore. They were raising five children when doctors discovered a tumor in Lacks' cervix and saved a sample of her cancer cells collected during a biopsy.

Lacks died at age 31 in the "colored ward" of Johns Hopkins Hospital. She was buried in an unmarked grave.

While most cell samples died shortly after being removed from the body, her cells survived and thrived in laboratories. They became known as the first immortalized human cell line because scientists could cultivate them indefinitely, meaning researchers anywhere could reproduce studies using identical cells.

The remarkable science involved — and the impact on the Lacks family, some of whom had chronic illnesses and no health insurance — were documented in a bestselling book by Rebecca Skloot, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," which was published in 2010. Oprah Winfrey portrayed her daughter in an HBO movie about the story.

Johns Hopkins said it never sold or profited from the cell lines, but many companies have patented ways of using them.

In their complaint, Lacks' descendants argued that her treatment illustrates a much larger issue that persists today: racism inside the U.S. medical system.

"The exploitation of Henrietta Lacks represents the unfortunately common struggle experienced by Black people throughout history," the complaint reads.

In a brief filed in support of the Lacks family, attorneys advocating for civil rights, women's rights and health care equity said the case is one of many in which U.S. doctors and scientists have exploited minority patients. Another example they cited involved James Marion Sims, a 19th century Alabama surgeon heralded as the father of modern gynecology who performed experimental surgeries on a dozen enslaved women without the use of anesthesia, claiming Black people could endure more pain than white people.

"Indeed, a great portion of early American medical research is founded upon nonconsensual experimentation upon systemically oppressed people," the attorneys wrote.

In another supporting brief, Southern University law professor Deleso Alford highlighted the discrepancy in status and financial stability between Lacks' descendants, including grandson Ron Lacks who wrote a book in 2020, and the medical professionals profiting off her cells.

"In the same year Mr. Lacks was self-publishing a book in the hopes of finding some help for his family, the CEO of Thermo Fisher received a compensation package of over \$26 million," the brief says.

Thermo Fisher argued the case should be dismissed because it was filed after the statute of limitations expire. But lawyers for the Lacks family said that shouldn't apply because the company is continuously benefiting.

In a statement posted online, Johns Hopkins Medicine officials said they reviewed all interactions with Lacks and her family after the publication of Skloot's book. While acknowledging an ethical responsibility, the statement said the medical system "has never sold or profited from the discovery or distribution of HeLa cells and does not own the rights to the HeLa cell line."

Though her relatives hadn't received financial compensation, they reached an agreement with the National Institutes of Health in 2013 that gave them some control over how the DNA code from HeLa cells is used.

Crump, a civil rights attorney, has become well known for representing victims of police violence and calling for racial justice, especially in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder. The Lacks family joined him Tuesday near Baltimore's waterfront to announce the settlement and pay tribute to Lacks on what would have been her 103rd birthday. The group brought balloons and a cake to celebrate.

Lacks' only surviving child, Lawrence Lacks Sr., lives to see justice done, grandson Alfred Lacks Carter

Jr. said. Now 86, Lawrence Lacks was 16 when his mother died.

"There couldn't have been a more fitting day for her to have justice, for her family to have relief," Carter said. "It was a long fight — over 70 years — and Henrietta Lacks gets her day."

X marks the lawsuit: Elon Musk's social media company sues nonprofit highlighting site's hate speech

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, has sued a group of researchers — alleging their work highlighting an increase in hate speech on the platform cost the company millions of dollars of advertising revenue.

The suit, filed late Monday night in U.S. District Court in the Northern District of California, accuses the nonprofit Center for Countering Digital Hate of violating X's terms of service by improperly collecting a vast amount of data for its analysis. The suit also alleges, without offering evidence, that the organization is funded by foreign governments and media companies who view X as competition.

The legal fight between the tech company, which was acquired by Elon Musk last year, and the center could have significant implications for a growing number of researchers and advocacy groups that seek to help the public understand how social media is shaping society and culture.

With offices in the U.S. and United Kingdom, the center regularly publishes reports on hate speech, extremism and harmful behavior on social media platforms like X, TikTok or Facebook. The organization has published several reports critical of Musk's leadership, detailing an increase in anti-LGBTQ hate speech as well as climate misinformation since his purchase.

In its lawsuit, X alleges the center violated its terms of service by automatically scraping large amounts of data from the site without the company's permission. X also claims the center improperly accessed internal Twitter data, using log-on credentials it obtained from an employee at a separate company that has a business relationship with X.

Without naming any individuals or companies, the suit says the center receives funding from foreign governments as well as organizations with ties to "legacy media organizations" that see X as a rival.

The suit claims the center's work has cost X tens of millions of dollars in lost ad revenue.

In response to the legal action, Imran Ahmed, the center's founder and CEO, defended its work and accused Musk of using the lawsuit to silence criticism of his leadership, as well as research into the role X plays in spreading misinformation and hate speech.

"Musk is trying to 'shoot the messenger' who highlights the toxic content on his platform rather than deal with the toxic environment he's created," Ahmed said.

The center's 2021 tax forms show it took in \$1.4 million in revenue. A review of major donors shows several large charities, including the National Philanthropic Trust in the U.S. and the Oak Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in the U.K.

A spokesman for the group said the center receives no funding from any government entities or tech companies that could be considered competitors to X. The identities of other donors is not revealed in public documents, and the center declined to provide a list.

Musk is a self-professed free speech absolutist who has welcomed back white supremacists and election deniers to the platform, which he renamed X last month. He initially had promised that he would allow any speech on his platform that wasn't illegal. "I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means," Musk wrote in a tweet last year.

Nevertheless, the billionaire has at times proven sensitive about critical speech directed at him or his companies. Last year, he suspended the accounts of several journalists who covered his takeover of Twitter.

Sheila Oliver, New Jersey's lieutenant governor and a prominent Black leader, dies at 71

By MIKE CATALNI Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver, who rose to become one of New Jersey's most prominent Black leaders and passionately advocated for revitalizing cities and against gun violence, died Tuesday after a sudden illness. She was 71.

No cause of death was given, according to a statement from her family issued by Gov. Phil Murphy's office. Oliver was serving as acting governor while Murphy and his family are on vacation in Italy. His office said she had been hospitalized on Monday.

Murphy said he and his family are distraught at the news. Naming Oliver as his lieutenant governor was, he said, "the best decision I ever made."

She was the first Black woman to hold statewide elected office in New Jersey, winning the vote alongside Murphy in 2017 and again in 2021. She was a well-known figure in state government, and made history in 2010 by becoming the first Black woman to lead the state Assembly.

In contrast to her predecessor, who rarely appeared alongside Gov. Chris Christie, Oliver regularly stood at Murphy's side and signed several bills into law while serving as acting governor.

She was a compelling public speaker and frequent attendee at Murphy's bill signings and other events, where he typically introduced her as his "rocking" lieutenant governor.

In 2021 while unveiling tighter gun legislation alongside Murphy, Oliver's voice cracked as she lamented the gun violence that disproportionately affected cities in the state and lamented what she suggested was runaway gun violence.

"We are tired of funerals and memorials," Oliver said. "Growing up in Newark, I tell young people I could go to any section of this city by myself or with my friends. Our young people cannot do that today."

In 2021, she signed a bill that established a pilot program to overhaul the state's juvenile justice system in four cities and which aimed to reintegrate young people into their communities. Another measure she signed in 2021 revived a defunct fund for "urban enterprise zones" aimed driving economic development in cities through lower sales tax rates.

