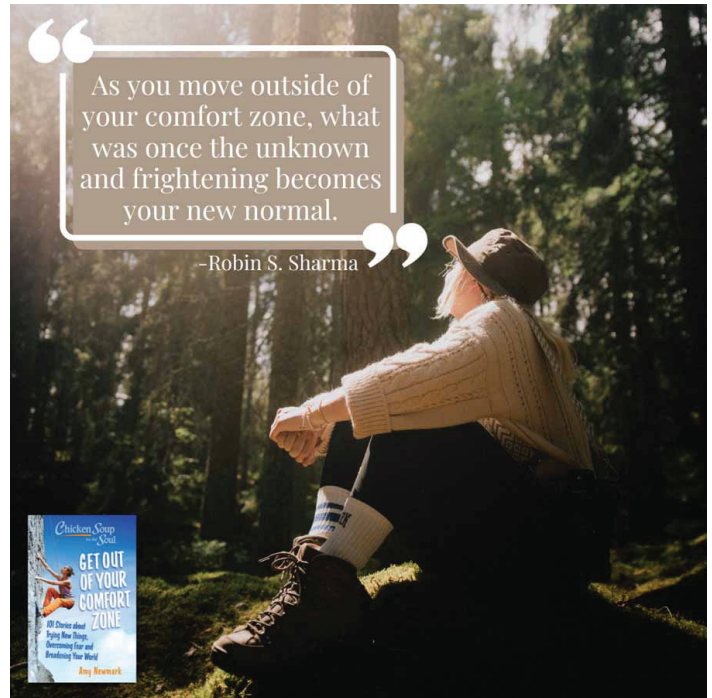


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Monday, Aug. 14

Senior Menu: Chicken rice casserole, mixed vegetables, chocolate pudding with banana, whole wheat bread.

Boys Golf at Sioux Valley (Volga), 10 a.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 15

Senior Menu: Baked pork chops, creamy noodles, California blend, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

Girls Soccer hosts Garretson, 6 p.m.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde Ad Council

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 16

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, Waldorf salad, muffin, tomato juice.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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

Thursday, Aug. 17

Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin potatoes, broccoli/cauliflower blend, fruit, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Boys Golf at Milbank, 10 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA "Do Day", 1:30 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 18

Senior Menu: Chicken strips, tri-tators, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Girls Soccer hosts Belle Fourche, 4 p.m.

Boys Soccer hosts Belle Fourche, 6 p.m.

Football hosts Aberdeen Roncalli, 7 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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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

paper the Marion County Record, reportedly died at 98 after a controversial police raid of her home and newspaper office left her "stressed beyond her limits."

A group of 30 to 50 people ransacked 100k worth of items in a Los Angeles Nordstrom store, using bear spray on police. The incident sparked criticism amid a rise in crime within the state.

The Coast Guard is searching for four divers who went missing around 50 miles south of Cape Fear, North Carolina, on Sunday.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg ended speculation of a tech behemoth cage fight, posting: "I think we can all agree Elon [Musk] isn't serious, and it's time to move on."

At least 21 people have died after a flash flood hit the northwestern Chinese city of Xi'an.

A small jet crashed at the Thunder Over Michigan air show on Sunday, with both occupants reportedly left uninjured after ejecting from the aircraft.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, a Russian warship fired warning shots and boarded a cargo ship in the Black Sea on Sunday, after the vessel ignored a "request to stop for inspection for the carriage of prohibited goods". Kyiv has accused Moscow of piracy and violating international law over the incident.

TALKING POINTS

"Mr. Trump, like every American, has a First Amendment right to free speech, but that right is not absolute. In a criminal case such as this one, the defendant's free speech is subject to the rules," U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan said during a Friday hearing in former President Donald Trump's election conspiracy case.

"The closest thing I can compare it to is, perhaps, a war zone, or maybe a bomb went off. It was cars in the street, doors open, melted to the ground. Most structures no longer exist for blocks and blocks of this," Maui Mayor Richard Bissen told Good Morning America after viewing the destruction in Lahaina caused by this week's wildfires on Maui.

"The suffering people in the trenches of a divided country really need only surrender, which would perhaps open the way to peace. But neither Washington nor Kyiv wants peace. America wants undivided power and for the sake of it does not spare the bloody Ukrainian fat," former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, an ally to Russian President Vladimir Putin, wrote on Telegram.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

The FIFA Women's World Cup quarter-finals continue in Australia. France will play Australia in a match scheduled to begin at 3 a.m. ET on Saturday, and England will take on Colombia a few hours later with a match at 6:30 a.m. ET.

The Library of Congress is hosting its National Book Festival on Saturday in Washington, D.C. The event kicks off at 9 a.m. ET at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, with some programs expected to stream online.

Donald Trump will be traveling to the Iowa State Fair taking place on Saturday in Des Moines. The former president is expected to arrive in the early afternoon.

This year's Perseid meteor shower is expected to be at its most visible Saturday night and early Sunday morning.

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2023 Basketball Golf Tournament Summary

Championship Flight

1st place: Craig Dunker, Ryan Fjeldheim, Brock Sadness, Tom Crank

2nd place: Brad Larson, Tyler Sperry, Lance Frohling, Connor Hansen

1st Flight

1st place: Trent Traphagen, Mitch Locke, Heidi Locke, Adam Wright

2nd place: Treyton Diegel, Wyatt Kurtz, Anthony Sippel, Carter Jondahl

Pin Prizes:

Hole 2 Men's Longest Putt: Lon Gelhaus

Hole 9 Men's Longest Drive: Spencer Knecht

Hole 8 Men's Closest to the Pin: Tyler Sperry

Hole 3 Women's Longest Drive: Chelsea Hanson

Hole 6 Women's Closest 2nd Shot: Heidi Locke

Hole 9 Women's Longest Putt: Brenda Madsen

2023 SDFBCA Pre-Season Coaches Poll

11AAA

Harrisburg (5) 89

SF Jefferson (9) 68

Brandon Valley (3) 67

SF Lincoln (6) 59

O'Gorman 46

RV: SF Roosevelt (1), SF Washington

11AA

Pierre T. F. Riggs (24) 124

Tea Area (2) 98

Yankton 60

Brookings 34

Aberdeen Central 29

RV: Watertown

11A

Dell Rapids (18) 116

West Central (3) 68

Canton (1) 55

SF Christian (1) 52

Madison (1) 40

RV: Dakota Valley (3), Lennox, Beresford

11B

Winner (16) 114

Elk Point-Jefferson (7) 91

Sioux Valley (2) 56

Hot Springs 31

Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 29

RV: MCM (2), St. Thomas More, Tri Valley

9AA

1. Wall (10) 97

2. Parkston (9) 97

3. Howard (5) 83

4. Hamlin (4) 64

5. Hanson (1) 43

RV: Elkton-Lake Benton 22, Bon Homme 21,
Platte-Geddes 11, Viborg-Hurley 10

9A

1. Gregory (21) 120

2. Warner (2) 90

3. Canistota (3) 42

4. Wolsey-Wessington 41

5. Castlewood 33

RV: Lyman 17, Harding Co/Bison 16, Timber
Lake 9

9B

1. Hitchcock-Tulare (12) 79

2. De Smet (4) 75

3. Herreid-Selby Area (4) 65

4. Corsica-Stickney (1) 34

5. Faulkton Area (3) 32

RV: Dell Rapids St. Mary (1) 28, Kadoka 20,
Sully Buttes 19, Avon 12

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**BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

August 15, 2023, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. First Reading of Ordinances:
 - a. #251 - Rezone
 - b. #252 - Rezone
 - c. #253 - Rezone
 - d. #254 - Rezone
5. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign MOU for 2023 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) between City of Aberdeen and Brown County
6. Approve New Dive Team Member
7. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Fair Contract
8. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes from August 8, 2023
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Lease Agreement
 - e. Claim Assignment
 - f. Lottery Permit – Aberdeen Area Veterans
 - g. Travel Requests
 - h. Plats for Aberdeen City Zoning regarding Tax Deed Properties
9. Other Business
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission - Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board)

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

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Weekly Vikings Recap - Preseason Week 1

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The first preseason kicked off for the Minnesota Vikings on Thursday night as they faced the Seattle Seahawks and all its backups. Like Seattle, the Vikings too rested most of their starters as only Ed Ingram started for the offense and only Cam Bynum and Akayleb Evans started for the defense. Despite the lack of starters, the game still had a couple of bright spots. The first of which was Ty Chandler who, with his pass-catching performance out of the backfield, put himself in a good spot to be the number two running back on the Vikings' depth chart this season. The defensive line, especially Luiji Vilain, looked quite good as they held the Seahawks to no points for most of the first half and applied a ton of pressure at various times to Seattle's quarterbacks. And, Jalen Reagor, who may be on the fence about making the roster, had a somewhat impressive first half as he led the offense in receiving.

Nonetheless, it was evident that the game consisted of a lot of inexperienced players for the Vikings as the team had several stupid penalties throughout. One player who should not have shown any sort of inexperience was seven-year veteran quarterback, Nick Mullens. However, Mullens, who will likely be the backup quarterback for the Vikings this season, seemed very jittery in the pocket and quick to get rid of the ball on several of his dropbacks.

As the second half began, the game got much uglier for the Vikings. Although Jaren Hall showed relative calmness at the quarterback position, the offense never seemed to get going. Often, Hall found himself scrambling out of the pocket only to throw the ball away out of bounds. However, Hall's success getting outside the pocket did not last long. By late in the fourth quarter, the Seahawks' defensive line started to put pressure on Hall and even come up with multiple sacks.

To make matters worse the Vikings continued to make boneheaded mistakes, the main one coming on a muffed punt by rookie punt returner, Thayer Thomas. As the second half progressed, it appeared that the Vikings' defense had officially run out of gas. The Seahawks started to move up and down the field on the Vikings' defense and completely dominated the line of scrimmage. Players like Andrew Booth, who many hoped would start to show off the talent that got him drafted early in the second round last year, gave up a wide-open touchdown. It appeared that Booth still has a long way to go before he becomes an everyday starting cornerback for the Vikings.

The only positive for the Vikings from this game had to be that there were no major injuries to any of the players they expect to make major contributions to the team this year. Outside of that, the game was an extremely boring one. I, myself, do not expect that I will look back on the highlights from this game at any point in the future.

Final Score: Seahawks 24 - Vikings 13

Looking ahead, the Vikings will continue their training camp schedule next week. With the Tennessee Titans coming to town to play in the second game of the preseason on August 19, the Vikings have scheduled a joint practice with the Titans beforehand. This will likely be the only time players like Kirk Cousins and Justin Jefferson will partake in any sort of game-like experiences with an opposing team before the season starts. Hopefully, the highlights from the joint practice are better than the ones from the preseason game against Seattle.

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Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday August 05, 2023, to 6 a.m. Sunday August 13, 2023

Final Rally Tally

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	96	24	120	148
Misd Drug Arrests	182	64	246	148
Felony Drug Arrests	129	26	155	103
Total Citations	900	579	1479	1430
Total Warnings	2599	1697	4296	5288
Cash Seized	\$2005.00	\$0.00	\$2005.00	\$4335.00
Vehicles Seized	0	0	0	4
For Drug Poss.	0	0	0	4
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Accidents	22	36	58	45
Injury Accidents	20	44	64	50
Fatal Accidents	4	1	5	3
# of Fatalities	4	1	5	3

Fatal Crashes: None to report.