In addition to serving as Murphy's top deputy, stepping in while he was out of the state, she also oversaw the Department of Community Affairs, which coordinates state aid to towns and cities and supervises code enforcement.

Her sudden illness and death seemed to have stunned officials.

"This is devastating news. I am shocked at the passing of Lieutenant Governor Oliver. Sheila is a path-breaker and has been one of the foremost leaders of our great state for decades. I am still processing this," Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr. said in a statement.

Christie, who's running for the Republican nomination for president, worked with her during his first term when she was Assembly speaker and remembered her as "a great person and partner" and said in a tweet that her passing was a loss for him personally as well as the state.

Murphy's office announced on July 31 that Oliver was admitted to Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston with an undisclosed medical condition. The governor's office declined to elaborate.

Her family's statement remembered her as "our cherished daughter, sister, aunt, friend, and hero."

Murphy spokesperson Mahen Gunaratna said the governor will be "returning soon" but didn't specify when. He was set to return Aug. 13.

Oliver served in the Assembly since 2004 and was on the Essex County board of chosen freeholders from 1996 to 1999. Born and raised in Newark, she earned a sociology degree from Pennsylvania's Lincoln University.

"She brought a unique and invaluable perspective to our public policy discourse and served as an inspiration to millions of women and girls everywhere, especially young women of color," Murphy said in a statement Tuesday. "Beyond all of that, she was an incredibly genuine and kind person whose friendship and partnership will be irreplaceable."

Oliver was just the second person to hold the post of lieutenant governor, a newer state government position that began under previous Gov. Chris Christie.

It was unclear who would immediately succeed her. New Jersey's constitution calls for Senate President Nicholas Scutari to serve as acting governor if the governor and lieutenant governor are out of state or incapacitated. The constitution requires Murphy to appoint Oliver's successor within 45 days.

Aid efforts for Haitians suffer new blow with kidnapping of American nurse and daughter

By EVENS SANON and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Aid efforts for Haitians enduring the gang violence ravaging their nation suffered a new blow with the kidnapping of an American nurse from New Hampshire and her young daughter, who were still missing Tuesday.

Gang warfare has increasingly plagued Haiti since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. The killing worsened criminal control of Haiti and today the innocent are regularly killed, raped and held for ransom. A local nonprofit has documented 539 kidnappings since January, a significant rise over previous years.

That number is almost certainly underreported in Haiti, where many people fear authorities in addition to the gangs. Hospitals and other aid organizations — often the only institutions in the country's many lawless areas — have increasingly been criminals' targets. Many service providers have been forced to close, leaving a growing number of people in this country of 11.45 million without access to healthcare, food, education and other basics.

Haitians, aid providers and outside observers worry that the kidnapping of New Hampshire native Alix Dorsainvil and her daughter will turn more of the nation into a no-go zone for anyone besides gangs and the populations they torment. The Christian organization Dorsainvil works for, El Roi Haiti, has offered medical care, education and other basic services. The organization released a photo of Dorsainvil smiling happily with her arm around her husband but provided no details about the mother and their daughter.

Dorsainvil was providing medical care in El Roi Haiti's small brick clinic late last week in a gang stronghold of the country's capital, Port-au-Prince, when armed men burst in and seized her, witnesses told The Associated Press. The captors have demanded \$1 million in ransom, a standard practice by the gangs to get money to fund operations.

"(The kidnapping) is definitely going to have a chilling impact on the work that particularly smaller aid groups do in the country," said Renata Segura, International Crisis Group's deputy director for Latin America and Caribbean. "People are going to be thinking about it twice before returning to those communities."

Smaller grassroots organizations like Dorsainvil's are particularly affected, Segura said, because they have fewer resources to deal with the violence. People in Cite Soleil protested the kidnapping, carrying signs that read, "She is doing good work in the community. free her." Protesters marched to the medical facility where Dorsainvil was kidnapped. It had closed doors.

Doctors Without Borders last month announced that it was suspending services in one of its hospitals because some 20 armed men had burst into an operating room and snatched a patient.

"There is such contempt for human life among the conflicting parties, and such violence in Port-au-Prince, that even the vulnerable, sick and wounded are not spared," Mahaman Bachard Iro, the organization's head of programmes in Haiti, wrote in a statement. "How are we supposed to be able to continue providing care in this environment?"

Residents of an adjoining neighborhood, Tabarre, were wondering Tuesday if aid groups' temporary closures will become permanent.

"People are probably dying without basic services because they cannot afford to go to a private hospital," 39-year-old bus driver Donald Saintilus said.

Hospitals have told the AP that they now see patients arriving in dire condition due to lack of medical care. The United Nations said in February that violence had "severely hampered" access to health services.

Segura, of the International Crisis Group, said fewer women have given birth in hospitals, which could boosting infant and maternal deaths. She also said that gangs have been trying to provide aid services to the communities they terrorize in an effort to project a sort of Robin Hood image.

The international community has attempted to address Haitian disorder in the past, with some success, and Kenya's Foreign Ministry said Saturday that it had offered 1,000 police to help train and assist the Haitian National Police "restore normalcy in the country and protect strategic installations."

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller wouldn't provide details Monday on what was being done to locate and recover Dorsainvil and her daughter. Haitian authorities have not responded to multiple calls and messages from the AP.

"Obviously, the safety and security of American citizens overseas is our highest priority. We are in regular contact with the Haitian authorities. We'll continue to work with them and our US government interagency partners, but because it's an ongoing law enforcement investigation, there's not more detail I can offer," Miller wrote in a statement Monday.

In a video for the El Roi Haiti website, Alix Dorsainvil describes Haitians as "full of joy, and life and love" and people she was blessed to know.

Dorsainvil graduated from Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts, which has a program to support nursing education in Haiti. Dorsainvil's father, Steven Comeau, reached in New Hampshire, said he could not talk.

In a blog post Monday, El Roi Haiti said Alix Dorsainvil fell in love with Haiti's people on a visit after the devastating 2010 earthquake in the Caribbean. It said the organization was working with authorities in both countries to free her and her daughter.

"Please continue to pray with us for the protection and freedom of Alix and her daughter. As our hearts break for this situation, we also continue to pray for the country and people of Haiti and for freedom from the suffering they endure daily."

Amazon adds video telemedicine visits nationwide to its virtual clinic

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Amazon is adding video telemedicine visits in all 50 states to a virtual clinic it launched last fall, as the e-commerce giant pushes deeper into care delivery.

Amazon said Tuesday that customers can visit its virtual clinic around the clock through Amazon's website or app. There, they can compare prices and response times before picking a telemedicine provider from several options.

The clinic, which doesn't accept insurance, launched last fall with a focus on text message-based consultations. Those remain available in 34 states. The new video telemedicine option also will be available in Washington, D.C.

Virtual care, or telemedicine, exploded in popularity when COVID-19 hit a few years ago. It has remained popular as a convenient way to check in with a doctor or deal with relatively minor health issues like pink eye.

Amazon says its clinic offers care for more than 30 common health conditions. Those include sinus infections, acne, COVID-19 and acid reflux. The clinic also offers treatments for motion sickness, seasonal allergies and several sexual health conditions, including erectile dysfunction.

It also provides birth control and emergency contraception.

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Nworah Ayogu said in a blog post that the clinic aims to remove barriers to help people treat "everyday health concerns."

"As a doctor, I've seen firsthand that patients want to be healthy but lack the time, tools, or resources to effectively manage their care," Ayogu wrote.

Amazon said messaging-based consultations cost \$35 on average while video visits cost \$75.

That's cheaper than the cost of many in-person visits with a doctor, which can run over \$100 for people

without insurance or coverage that makes them pay a high deductible.

While virtual visits can improve access to help, some doctors worry that they also lead to care fragmentation and can make it harder to track a patient's overall health. That could happen if a patient has a regular doctor who doesn't learn about the virtual visit from another provider.

In addition to virtual care, Amazon also sells prescription drugs through its Amazon Pharmacy business and has been building its presence with in-patient care.

Earlier this year, Amazon also closed a \$3.9 billion acquisition of the membership-based primary care provider One Medical, which had about 815,000 customers and 214 medical offices in more than 20 markets.

One Medical offers both in-person care and virtual visits.

Anti-monopoly groups had called on the Federal Trade Commission to block the deal, arguing it would endanger patient privacy and help make the retailer more dominant in the marketplace. The agency didn't block the deal but said it won't rule out future challenges.

That deal was the first acquisition made under Amazon CEO Andy Jassy, who took over from founder Jeff Bezos in 2021. Jassy sees health care as a growth opportunity for the company.

Aung San Suu Kyi has some of her prison sentences reduced by Myanmar's military-led government

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar's military-led government reduced the prison sentences of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a clemency connected to a religious holiday in the Buddhist-majority country, state media said Tuesday.

Former President Win Myint also had his sentence reduced as part of the clemency granted to more than 7,000 prisoners.

But Suu Kyi, 78, still must serve a total of 27 years out of the 33 she originally was imprisoned for.

The head of Myanmar's military council, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, granted the clemency order to reduce the sentences Suu Kyi received in five cases in which she was convicted for violating coronavirus restrictions, illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies and sedition, according to a report on state MRTV.

She was initially sentenced for 19 offenses that her supporters and rights groups described as attempts to discredit her and legitimize the 2021 army takeover that removed her from office, as well as to prevent her return to politics.

There were reports last week that Suu Kyi might be transferred to house arrest as part of the clemency, but the government did not confirm them.

The military's True News Information Team sent video footage to journalists in which the spokesperson for the ruling military council, Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, tells reporters he had not received any information about reports saying Suu Kyi already was transferred from prison to a residence in Myanmar's capital, Naypyitaw.

"I haven't heard anything about it," Zaw Min Tun said Tuesday.

Win Myint, the former president, was pardoned for two of the eight offenses for which he received convictions: sedition and violating coronavirus restrictions and sedition. The pardons cut four years from his 12-year combined prison sentence.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reacted to the pardons by reiterating his call for the immediate release of Suu Kyi and Win Myint, the U.N. deputy spokesman said.

The U.N. chief also called for the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners, "an end to the violence and repression, and respect for human rights" in Myanmar, spokesman Farhan Haq said.

The clemency was announced a day after Myanmar's military extended the state of emergency it imposed when it seized power from Suu Kyi's elected government 2 1/2 years ago, forcing a further delay in elections it promised when it took over.

Several of Suu Kyi's cases are awaiting final appeals.

Min Aung Hlaing pardoned a total of 7,749 prisoners and commuted the death sentences of others to

commemorate the day the Buddha gave his first sermon, the MRTV report said.

The army leader also granted amnesty to 125 foreign prisoners and 22 members of ethnic armed groups, it added. The announcement said he dropped cases against 72 people connected to ethnic armed groups.

It wasn't immediately clear if any of the released prisoners included the thousands of political detainees locked up for opposing military rule.

The justice ministry of the shadow National Unity Government, which views itself as the country's legitimate administrative body, called on the country's military rulers to immediately release all detained political prisoners including Suu Kyi, saying they were unjustly arrested and sentenced.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners — a rights monitoring organization — 24,123 people have been arrested in Myanmar since the army takeover. At least 3,857 civilians have been killed by security forces in the same period, the group says.

MRTV quoted Acting President Myint Swe as saying "it was necessary" to extend the state of emergency for another six months because there is still a lot of work to be done to return the country to "normalcy" and time is needed to prepare for elections.

Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai met Suu Kyi in prison three weeks ago, becoming the first foreign visitor to be granted access to her since she was detained. Don told journalists she was in good health and conveyed her willingness to engage in talks to resolve the crisis gripping her strife-torn nation.

Suu Kyi has been unable to give her version of the July 9 meeting, said to have lasted about an hour and a half. Myanmar's military confirmed the meeting took place but said it had no details because it was one-on-one between the ousted leader and the Thai diplomat.

Don revealed his visit to Suu Kyi during a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta.

ASEAN has been seeking to mediate an end to the violent conflict in Myanmar, which some members believe destabilizes the region.

Tiger Woods joins PGA Tour board and gives commissioner his support as Saudi deal talks continue

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

Tiger Woods has joined the PGA Tour policy board for the first time in his 27 years on tour, giving Commissioner Jay Monahan key support as he rebuilds trust while forging ahead with details of a business partnership with Saudi backers of LIV Golf.

Woods will become a sixth player director — a year ago, the PGA Tour had only four players on its board — as part of a broad agreement that gives the players a greater voice and awareness of any major deals going forward.

The announcement Tuesday is a response to the PGA Tour having secret talks with the head of Saudi Arabia's national wealth fund that led to a proposed partnership that was announced in June and stunned players who had lined up behind the tour to fend off the Saudi threat.

Woods, as the sixth player director, marks the first time players have outnumbered the five independent directors on the board. The 12th board member is the PGA of America president, John Lindert.

Equally critical to Monahan was the support from Woods. Monahan is seeing players this week at the Wyndham Championship in Greensboro, North Carolina, for the first time since he took a monthlong leave because of a medical situation. He returned to work two weeks ago.

"I am honored to represent the players of the PGA Tour," Woods said in a statement, his first public comments since the Saudi deal was announced. "This is a critical point for the tour, and the players will do their best to make certain that any changes that are made in tour operations are in the best interest of all tour stakeholders."

Woods thanked Monahan for agreeing to act on the players' concerns and said "we look forward to being at the table with him to make the right decisions for the future of the game.

"He has my confidence moving forward with these changes."

Woods had been one of the strongest opponents of LIV Golf and helped run a meeting of select players last August in Delaware to restructure the PGA Tour model, geared toward bringing the top players together more often for \$20 million purses.

While limited in his appearances because of injuries from a February 2021 car crash, Woods remains the most powerful voice among players. He has never served on the Player Advisory Council or the PGA Tour policy board. But his opinions have always been sought — and often heard — in private with Monahan and his predecessor, Tim Finchem.

“Tiger’s voice and leadership throughout his career have contributed immeasurably to the success of the PGA Tour, and to apply both to our governance and go-forward plan at this crucial time is even more welcomed and impactful,” Monahan said.

The tour said “player leaders” asked for certain steps to be taken immediately, and Monahan agreed. That starts with amending the board’s governing documents to ensure no major decision can be made without prior involvement and approval of the players on the board.

Monahan recently appointed Colin Neville, a partner at The Raine Group, as an adviser to the player directors as the tour works out a definitive agreement with the Public Investment Fund and the European tour.

Under the agreement announced Tuesday, Neville will be kept abreast of negotiations on the framework agreement and given full access to documents as he represents the players.

Neville was in the Delaware player meeting last August that led to the restructuring. He was involved in the team concept of the Premier Golf League some five years ago, which was to be supported by private capital. It never got going, and many of the ideas were adopted by LIV Golf.

Monahan said he was committed to restoring “any lost trust or confidence” from what he described as the surprise announcement on June 6. According to the framework agreement, the sides have until Dec. 31 to reach a definitive deal, although that can be extended.