Injury Crashes:

At 1:39pm, Saturday, Interstate 90, mile marker 59: a 2022 Nissan Sinatra SR was traveling eastbound, drove across all lanes of travel and crashed in the north ditch. The driver received minor injuries.

At 2:14pm, Saturday, South Dakota Highway 87, mile marker 74: a 2018 Kawasaki motorcycle was traveling northbound, failed to negotiate a curve, tipped, and slid into the guard rail. The driver and passenger were not wearing helmets and received serious non-life-threatening injuries.

At 4:29pm, Saturday, South Dakota Highway 87, mile marker 57: a 1999 Ultra Acquisition Corp motorcycle was traveling northbound, failed to negotiate a curve, left the roadway, and struck a rock. The driver was not wearing a helmet and received serious non-life-threatening injuries.

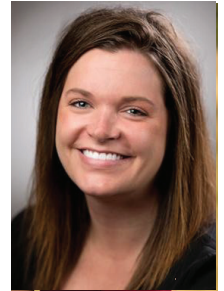
At 6:46pm, Saturday, 10534 Nemo Road: a 2021 Harley Davidson motorcycle was traveling eastbound and struck a deer. The driver was wearing a helmet and received serious non-life-threatening injuries.

“Back to School, Back to School, Here We Go Back to School.”

By Nikki Eining CSW-PIP, QMHP



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Nikki Eining CSW-PIP, QMHP

Here it is, August. Summer has flown by and already there is Halloween candy roaming the shelves of Walmart. For most of us, August also brings the normal adjustment of transitioning back to the school year. It is normal for this to look differently for everyone, especially depending upon the age of your child. You may find yourself stressing to find the school supplies list, supporting your youth through two a day practices for athletic season or looking forward to getting back to the routine of the school year.

Adjustment is a term utilized often in the behavioral health world. Adjustment is “the process of adapting or becoming used to a new situation or stressor.” It is a change in our life. This possibly could be a change in the way we are doing something, our relationships, our employment, our family, our environment or possibly our routine. It is normal that with change comes stress. Stress can be positive stress, or it can be very uncomfortable. When adjustment, or change, is out of our control and creates this uncomfortable stress, it is important for us to explore and focus on “what is within my control.”

This is where we can explore what is within our control as we adjust back to the school year. Here are some tips on things to think through that can be within your control:

- Sit with your family and work together to develop a daily, predictable family routine. Explore bed-time routines and timeframes. Consistent rest helps us manage stress. Children being a part of creation of the routine also engages them more in the routine and they will be more likely to follow through.
- Communicate or reach out to parents or school staff within similar schools or classes. Gathering more factual information can aid in our management of stress and anxiety.
- Attend open houses, visit the school area and aid in walking through with your child what to expect as the new school year begins. Pre-teaching and familiarizing ourselves with environments sets us up for transition success.
- Identify a separation tradition with your child – maybe this is a hug, a kiss and a special line between you and them, maybe it is a special high five you created together or a special short song. Consistent, brief and positive separation traditions can be a great way to make this predictable and successful for your child.
- Schedule small fun activities with your child during this transition. This gives children something to look forward to, allows them to know ‘summer fun is not 100% over,’ and also builds attachment time in your schedule with caregivers during a transition of the school day away from caregiver.

As always, everyone’s experience is different. Normalizing the stress around change is important. Our nervous system likes predictability. Therefore, when we change things, our body can be on alert. By focusing on healthy things within our control, we can manage through this normal stress associated with adjustment.

With any adjustment in our lives, if stress symptoms continue after a month of change communicate with your primary care provider or local behavioral health care provider to explore how to support you or family members through this.

Nikki Eining CSW-PIP, QMHP Outpatient Clinical Mental Health Therapist Avera Medical Group Behavioral Health Brookings Clinic in Brookings, SD. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show based on science, built on trust for 21 seasons, streaming live on Facebook and SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is there any way to stem the tide of fiberglass pollution from aging and discarded boats fouling marine ecosystems?

-- Jared Grissom, Summit, NJ

It's summer vacation and you're ready to let loose on the water. Time to head out to the lake house, bring the boat out of the driveway, and cruise around the lake. Now imagine that same vessel 10 years from now, rotting away and destroying the local marine ecosystem. Nobody wants to kill off Nemo and Dory when boating on the bay, but sometimes innocent pastimes have unintended consequences. The fiberglass in these watercrafts has a rippling wave of destruction on our marine friends, damaging aquatic organisms' organs and leaching toxic chemicals into public soils and seas, affecting life even on land.

Okay fiberglass is pretty harmful, we get that, but then why is the boat industry still chock full of it? For one, fiberglass is much stronger compared to boat material alternatives like aluminum. Fiberglass simply resists adverse weather conditions better than other materials. Boats are more flexible than aluminum, giving them more maneuverability and versatility. The fiberglass allows for better hydrodynamics, increasing efficiency when venturing into the open water. In addition, boats made out of fiberglass allow for more surface area actually inside the vessel, a favorable advantage for fishermen and families alike.