“Any agreement we reach must be shaped by our members’ input and approval earned through our player directors,” Monahan said.

The other player directors are Rory McIlroy (the first international player on the board), Webb Simpson, Charley Hoffman and Peter Malnati. Patrick Cantlay was the fifth player added to the board at the start of the year.

The independent directors are Chairman Ed Herlihy and Jimmy Dunne, who worked privately with Monahan on the Saudi agreement, along with Mary Meeker and Mark Flaherty. Former AT&T Chairman Randall Stephenson recently resigned, saying he could not support the Saudi agreement. Players are involved in the search to replace him.

The framework agreement would allow Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of the PIF, to join the board as an independent director. Monahan had told The Associated Press in June that Al-Rumayyan would not be an additional board member but would replace someone whose term expires.

The tour listed 41 players who supported the changes, including Woods, McIlroy, Cantlay, Scottie Scheffler, Jon Rahm and Jordan Spieth. The 41 players include every PGA Tour member from the top 20 in the world ranking, along with all 16 members of the Player Advisory Council.

“I think it’s very obvious last year that a pretty good amount of us were frustrated and taken back with how some things took place,” Justin Thomas said. “We were just kind of put in a funky or tough position with how stuff was handled in the past. We want to have a say of what’s going on because it is our tour and ... how it’s structured and how it looks is important to us.”

Once nearing extinction, Brazil’s golden monkeys have rebounded from yellow fever, scientists say

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

There are now more golden lion tamarins bounding between branches in the Brazilian rainforest than at any time since efforts to save the species started in the 1970s, a new survey reveals.

Once on the brink of extinction, with only about 200 animals in the wild, the population has rebounded to around 4,800, according to a study released Tuesday by the Brazilian science and conservation nonprofit

Golden Lion Tamarin Association.

"We are celebrating, but always keeping one eye on other threats, because life's not easy," said the nonprofit's president, Luís Paulo Ferraz.

Golden lion tamarins are small monkeys with long tails and copper-colored fur that live in family groups led by a mated pair. Usually, they give birth annually to twins, which all family members help to raise by bringing them food and carrying them on their backs.

The monkeys, which live only in Brazil's Atlantic Forest, are still considered endangered.

The population survey was conducted over roughly a year. Researchers went to specific locations and checked whether monkeys responded to recordings of the tamarins' long call, which basically means "I'm here. Are you there?" said James Dietz, a biologist and vice president of the U.S.-based nonprofit Save the Golden Lion Tamarin.

The new population figures are notable because the species had experienced a sharp decline from a yellow fever outbreak. In 2019, there were 2,500 monkeys, down from 3,700 in a 2014 survey.

Scientists intervened by vaccinating more than 370 monkeys against yellow fever, using shots adapted from a formula for humans — a fairly novel approach for conservation.

Scientists "cannot pinpoint a single exact cause for the recovery," but believe several factors may be at play, said Carlos R. Ruiz-Miranda, a State University of Northern Rio de Janeiro biologist who advised on the population study.

Firstly, the yellow fever outbreak has subsided, perhaps due to a combination of the virus' natural cycle and the vaccination campaign.

The animals may also be benefiting from an increase in forest habitat, said Dietz, who is also a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution's Conservation Biology Institute. Between 2014 and 2022, the amount of connected forest habitat increased 16%, mostly through forests regrown on converted cattle pasture, he said.

Currently about three dozen farmers and ranchers in the Atlantic Forest region participate in such reforestation programs.

"It makes me so happy to see the tamarins playing free on my farm. They don't only live in protected areas," said Ayrton Violento, a farmer and entrepreneur in the small city of Silva Jardim. His family's Fazenda dos Cordeiros has planted native fruit trees and also manages a tree nursery for native Atlantic Forest seedlings to plant on other farms.

"Recently, every year I see more tamarin families, more frequently," he said.

Ferraz, of the nonprofit Golden Lion Tamarin Association, said that despite the good news, he was still concerned about a renewed risk of trafficking for the illegal pet trade. The problem was rampant in the 1960s, but had almost disappeared in recent decades due to enforcement.

In July, the anti-poaching nonprofit Freeland Brazil reported that Suriname's forest service had seized seven golden lion tamarins and 29 endangered Lear's macaws believed to have been trafficked from Brazil for sale in Europe.

"We have seen the resilience of the species, but also know they are still vulnerable," said Ferraz.

Chatbots sometimes make things up. Is AI's hallucination problem fixable?

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Spend enough time with ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence chatbots and it doesn't take long for them to spout falsehoods.

Described as hallucination, confabulation or just plain making things up, it's now a problem for every business, organization and high school student trying to get a generative AI system to compose documents and get work done. Some are using it on tasks with the potential for high-stakes consequences, from psychotherapy to researching and writing legal briefs.

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"I don't think that there's any model today that doesn't suffer from some hallucination," said Daniela Amodei, co-founder and president of Anthropic, maker of the chatbot Claude 2.

"They're really just sort of designed to predict the next word," Amodei said. "And so there will be some rate at which the model does that inaccurately."

Anthropic, ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and other major developers of AI systems known as large language models say they're working to make them more truthful.

How long that will take — and whether they will ever be good enough to, say, safely dole out medical advice — remains to be seen.

"This isn't fixable," said Emily Bender, a linguistics professor and director of the University of Washington's Computational Linguistics Laboratory. "It's inherent in the mismatch between the technology and the proposed use cases."

A lot is riding on the reliability of generative AI technology. The McKinsey Global Institute projects it will add the equivalent of \$2.6 trillion to \$4.4 trillion to the global economy. Chatbots are only one part of that frenzy, which also includes technology that can generate new images, video, music and computer code. Nearly all of the tools include some language component.

Google is already pitching a news-writing AI product to news organizations, for which accuracy is paramount. The Associated Press is also exploring use of the technology as part of a partnership with OpenAI, which is paying to use part of AP's text archive to improve its AI systems.

In partnership with India's hotel management institutes, computer scientist Ganesh Bagler has been working for years to get AI systems, including a ChatGPT precursor, to invent recipes for South Asian cuisines, such as novel versions of rice-based biryani. A single "hallucinated" ingredient could be the difference between a tasty and inedible meal.

When Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, visited India in June, the professor at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi had some pointed questions.

"I guess hallucinations in ChatGPT are still acceptable, but when a recipe comes out hallucinating, it becomes a serious problem," Bagler said, standing up in a crowded campus auditorium to address Altman on the New Delhi stop of the U.S. tech executive's world tour.

"What's your take on it?" Bagler eventually asked.

Altman expressed optimism, if not an outright commitment.

"I think we will get the hallucination problem to a much, much better place," Altman said. "I think it will take us a year and a half, two years. Something like that. But at that point we won't still talk about these. There's a balance between creativity and perfect accuracy, and the model will need to learn when you want one or the other."

But for some experts who have studied the technology, such as University of Washington linguist Bender, those improvements won't be enough.

Bender describes a language model as a system for "modeling the likelihood of different strings of word forms," given some written data it's been trained upon.

It's how spell checkers are able to detect when you've typed the wrong word. It also helps power automatic translation and transcription services, "smoothing the output to look more like typical text in the target language," Bender said. Many people rely on a version of this technology whenever they use the "autocomplete" feature when composing text messages or emails.

The latest crop of chatbots such as ChatGPT, Claude 2 or Google's Bard try to take that to the next level, by generating entire new passages of text, but Bender said they're still just repeatedly selecting the most plausible next word in a string.

When used to generate text, language models "are designed to make things up. That's all they do," Bender said. They are good at mimicking forms of writing, such as legal contracts, television scripts or sonnets.

"But since they only ever make things up, when the text they have extruded happens to be interpretable as something we deem correct, that is by chance," Bender said. "Even if they can be tuned to be right more of the time, they will still have failure modes — and likely the failures will be in the cases where it's

harder for a person reading the text to notice, because they are more obscure.”

Those errors are not a huge problem for the marketing firms that have been turning to Jasper AI for help writing pitches, said the company’s president, Shane Orlick.

“Hallucinations are actually an added bonus,” Orlick said. “We have customers all the time that tell us how it came up with ideas — how Jasper created takes on stories or angles that they would have never thought of themselves.”

The Texas-based startup works with partners like OpenAI, Anthropic, Google or Facebook parent Meta to offer its customers a smorgasbord of AI language models tailored to their needs. For someone concerned about accuracy, it might offer up Anthropic’s model, while someone concerned with the security of their proprietary source data might get a different model, Orlick said.

Orlick said he knows hallucinations won’t be easily fixed. He’s counting on companies like Google, which he says must have a “really high standard of factual content” for its search engine, to put a lot of energy and resources into solutions.

“I think they have to fix this problem,” Orlick said. “They’ve got to address this. So I don’t know if it’s ever going to be perfect, but it’ll probably just continue to get better and better over time.”

Techno-optimists, including Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, have been forecasting a rosy outlook.

“I’m optimistic that, over time, AI models can be taught to distinguish fact from fiction,” Gates said in a July blog post detailing his thoughts on AI’s societal risks.

He cited a 2022 paper from OpenAI as an example of “promising work on this front.” More recently, researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich said they developed a method to detect some, but not all, of ChatGPT’s hallucinated content and remove it automatically.

But even Altman, as he markets the products for a variety of uses, doesn’t count on the models to be truthful when he’s looking for information.

“I probably trust the answers that come out of ChatGPT the least of anybody on Earth,” Altman told the crowd at Bagler’s university, to laughter.

The Crimean Peninsula is both a playground and a battleground, coveted by Ukraine and Russia

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Its balmy beaches have been vacation spots for Russian czars and Soviet general secretaries. It has hosted history-shaking meetings of world leaders and boasts a strategic naval base. And it has been the site of ethnic persecutions, forced deportations and political repression.

Now, as Russia’s war in Ukraine enters its 18th month, the Crimean Peninsula is again both a playground and a battleground, with drone attacks and bombs seeking to dislodge Moscow’s hold on the territory and bring it back under Kyiv’s authority, no matter how loudly the Kremlin proclaims its ownership.

Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelenskyy has vowed to retake the diamond-shaped peninsula that Russia’s Vladimir Putin illegally annexed in 2014.

For both presidents, backing off Crimea is hardly an option.

Moscow deployed troops and weapons there, allowing Russian forces to quickly seize large parts of southern Ukraine when the war began in 2022. Kyiv says the militarization of Crimea threatens all countries in the Black Sea region.

‘CRIMEA IS OURS!’

Putin’s annexation in 2014 was quick and bloodless. While Ukraine was still grappling with the aftermath of the uprising that forced pro-Moscow President Victor Yanukovich from office, men in military uniforms without insignia took control of Crimea.

They helped orchestrate a referendum on the peninsula, and pro-Kremlin authorities said the results showed an almost unanimous desire of its residents to become part of Russia.

Putin’s popularity soared. His approval ratings, which had been declining, soared from 65% in January of that year to 86% in June, according to the Levada Center, an independent Russian pollster.

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"Krym nash!" — or "Crimea is ours!" — became a rallying cry in Russia. But only a handful of countries, such as North Korea and Sudan, recognized the move.

Putin has called Crimea "a sacred place," and has prosecuted those who publicly argue it is part of Ukraine. Zelenskyy has repeatedly said that "Russia won't be able to steal" the peninsula.

A STRATEGIC ASSET

Crimea's unique position in the Black Sea makes it a strategically important asset for whoever controls it, and Russia has spent centuries fighting for it.

Crimea was home to Turkic-speaking Tatars when the Russian empire first annexed it in the 18th century. It briefly regained independence as a Tatar republic two centuries later before becoming swallowed by the Soviet Union.

In 1944, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin deported nearly 200,000 Tatars, or about a third of Crimea's population, to Central Asia, 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) to the east. Stalin had accused them of collaborating with Nazi Germany — a claim widely dismissed by historians. An estimated half of them died in the next 18 months of hunger and harsh conditions.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred it to Ukraine in 1954 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the unification of Moscow and Kyiv. But that symbolic move backfired in 1991 when the USSR collapsed and the peninsula became part of newly independent Ukraine.

"For the majority of Russians, as well as for the Russian political elite, Crimea has always been perceived as given to Ukraine unfairly. Crimea has always been perceived as Russian," Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, told The Associated Press.

Russia kept a foot in the door, however: Its Black Sea Fleet had a base in the city of Sevastopol, and Crimea — as part of Ukraine — continued to host it.

The base was of major military value to Moscow, and that was likely a key factor for the Kremlin's decision to annex the peninsula in 2014, according to Graeme Robertson of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

"Sevastopol really matters for the Russian fleet and for access to the Mediterranean, and for Russia to be a power that's able to close the Black Sea and exercise control over Ukraine's economic viability and political viability," Robertson said in an interview. "I think that is, at the end of the day, why the annexation took place."

Repressions against the Crimean Tatars continued under Putin, despite Moscow's denials of discrimination. They strongly opposed the annexation, and an estimated 30,000 of them fled the peninsula between 2014 and 2021.

Some who stayed faced a relentless crackdown by Russia, which rejects accusations of discrimination but nevertheless banned the Tatars' main representative body and some religious groups. About 80 Tatars have been convicted in the crackdown, Amnesty International reported in 2021, and 15 activists have gone missing.

CRIMEA'S EMOTIONAL VALUE

Beyond its strategic value, Crimea has a special resonance for Russians — "an emotional and almost sort of quasi-religious kind of thing," said Sam Greene, a professor of Russian politics at King's College London.

Some of it may be based on its history.

Sevastopol was a preferred holiday destination for Nicholas II, the last Russian czar, and his family. The southern town of Yalta was the prime holiday destination during Soviet times, with many sanatoriums built in and around it. It drew worldwide attention when Stalin, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met there in 1945 to discuss the fate of Germany and Europe after World War II.

Foros, another resort town near Sevastopol, held the state dachas of Soviet leaders. President Mikhail Gorbachev was vacationing there in 1991 when hard-liners opposed to his rule put him under house arrest during a failed coup d'état.

When Greene and Robertson conducted a survey of Russians both before and after Putin seized Crimea

in 2014, they noted a change in the respondents' demeanor.

"All of a sudden, they felt that corruption was less of an issue in the country," Greene said. "And they were optimistic about the economy, both personally, in terms of their own welfare, and how the country as a whole was likely to do in the future. And their memories of the 1990s have improved."

This optimism held for four years but began deflating in 2018. Putin's popularity fell to under 70% in summer 2018, after he was re-elected and made unpopular economic moves such as raising the retirement age.

The full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022 reinstated that rallying effect to a degree, Greene says, but if the Kremlin loses Crimea or requires a significant effort to keep it, people "might come to the conclusion that Putin is not the man for the job."

Stanovaya, the political analyst, says few in Moscow believe Ukraine is capable of retaking Crimea, even with the increased attacks that include those on Putin's prized asset — the Kerch Bridge linking Crimea to Russia, which was struck in October 2022 and again last month — and other targets, such as an ammunition depot on July 22.