To call degrading fiberglass damaging is an understatement, as the material's effects have had astounding impacts globally. The microplastics present after fiberglass breaks down over time silently enter the bodies of aquatic organisms. These microplastics can disrupt their biological organs, like the endocrine system which is responsible for regulation of hormones. Toxic chemicals like lead and copper dilute in the water and break apart precious, coastal ecosystems like estuaries and coral reefs. These same heavy metals can stay in the soil and leach into clean groundwater, contaminating healthy resources. Amplifying the problem is the difficulty of disposing of fiberglass boats. It is complicated, costly and, time-consuming. A lack of education about the true severity of abandoning vessels further contributes to a carefree release of fiberglass toxicity into our marine ecosystems.

Thankfully, the ship of environmental remediation hasn't fully sunk. Ships in good condition can be sold used, and others can be reused piecemeal as parts. Organizations can help as well. Groups like the Vessel Disposal and Reuse Foundation, U.S Coast Guard and others can help organize the recycling process.

The federal government, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has collaborated with organizations like the Lynnhaven group and has granted almost \$2 million in debris removal initiatives. There is still hope for optimism that we will solve the fiberglass issue. It is crucial to educate ourselves and our neighbors about the harsh dangers of fiberglass to really emphasize the magnitude of the issue. We can speak our minds to local legislatures for tighter regulations on the disposal of boats. While the issue of fiberglass pollution is still plaguing our waterways, we have many tools at our disposal to fight back.



Fiberglass may resist adverse weather conditions better than other materials, but should we really be using so much of it in our boats?

Credit: Pexels.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Six SD nursing homes are among nation's worst-rated

Sioux Falls center has been a 'special focus facility' for over two years

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - AUGUST 13, 2023 7:00 AM

Six of South Dakota's 98 nursing homes are on a federal list of the nation's worst-rated care facilities. Five of the facilities are eligible for a special program to improve quality of care through increased regulatory oversight, and the other one is already in the program.

The five eligible South Dakota facilities as of the July report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are Avantara Norton in Sioux Falls, Bennett County Hospital and Nursing Home in Martin, Dells Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Dell Rapids, Firesteel Healthcare Center in Mitchell and Riverview Healthcare Center in Flandreau.

One facility, Good Samaritan Society Sioux Falls Center, has been participating in the Special Focus Facility program for over two years. Two other South Dakota facilities graduated from the program within the last three years: Avantara Arrowhead in Rapid City and White River Health Care Center.

The Good Samaritan facility in Sioux Falls is a 98-certified bed nonprofit nursing home. The home was found in compliance during its last state inspection report in April and met criteria for its latest federal inspection. The home has been fined by the federal government four times — for a total of \$122,000 — for violations since 2020.

Nursing homes are identified as special-focus facilities based on their last three standard health survey inspections. Special-focus facilities must meet more stringent criteria two times in a row to be eligible for graduation. The Good Samaritan Center needs to meet the criteria one more time to graduate from the list.

Because the number of special-focus facilities is capped, eligible facilities — even those that have earned CMS' lowest ratings for quality — can't be named a special-focus facility until other homes in the same state that are already in the program are terminated from Medicare and Medicaid or improve and "graduate" from the program.

That's a process that can take four years or more. As a result, there are several homes in each state that are deemed eligible for special-focus status due to ongoing quality-of-care issues, but can't actually enroll in the program. It's also why four of the five eligible South Dakota facilities have waited between 18 and 26 months on the list. Bennett County is the most recent addition, spending three months on the list so far.

Typically, the homes that are deemed eligible for special-focus designation have about twice the average number of violations cited by state inspectors; they have more serious problems than most other nursing homes, including harm or injury to residents; and they have an established pattern of serious problems that has persisted over a long period of time.

Facility summaries

The five South Dakota homes eligible for inclusion in the Special Focus Facility program all have 1-out-of-5-star ratings from CMS. Following are summaries of the problems cited at each of those facilities, along with the one South Dakota facility already in the program.

Avantara Norton: The 110-certified bed facility in Sioux Falls is owned by for-profit company Legacy Healthcare. The home has been cited for 20 deficiencies in the last year and has been fined nearly \$125,000 by the federal government since 2021.

The home was cited for cleanliness, safety hazards and staffing issues. It received a serious deficiency in its October 2022 report for failing to provide enough water to maintain a resident's health. The resident was in "immediate jeopardy" due to staff not properly monitoring and ensuring the resident drank enough

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water. Because of dehydration, the resident had frequent emergency room visits due to thick urine, frequent UTIs, constipation, skin problems and poor dental health, according to the report.

Additionally, the report revealed that a staff member who'd previously been fired from the facility because of a substantiated allegation of abuse and neglect was rehired by the facility. The history was found after a resident alleged that the staff member had verbally abused them and left them sitting on a toilet seat "for a long time" until another staff member could hold them up, since the resident couldn't walk by themselves. The staff member was fired again.

Bennett County Hospital and Nursing Home: The 27-certified bed nonprofit facility in Martin has been cited for three deficiencies in the last year and has been fined nearly \$79,000 since 2021.

In its most recent recertification inspection report from April 2022, citations included infection control concerns, improperly dispensing psychotropic medications to residents and risk of safety hazards — specifically regarding residents who smoked outdoors without proper staff supervision. The facility has a nurse turnover rate of 94.4% every 12 months.

Dells Nursing and Rehab Center: The 48-certified bed facility has one deficiency reported in the last year, but it was cited for 32 deficiencies during one survey in November 2021, including an "immediate jeopardy" deficiency for residents because it did not implement proper COVID-19 precautions. The facility was fined \$96,415.

Firesteel Healthcare Center: The 150-certified bed facility is owned by for-profit company EmpRes Healthcare Management. So far this year, the home has been cited for four violations. The home has been fined nearly \$150,000 since 2021 — over \$100,000 due to a January 2021 infection report regarding a lack of COVID-19 control that placed several residents in "immediate jeopardy" of harm.

In its most recent recertification inspection report from January, citations included improper dispensing of psychotropic medications to residents and infection control concerns.

Riverview Healthcare Center: The 49-certified bed facility in Flandreau, owned by for-profit company EmpRes Healthcare Management, has been cited for four total state and federal violations so far this year. It's been fined \$117,000 since 2021.

In its most recent recertification inspection report from February, citations included improper ulcer prevention and improper food preparation and storage.

Good Samaritan Society Sioux Falls Center: The 98-certified bed nonprofit nursing home was flagged for "immediate jeopardy" to its residents in November 2020 for a lack of infection control regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. It was placed on the special-focus facilities list in May 2021, where it was cited for 11 deficiencies in December 2021 and 10 deficiencies in June 2022. The home has been fined four times — for a total of \$122,000 — for violations since 2020.

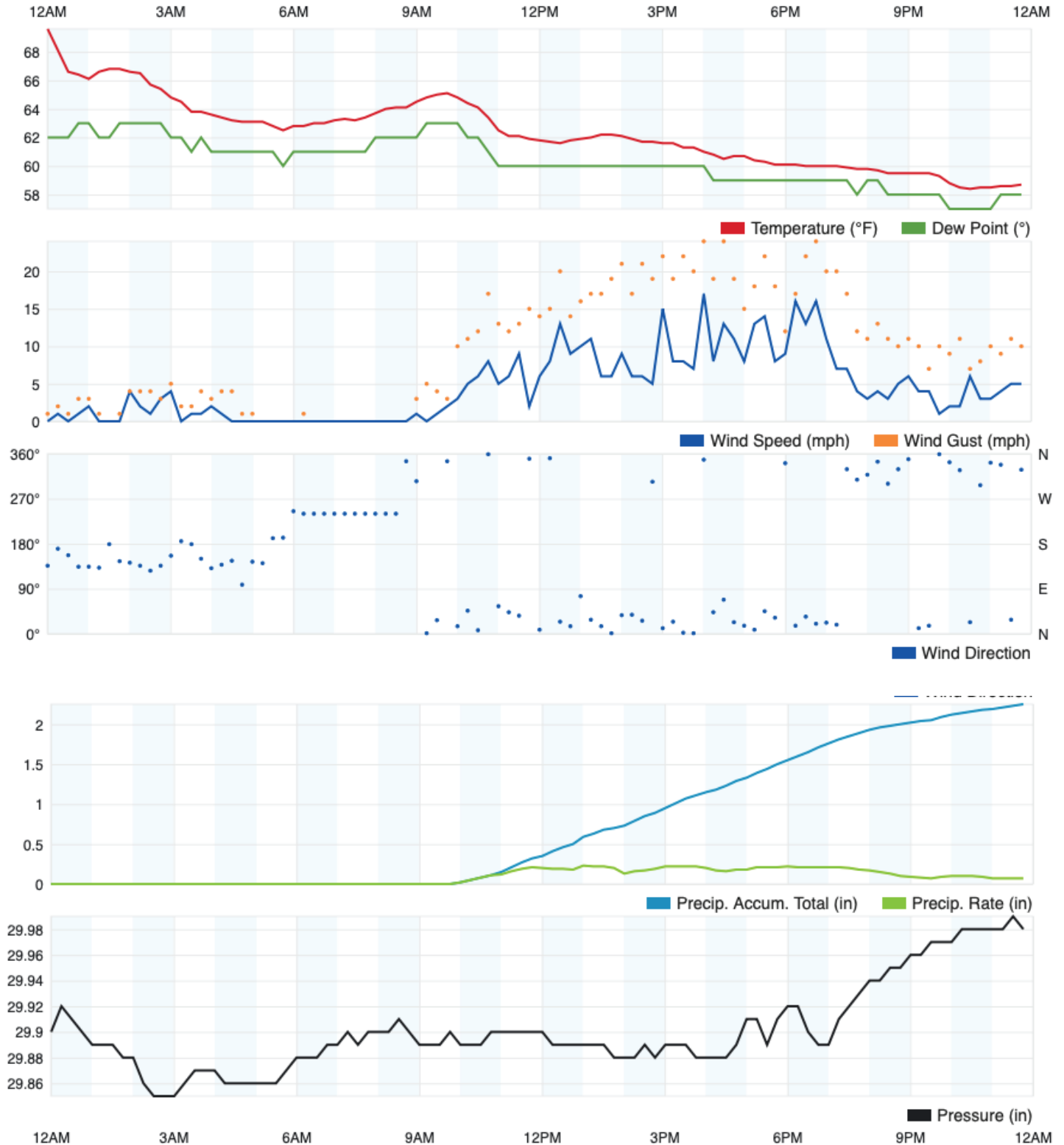
The home was found in compliance during its last state inspection report in April and met criteria for its latest federal inspection.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather



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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Decreasing Clouds	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Clear	Sunny
High: 75 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 84 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 89 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 78 °F



Mostly Dry... And Cool Today

 **72-79°**
Coolest across the Prairie
Coteau

A warming trend through mid week with highs on Wednesday reaching the 80s and 90s.

 weather.gov/aberdeem
August 14, 2023 3:49 AM

Aside from light rain over far eastern South Dakota this morning, today will feature dry and cool conditions. High temperatures today will be in the 70s. Low temperatures tonight will be in the mid to upper 50s.