"It is, of course, irritating, but it is viewed as political investments directed at (Ukraine's) domestic audience and at the West," she said.

Some ordinary Russians seem unbothered as well — many still flocked to Crimea's resorts this summer. After July's attack on the bridge, Russian media found multiple vacationers undeterred by authorities telling them to travel to the peninsula through the occupied parts of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine, even though all three are on the front line of the fighting.

Still, tourism has suffered, with some of the peninsula's beaches turned into fortifications and some hotels and guest houses reporting vacancies.

UKRAINE'S STAKE IN CRIMEA

By the time of the 2014 Russian annexation, Crimea had been part of Ukraine for 60 years. Leonid Kravchuk, the first president of independent Ukraine, said Kyiv had invested some \$100 billion into the peninsula between 1991 and 2014.

It also has become part of Ukraine's identity as well.

Before the invasion, Zelenskyy was focused on diplomatic efforts to get Crimea back, but after Russian troops rolled across the border, Kyiv started publicly contemplating retaking the peninsula by force.

It won't be easy, as "Russia seeks to deploy the maximum number of different types of weapons there," military analyst Roman Svytan told AP, because its position between the Black Sea and the Azov Sea gives Moscow "the military key to the entire region."

From a security perspective, Ukraine needs Crimea to be fully independent and have control over activities in the Black Sea, Robertson said.

"Any deal that would cede Crimea to the Russians as part of a peace settlement would be very hard to sell in Ukraine," he added.

So it's very important for Kyiv "to signal to the West that this is a war about getting all of Ukraine back," Robertson said. "This is not about getting eastern Ukraine and southern Ukraine and then cutting a deal."

Mar-a-Lago property manager is the latest in a line of Trump staffers ensnared in his legal turmoil

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A longtime Mar-a-Lago staffer who spent years fetching luxury cars for wealthy club members is the latest person to be ensnared in former President Donald Trump's ballooning legal troubles.

Carlos De Oliveira appeared in court Monday to face charges connected to what prosecutors allege was a scheme directed by the former president and current GOP front-runner to try to erase security footage after it was subpoenaed by a grand jury. De Oliveira is also charged with lying to investigators, according to a new indictment unveiled last week.

De Oliveira is now the second little-known Trump employee charged in connection to his alleged hoarding of classified documents at his Palm Beach, Florida, club. His case highlights the collateral damage of

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Trump's mounting legal woes, as he leaves a trail of co-conspirators and allies accused of lying or committing other crimes on his behalf. Some of those finding themselves under legal scrutiny depend on Trump for their livelihood — and now to pay their mounting legal bills.

Trump has adamantly denied any wrongdoing and accused President Joe Biden's Justice Department of targeting him to damage his campaign.

"They're trying to intimidate people so that people go out and make up lies about me. Because I did nothing wrong," he told conservative radio host John Fredericks last week. "But these are two wonderful employees. They've been with me for a long time, and they're great people. And they want to destroy their lives."

The White House has repeatedly denied any suggestion that Biden has sought to influence investigations related to Trump.

De Oliveira's appearance Monday marked not only the public's first glimpse of Trump's co-defendant but also an introduction for many who frequent the club. Unlike Walt Nauta, the Trump aide who was charged last month and who is a constant presence by Trump's side, even current and former Trump staffers and allies said after the indictment was unsealed they were unfamiliar with De Oliveira and didn't recognize his name. Several asked whether a reporter might have a photograph to help jog their memories.

Mar-a-Lago is staffed by more than 150 workers, from full-time staff to seasonal employees, and many were among those called to appear before the grand jury, according to people familiar with the appearances, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the case. They are just some of the dozens of staff, aides, public officials and attorneys who have been caught up in overlapping investigations into the documents as well as Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

De Oliveira, according to the indictment and public records, has worked at Mar-a-Lago for more than 20 years, beginning as a valet who earned just \$12,000 in 2010. He was promoted to the club's property manager in January 2022.

One club member who insisted on anonymity to talk about staff described De Oliveira as a friendly face who ran the valet parking operation. The club member said it was hard to imagine Trump having any kind of lengthy conversations with someone in his position, as the indictment alleges. Others, however, noted Trump has a tendency to talk to everyone, including staff, and pays very close attention to his properties, pointing out issues like chipped paint and directing maintenance workers to quickly attend to them.

Trump also has a longtime pattern of elevating low-level staffers, building intense loyalty in the process. They pointed to people like Dan Scavino, a former golf caddy who became one of Trump's most trusted aides, serving as a White House deputy chief of staff for communications and one of the few people entrusted to issue tweets under his name.

While those who have been elevated by Trump are among his most loyal defenders, others who have turned against the former president described a pattern of young staffers and low-level employees becoming enthralled with Trump and the trappings of power — first at the White House, with its rides aboard Air Force One, and now at Mar-a-Lago, where dues-paying members burst into applause every time he enters a room. Trump, they say, has a knack for making people feel as though they are special and, from some, earns blind loyalty in return.

Stephanie Grisham, a onetime press secretary and aide to the former first lady, who is now a vocal Trump critic, said she was initially enamored by it all.

"I used to be in awe of that very thing," she said. "He makes you feel important."

De Oliveira and his attorney, John Irving, didn't respond to multiple requests for comment, and nobody answered the door at the home he rents in a working-class suburban community close to the highway between Jupiter and West Palm Beach. In 2012, records show, he filed for bankruptcy.

"The Justice Department has unfortunately decided to bring these charges against Mr. De Oliveira," Irving said after the court appearance Monday. "They don't stop to put their money where their mouth is. I am looking forward to seeing what discovery is."

De Oliveira joins a long line of former Trump associates, employees and supporters who have faced potential jail time or served time behind bars. They include Nauta, the Navy valet who fetched Trump's Diet

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Cokes at the White House before joining him as a personal aide, and was charged last month alongside Trump for his role in the alleged scheme. Both he and Trump have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Allen Weisselberg, a Trump Organization executive, served three months in jail after pleading guilty to receiving \$1.7 million in unreported job perks. And Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime lawyer and fixer, spent more than 13 months behind bars over payouts he helped arrange during the 2016 presidential race to keep women from going public about alleged sexual encounters with Trump. Trump has since been charged in connection to the payments.

Others have recently been implicated. In Michigan last month, 16 Republicans who acted as fake electors to help Trump overturn the results of the 2020 were charged with felonies. And more than 1,000 people so far have been charged with federal crimes in connection with storming the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, driven by Trump's lies of a stolen election.

The document unveiled last week alleges that, the day after the Trump organization was informed of a draft grand jury subpoena asking for security camera footage from Mar-a-Lago, Trump called De Oliveira and they spoke for approximately 24 minutes. A day later, Nauta — who was scheduled to travel with Trump to Illinois — changed his arrangements and instead made plans to travel to Palm Beach.

At the club, Nauta met with De Oliveira and the two "went to the security guard booth where surveillance video is displayed on monitors, walked with a flashlight through the tunnel where the Storage Room was located, and observed and pointed out surveillance cameras."

Two days later, De Oliveira allegedly asked "Trump Employee 4" — a man identified as information technology worker Yuscil Taveras — how long security footage was saved on the club's server and said "the boss" wanted the server deleted. When the employee responded that he would not know how to do that and didn't have the right to, De Oliveira allegedly "insisted to TRUMP Employee 4 that 'the boss' wanted the server deleted and asked, what are we going to do?"