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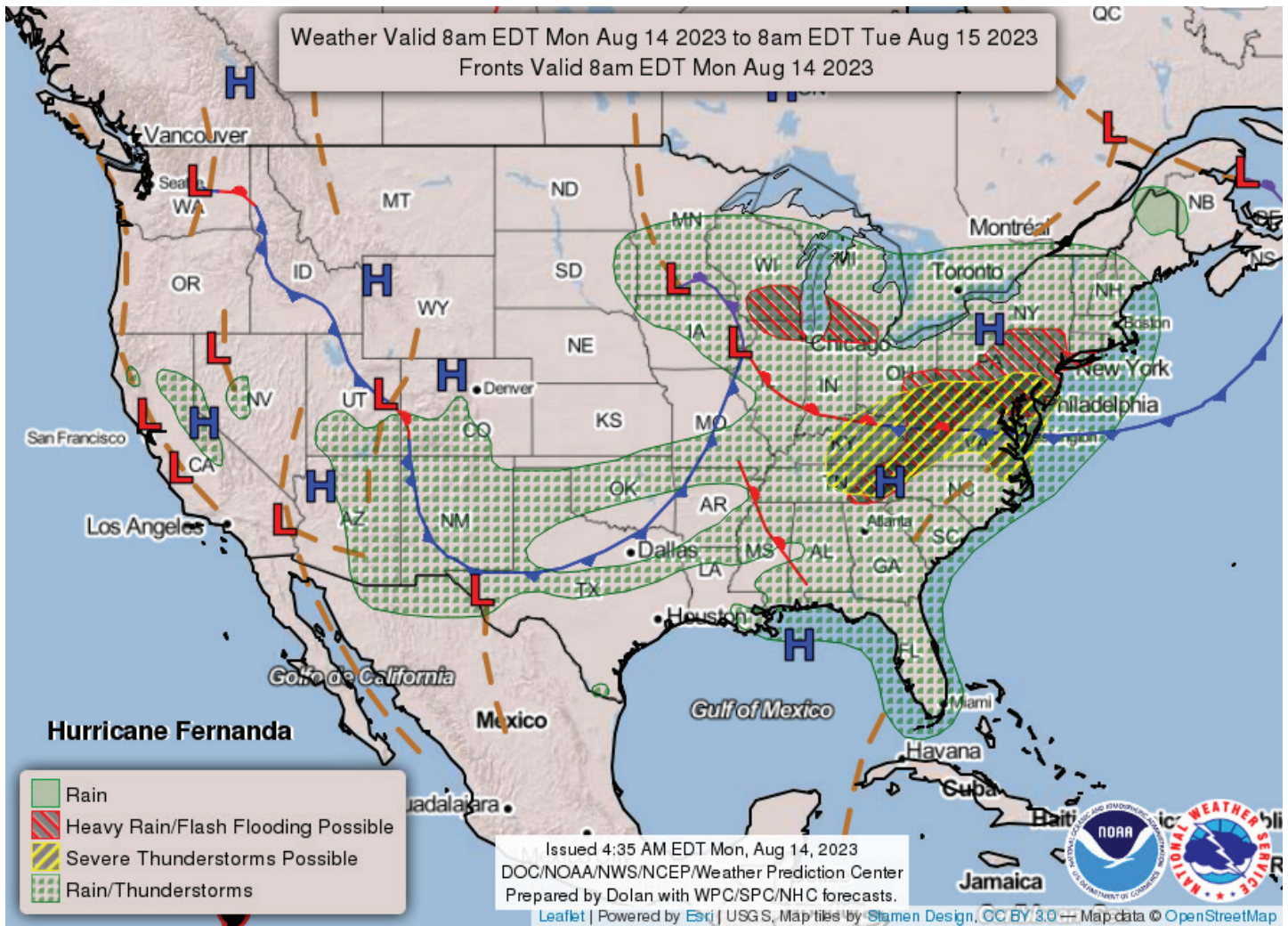
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 12:00 AM
Low Temp: 58 °F at 10:25 PM
Wind: 24 mph at 3:57 PM
Precip: : 2.23 + .12 since midnight = 2.35

Day length: 14 hours, 10 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1952
Record Low: 38 in 1968
Average High: 83
Average Low: 57
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.01
Precip to date in Aug.: 5.62
Average Precip to date: 15.11
Precip Year to Date: 18.29
Sunset Tonight: 8:43:38 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:31:44 AM



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Today in Weather History

August 14, 1898: A deadly, estimated F4 tornado moved southeast from 12 miles northwest of Clear Lake, passing 7 miles north of town and ending about 4 miles west of Gary. Deaths occurred on two farms. One man was killed when the kitchen of his farm house was torn off. Five members of one family were killed along with two labors on another farm as every building was swept away. Buildings suffered massive damage on eight farms. This tornado was one of the earliest, estimated F4 tornadoes on record for South Dakota.

August 14, 2008: Several severe thunderstorms developed along a cold front across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail, some flash flooding, and a couple of weak tornadoes occurred with these storms. An EF0 tornado touched down briefly at the Brown County Fairgrounds, blowing over several tents and awnings. Another EF0 tornado touched down briefly in an open field causing no damage north of Stephan in Hyde County.

August 14, 2009: A warm front brought severe thunderstorms with large hail up to the size of golf balls along with sixty mph winds to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Also, very heavy rain fell across western Brown County with 2 to 4 inches of rain reported. This heavy rain brought flash flooding conditions. Numerous county roads and area fields were overrun with flowing water. The water level on Richmond Lake rose nearly a foot the next day after the event from high inflows. This rapid rise in the lake level resulted in numerous boat and fishing docks being submerged. Several boats were also trapped under lift canopies due to the high water. There were reports of several boats breaking free of their mooring and floating toward the spillway.