It remains unclear whether the men succeeded in preventing investigators from accessing any footage. Prosecutors, in their interviews, had asked about potential gaps or missing footage, but the indictments make ample reference to movement caught on tape, and Trump has insisted nothing was deleted.

Another notable scene unfolded two weeks after the FBI's Mar-a-Lago search. The indictment alleges that Nauta called another Trump employee and said words to the effect of, "someone just wants to make sure Carlos is good." The employee allegedly responded that De Oliveira was loyal and would not do anything to affect his relationship with the former president — and later confirmed that in a Signal chat. Later that day, Trump allegedly called De Oliveira and told the property manager that he would get him an attorney.

Trump's political operation has paid tens of millions of dollars on legal fees for associates, including De Oliveira, and recently created a new legal defense fund to help cover costs.

"In order to combat these heinous actions by Joe Biden's cronies and to protect these innocent people from financial ruin and prevent their lives from being completely destroyed, a new legal defense fund will help pay for their legal fees to ensure they have representation against unlawful harassment," said Trump spokesman Steven Cheung.

Grisham said the help made it harder to turn on Trump.

"If he's looking out into the world right now, he's not seeing that anyone who's turned on Trump has been real successful. And he's getting his lawyers paid for ... so I think he traps you in that regard, too. ... You're trapped financially, you're trapped emotionally and you dig yourself into a hole you cannot get out of, thinking: 'What is the upside for me to tell the truth?...' At the end of the day you have to feed yourself and your family."

Does Texas A&M's botched hire spell doom for classroom diversity? Some say yes

By ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press

With pageantry that included balloons, a banner and an outdoor signing ceremony, Texas A&M University celebrated a diverse new chapter in its history with its June hiring of Kathleen McElroy.

McElroy, a Black journalist whose background included decades at the New York Times and a reputation for promoting diversity in the workplace, was a major get for the university with the largest student body in the country. She was headed to her alma mater with a mission to revive its journalism program — and it was all the sweeter for A&M because she had been lured away from its rival, the University of Texas at Austin.

But the celebration didn't last long. Just days later, McElroy's tenure offer unraveled after the university buckled under backlash from Texas Scorecard, a conservative website, and an unspecified group of individuals close to the university who opposed her previous diversity initiatives. A new state law will limit that and the discussion of race and inclusion on college campuses next year.

The Republican-backed law, which takes effect in January, prohibits employees at Texas higher education institutions from promoting diversity, equity or inclusion. Institutions that violate the law face financial penalties.

While the law is supposed to exempt academics and admissions, many are concerned it could be broadly applied — chilling free speech in the classroom.

They point to McElroy's unceremonious departure to show it's already happening.

"We were supposed to maintain our academic freedom around these issues but the McElroy situation shows that in fact those are not safe either," said Karma Chavez, a professor and department chair of Mexican American and Latino/a Studies at UT-Austin.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Just days after the signing ceremony at Texas A&M, McElroy was informed of internal pushback on her hiring, according to the Texas Tribune. Opponents who remain unidentified took issue with her experience with the Times and her work on race and diversity.

The Tribune reported that over several weeks, McElroy received three different contract offers — the first included full tenure, the second reduced the offer to a five-year contract without tenure and a final proposal offered a one-year at-will position from which she could be fired at any time. McElroy ultimately rejected the offer and withdrew her resignation from UT-Austin.

Texas A&M president Katherine Banks resigned after the details of McElroy's hiring process were publicized. The school's Office of General Counsel is investigating what happened.

McElroy said in a statement that she was "deeply grateful" for the outpouring of support from current and former students, as well as "Aggies of all majors." "Aggie" is a nickname adopted by Texas A&M for its students, who it referred to as "Farmers" until the 1920s.

McElroy declined to comment further.

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents met Sunday in an hourslong executive session to approve "potential" negotiations of a settlement with McElroy.

The uproar at Texas A&M is no longer just about McElroy, though. Allegations have emerged that another professor, Joy Alonzo, was put on paid leave after a student accused her of speaking unfavorably about Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick during a lecture about the opioid crisis.

According to The Tribune, John Sharp, the chancellor of Texas A&M System, texted Patrick shortly after the lecture to inform him that Alonzo was placed on leave "pending investigation re firing her." It remains unclear what Alonzo said that was considered questionable.

Patrick is one of the main proponents of the state's DEI ban, calling such initiatives "divisive" in previous statement. His office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

McElroy's and Alonzo's situations come at a time when at least a dozen GOP states are targeting DEI efforts in higher education — which were created to increase access and equitable treatment for minority

communities. They also come as the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down affirmative action, ruling that race cannot factor into college admissions processes.

AN UNCERTAIN AND GLOOMY FUTURE

Rebecca Hankins, a Texas A&M professor for 20 years, said that though professors have been promised academic freedom, what happens next is unclear. "There is nothing that gives me confidence things are going to get better," she said.

Hankins, who is Black and Muslim, said she has seen colleagues admonished for their speech in the classroom over the years and cited the school's history in her pessimism about its capacity for change.

"Am I supposed to think that you care about me knowing that someone who fought to keep us enslaved, you built a statue to?" Hankins said.

Hankins said the school's archives include photos of former university groups wearing Ku Klux Klan robes, and a campus statue of a Confederate Army general is still revered by students, who drop pennies on it for good luck.

Traditions aside, some alumni have expressed disgust over the university's handling of McElroy's hiring.

In a letter sent last week, the Texas A&M Black Former Student Network criticized the school's leadership for promoting values such as loyalty, respect and self-service while showing that they "don't have the character nor the courage to follow these Core Values."

Current students remain concerned about the impact the DEI ban will have on activities, programs and speech on campus next year.

"A lot of the students want clear communication with how that is going to look, especially students in organizations funded through DEI offices," said Andrew Applewhite, a junior at Texas A&M who leads the student senate.

In a statement Wednesday, Texas A&M interim president Mark A. Walsh said he believed every Aggie should have a voice and be treated with respect. "Just to be clear on where I stand, I believe diversity in all its forms is a strength," Walsh said.

While Texas A&M has said it embraces diversity, it's not explicitly among the values the school promotes.

A POTENTIAL EXODUS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION

McElroy's failed hiring is also driving concerns about the new law's impact on hiring and retention.

College administrators are so fearful of violating the new law that they are debating this over the qualifications of a candidate, said Pat Heintzelman, president of the Texas Faculty Association.

"They are setting the bar higher because of race now," Heintzelman said.

Gov. Greg Abbott reinforced that in February when he warned state entities, including universities, to end DEI hiring practices — months before the ban was passed.

Faculty are already feeling the effects, according to Paulette Granberry Russell, president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. She said she is increasingly learning of faculty members at universities subject to DEI restrictions who are planning to leave their positions because they teach subjects that are "subject to a higher level of scrutiny."

"Too often it is going to have more of a dramatic impact on faculty of color," Granberry Russell said.

Shaky Americans avoid upset to reach Women's World Cup knockout round after 0-0 draw with Portugal

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) — A goal post saved the United States from elimination at the Women's World Cup.

Ana Capeta nearly scored for Portugal in stoppage time but her shot hit the left post and the United States escaped with a uninspiring 0-0 draw Tuesday night that got them through — just barely — to the knockout round.

The U.S. won only one game in group play for the first time in tournament history, scoring just four goals over three games. With the scoreless draw, the United States fell to second in the group behind the

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Netherlands and will head to Melbourne, Australia, for a round of 16 match on Sunday.

"We should have put some in the back of the net and we didn't. We own that," Alex Morgan said. "We're not happy with the performance we put out there. But at the same time, we're moving on."

The Americans, the most successful team ever at the World Cup with four titles, have never been eliminated in the tournament's group stage. But they looked shaky against the Portuguese, who were playing in their first World Cup.

"Obviously we want to play great and score a lot of goals, and we didn't do that. We know that it can be better, and has to be better, moving forward," said Megan Rapinoe, who came into the match in the second half as a substitute. "But ultimately, we're on to the next round."

The Portuguese players sobbed on the field after the final whistle after having come oh-so-so close to upsetting the mighty United States. Capeta's shot about two minutes into stoppage time looked so good that her coaches started celebrating and the players on the bench jumped to their feet.

"I truly believed that the goal would be in that moment and I was starting to think, 'What can I do to help my players if we're winning 1-0?'" coach Francisco Neto said. "What I said to the girls, I was very proud. Of course, they are very sad because we have huge expectations of ourselves."

Lynn Williams, who started for the U.S. for the first time in the tournament, had a chance on a header in the 14th minute but Portugal goalkeeper Ines Pereira smothered it. While the U.S. controlled possession and had the better chances, the team could not finish and the game was scoreless at the break.

Rose Lavelle picked up a yellow card in the 38th minute, her second of the group stage, and she won't be available for the team's round of 16 match.

The frustration of the U.S. fans at Eden Park was evident at the break, when there were scattered boos among the crowd as the teams headed for the tunnel. Early in the second half, a fire alarm went off in the stadium but it turned out to be a malfunctioning sprinkler.

The United States had a free kick from a dangerous spot in the 57th minute, but Morgan's header popped up well over the goal. She put her hands to her face in exasperation.

"I think we just need a little bit of ruthlessness in front of the net," Lavelle said. "I think we're getting the chances, but it's that final bit of ruthlessness of just putting it away."

Rapinoe came in as a sub in the 61st minute, but the Golden Boot winner at the 2019 World Cup couldn't find that elusive goal.

U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski tweaked his starting lineup for the match and started both Williams and Lavelle for the first time at this World Cup. He had started Trinity Rodman at forward and Savannah De-Melo in the midfield for the team's first two games.

Lavelle boosted the team when she came in at halftime against the Netherlands on Thursday in Wellington when a lackluster opening half sent the Americans into the break down 1-0 to the Dutch. Lavelle's corner to Lindsey Horan gave the Americans a 1-1 draw in the match.

But the energy just wasn't there against Portugal and the Americans seemed lost and unorganized for most of the match. In a post-game huddle, defender Kelley O'Hara, one of the veterans, shouted at her teammates.

"I just told the team 'Listen, we did what we had to do, we're moving on, the group stage is done, this is over, it's in the rearview, we have our next game in front of us and that's the only one that matters,'" O'Hara said. "Maybe we didn't do it the way we wanted to, or planned on doing it, but we're advancing and this is the World Cup and that's all that matters."

The United States last lost in the group stage to Sweden at the 2011 World Cup, but the Americans still advanced to the final match before losing on penalties to champion Japan.

The Americans have not needed the third and final group-stage match to learn their tournament fate since 2007, when there was only a slim chance for elimination. A loss to Portugal on Tuesday could have ended the tournament for the Americans.

Going into the match, the United States sat atop Group E even on points with the Netherlands but holding an edge on goal differential. But the Netherlands erased that advantage and took the group lead with a decisive 7-0 victory over Vietnam, in a match played simultaneously in Dunedin.

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The Netherlands now heads to Sydney to face the second-place team from Group G, which includes Sweden, South Africa, Italy and Argentina. The United States plays the group's top team — likely Sweden.

"They made it frustrating for us, and yeah, I think we're disappointed with ourselves," Lavelle said. "But we made it through, so we've got to put our energy toward that."

Today in History: Aug. 2, Iraq invades Kuwait

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 2, the 214th day of 2023. There are 151 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 2, 1923, the 29th president of the United States, Warren G. Harding, died in San Francisco; Vice President Calvin Coolidge became president.

On this date:

In 1776, members of the Second Continental Congress began attaching their signatures to the Declaration of Independence.

In 1873, inventor Andrew S. Hallidie (HAH'-lih-day) successfully tested a cable car he had designed for the city of San Francisco.

In 1876, frontiersman "Wild Bill" Hickok was shot and killed while playing poker at a saloon in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, by Jack McCall, who was later hanged.

In 1921, a jury in Chicago acquitted several former members of the Chicago White Sox baseball team and two others of conspiring to defraud the public in the notorious "Black Sox" scandal.

In 1922, Alexander Graham Bell, generally regarded as the inventor of the telephone, died in Nova Scotia, Canada, at age 75.

In 1934, German President Paul von Hindenburg died, paving the way for Adolf Hitler's complete takeover.

In 1939, Albert Einstein signed a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt urging creation of an atomic weapons research program.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman, Soviet leader Josef Stalin and Britain's new prime minister, Clement Attlee, concluded the Potsdam conference.

In 1974, former White House counsel John W. Dean III was sentenced to one to four years in prison for obstruction of justice in the Watergate cover-up. (Dean ended up serving four months.)

In 1980, 85 people were killed when a bomb exploded at the train station in Bologna, Italy.

In 1985, 137 people were killed when Delta Air Lines Flight 191, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed while attempting to land at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, seizing control of the oil-rich emirate. (The Iraqis were later driven out by the U.S. in Operation Desert Storm.)

Ten years ago: The United States issued an extraordinary global travel warning to Americans about the threat of an al-Qaida attack and closed down 21 embassies and consulates across the Muslim world for the weekend. Samantha Power was sworn in as the new United States Ambassador to the United Nations by Vice President Joe Biden, a day after the Senate approved her appointment by President Barack Obama 87-10.

Five years ago: Pope Francis decreed that the death penalty is "inadmissible" under all circumstances and the Catholic Church should campaign to abolish it. The Vatican said that Francis had amended the Catechism of the Catholic Church — the compilation of official Catholic teaching — to say that capital punishment can never be sanctioned because it constitutes an "attack" on the dignity of human beings. Apple became the world's first publicly-traded company to be valued at \$1 trillion. The Trump administration proposed weakening Obama-era mileage standards designed to make cars more fuel efficient and less polluting.

One year ago: U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Taiwan, becoming the highest-ranking American official in 25 years to visit the self-ruled island claimed by China, which quickly announced that would

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will conduct military maneuvers in retaliation for her presence. The Justice Department filed a lawsuit challenging Idaho's restrictive abortion law, arguing that it conflicts with a federal law requiring doctors to provide pregnant women medically necessary treatment that could include abortion. The San Diego Padres acquired superstar outfielder Juan Soto from the Washington Nationals in one of baseball's biggest deals at the trade deadline

Today's Birthdays: Rock musician Garth Hudson (The Band) is 86. Singer Kathy Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 80. Actor Joanna Cassidy is 78. Actor Kathryn Harrold is 73. Actor Butch Patrick (TV: "The Munsters") is 70. Rock music producer/drummer Butch Vig (Garbage) is 68. Sen. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., is 66. Singer Mojo Nixon is 66. Actor Victoria Jackson is 64. Actor Apollonia is 64. Actor Cynthia Stevenson is 61. Actor Mary-Louise Parker is 59. Rock musician John Stanier (Helmet) is 55. Writer-actor-director Kevin Smith is 53. Actor Jacinda Barrett is 51. Actor Sam Worthington is 47. Actor Edward Furlong is 46. TV meteorologist Dylan Dreyer (TV: "Today") is 42. Actor Marci Miller is 38. Singer Charli XCX is 31. Actor Hallie Eisenberg is 31.