1936 - Temperatures across much of eastern Kansas soared above 110 degrees. Kansas City MO hit an all-time record high of 113 degrees. It was one of sixteen consecutive days of 100 degree heat for Kansas City. During that summer there were a record 53 days of 100 degree heat, and during the three summer months Kansas City received just 1.12 inches of rain. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1953: Hurricane Barbara hits North Carolina as a Category 2 hurricane. Damage from the storm was relatively minor, totaling around \$1.3 million (1953 USD). Most of it occurred in North Carolina and Virginia from crop damage. The hurricane left several injuries, some traffic accidents, as well as seven fatalities in the eastern United States; at least two were due to electrocution from downed power lines. Offshore Atlantic Canada, a small boat sunk, killing its crew of two.

1969: Hurricane Camille, a powerful, deadly, and destructive hurricane formed just west of the Cayman Islands on this day. It rapidly intensified, and by the time it reached western Cuba the next day, it was a Category 3 hurricane. Hurricane Camille was spawned on August 5th by a tropical wave off the coast of Africa. The storm became a tropical disturbance four days later on the 9th and a tropical storm on the 14th with a 999-millibar pressure center and 55 mph surface winds.

1975: In London, England, a localized torrential downpour known as The Hampstead Storm, drops 6.72 inches of rain in 155 minutes at Hampstead Heath. One died in the storm. The water floods the Underground and forces sewer covers up.

1987 - Slow moving thunderstorms deluged northern and western suburbs of Chicago IL with torrential rains. O'Hare Airport reported 9.35 inches in 18 hours, easily exceeding the previous 24 hour record of 6.24 inches. Flooding over a five day period resulted in 221 million dollars damage. It was Chicago's worst flash flood event, particularly for northern and western sections of the city. Kennedy Expressway became a footpath for thousands of travelers to O'Hare Airport as roads were closed. The heavy rains swelled the Des Plaines River above flood stage, and many persons had to be rescued from stalled vehicles on flooded roads. (13th- 14th) (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1988 - Eighteen cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, and the water temperature at Lake Erie reached a record 80 degrees. Portland ME reported a record fourteen straight days of 80 degree weather. Milwaukee WI reported a record 34 days of 90 degree heat for the year. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms resulted in about fifty reports of severe weather in the northeastern U.S. One person was killed at Stockbridge MI when a tornado knocked a tree onto their camper. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHY WORRY?

A reporter once asked Henry Ford the question, "Do you ever worry?"

"No. I believe that God is managing my affairs. With God in charge, I believe that everything will work out for our best. So, what's there to worry about?"

Worry is like going back and forth in a rocking chair: a lot of motion but no forward movement. It can disturb our thinking, disorganize our work, destroy our health, and steal our life. It has never calmed a fear or brought peace to a troubled heart.

Worry is nothing more than anticipating some calamity or chaos that will probably never come our way. It normally has no substance or power except what we allow it to have as it invades our minds and controls our thoughts and disrupts our lives.

When we allow worry to muddle our minds, we need to call upon God immediately. Immediately! We must ask Him to replace each problem with one of His promises and ask for an extra portion of faith and trust in His goodness and grace. He knows what is in our future and every need that we ever have is under His control.

Prayer: Help me, Father, to increase my faith in You as I learn to trust Your promises and accept Your will. Give me confidence in Your care and concern for my best! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: So don't worry about these things, saying, -What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Matthew 6:31-32



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

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/10/2023 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:
08.11.23

8 9 18 35 41 18

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$36,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 3
DRAW: Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.12.23

3 16 26 29 30 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$7,850,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 18 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.13.23

3 6 12 37 44 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 33 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.12.23

13 18 19 29 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 33
DRAW: Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.12.23

10 26 27 48 52 12

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 2 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.12.23

19 21 37 50 65 26

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$215,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 2 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

North Dakota teen survives nearly 100-foot fall at North Rim of Grand Canyon

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz. (AP) — A 13-year-old North Dakota boy has survived a fall of nearly 100 feet at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon during a family trip.

Authorities said it took emergency crews two hours to rescue Wyatt Kauffman after he slipped on a cliff Tuesday and plunged the nearly 100 feet (30 meters) at the Bright Angel Point trail.

The teenager was airlifted to a Las Vegas hospital for treatment of nine broken vertebrae plus a ruptured spleen, a collapsed lung, a concussion and a broken hand and dislocated finger.

"I was up on the ledge and was moving out of the way so other people could take a picture," Kauffman told Phoenix TV station KPNX. "I squatted down and was holding on to a rock. I only had one hand on it.

"It wasn't that good of a grip. It was kind of pushing me back. I lost my grip and started to fall back," he added.

Rescue crews had to rappel down the cliff and get the injured boy out of the canyon in a basket.

"I just remember somewhat waking up and being in the back of an ambulance and a helicopter and getting on a plane and getting here" to the hospital, said Kauffman, who lives in Casselton, North Dakota.

Brian Kauffman was in North Dakota when he heard about his son's fall and rescue.

A National Park Service search and rescue team set up a rope rescue down to the steep and narrow trail and raised the teen safely to the rim.

"We're extremely grateful for the work of everyone. Two hours is an eternity in a situation like that," Brian Kauffman said.

He said Wyatt and his mother were on a trip to visit national parks when the Grand Canyon fall occurred.

Brian Kauffman said his son was discharged from the hospital Saturday and was being driven home. Wyatt and his mom were expected to reach Casselton on Tuesday.

"We're just lucky we're bringing our kid home in a car in the front seat instead of in a box," Brian Kauffman told KPNX.

Niger's coup leaders say they will prosecute deposed President Mohamed Bazoum for 'high treason'

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — Niger's mutinous soldiers said they will prosecute deposed President Mohamed Bazoum for "high treason" and undermining state security, in an announcement hours after the junta said they were open to dialogue with West African nations to resolve the mounting regional crisis.

If found guilty, Bazoum could face the death penalty, according to Niger's penal code.

Spokesman Col. Maj. Amadou Abdramane said on state television Sunday night that the military regime had "gathered the necessary evidence to prosecute before competent national and international authorities the ousted president and his local and foreign accomplices for high treason and for undermining the internal and external security of Niger."

The announcement said high-ranking West African politicians and "their international mentors" have made false allegations and attempted to derail a peaceful solution to the crisis in order to justify a military intervention. It said Bazoum was being charged following his exchanges with these people. The statement did not identify specific Western countries and did not specify a date for the trial.

Bazoum, Niger's democratically elected president, was ousted by members of his presidential guard on July 26 and has since been under house arrest with his wife and son in the presidential compound in the capital, Niamey.

People close to the president as well as those in his ruling party say the family's electricity and water

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have been cut off and they're running out of food. The junta dismissed these reports Sunday night and accused West African politicians and international partners of fueling a disinformation campaign to discredit the junta.

International pressure is growing on the junta to release and reinstate Bazoum. Immediately after the coup, the West African regional bloc ECOWAS gave the regime seven days to return him to power and threatened military force if it did not happen, but that deadline came and went with no action from either side.

Last week, ECOWAS ordered the deployment of a "standby" force, but it's still unclear when or if it would enter the country. The African Union Peace and Security Council is meeting on Monday to discuss Niger's crisis and could overrule the decision if it felt that wider peace and security on the continent was threatened by an intervention.

But as time drags on there's growing uncertainty and mixed messages are mounting.

On Sunday evening, before the military accused Bazoum of treason, a member of the junta's communication team told journalists that the regime had approved talks with ECOWAS, which would take place in the coming days. That same day, a mediation team of Islamic scholars from neighboring Nigeria who had met with the junta on the weekend, said the regime was open to dialogue with ECOWAS.

Previous attempts by ECOWAS to speak with the junta have foundered, with its delegations being barred from entering the country.

The newfound openness to talks could be a result of ECOWAS pressure, including severe economic and travel sanctions that are already taking a toll on the impoverished country's some 25 million people, but it doesn't mean they'll go anywhere, say Sahel experts.

"Let's see what these negotiations actually look like, because it's also in the junta's benefit to in the least entertain talks. That doesn't mean they'll be serious about them," said Aneliese Bernard, a former U.S. State Department official who specialized in African affairs and is now director of Strategic Stabilization Advisors, a risk advisory group.

But while talk of dialogue ensues, so does military mobilization.

In a memo from Senegal's security forces dated Aug. 11, seen by The Associated Press, it ordered the "regroupment" from bases in Senegal on Monday as part of its contribution to the ECOWAS mission in Niger. It was unclear what exactly was ordered to move, or where it was going.

In the weeks since the coup, the junta has entrenched itself in power, appointing a new government and leveraging anti-French sentiment against its former colonial ruler to shore up support among the population, creating a tense environment for locals who oppose the junta as well as many foreigners and journalists.

In a statement Sunday, the board of directors for the Press House, an independent Nigerien organization that protects journalists, said local and international media were being threatened, and intimidated by Nigerien activists who support the junta and it was deeply concerned about the "very difficult climate" they were operating in.

Since the coup, jihadi violence is also rising. Niger was seen by Western nations as one of the last democratic countries in the Sahel region it could partner with to beat back growing jihadi violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. France and the United States and other European countries have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into propping up Niger's military. Since the coup, France and the United States have suspended military operations.

On Sunday, Nigerien security forces were ambushed by fighters believed to be with the Islamic State group who attacked them on a dozen motorcycles, according to a security report for aid groups seen by AP.

This combined with another attack last week claimed by the al-Qaida linked group known as JNIM, signify a new phase of the conflict where groups are trying to consolidate power, and it's largely a consequence of the suspended military operations, said Wassim Nasr, a journalist and senior research fellow at the Soufan Center, told The Associated Press.

"This is due to the halting of cooperation and the military being busy with consolidating their coup in Niamey," he said. It's also a result of cutting communication and dialogue attempts with some jihadi groups, which had been established under Bazoum, he said.

A former jihadi, Boubacar Moussa, told AP that since the coup he's received multiple phone calls from active jihadis saying they have been celebrating the chaos and greater freedom of movement.

Moussa is part of a nationwide program that encourages jihadi fighters to defect and reintegrate into society, however, it's unclear if that program will continue under the military regime. As the situation evolves, he believes jihadis will take advantage of the security gap and launch new attacks.

Thinking of buying a new pair of jeans? Breaking down the cost over time might help you decide

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — For Jake Welch, getting dressed is one big math problem.

The 36-year-old brand director for an advertising firm calculates the cost-per-wear of his wardrobe by highlighting 200 items in a spreadsheet — excluding underwear and socks — and meticulously listing the price he paid for each of them as well as how many times he's worn it. He updates the spreadsheet every night on his computer to determine whether his purchases were worth it — or not.

Lots of people thought Welch was weird when he started doing this 12 years ago, opting to ditch the cheapest items on the sales rack in favor of maximizing the value of his purchases over the span of their lifecycles. But with inflation still a nagging problem, more shoppers are coming around to his way of thinking.

"I was actually onto something versus being a little looney," said Welch of Erda, Utah, who presented his findings last month at a company meeting.

Retailers are taking note of this mindset and shifting their marketing strategy in some cases. Gap's Old Navy is offering shoppers a full refund for uniforms purchased during the upcoming back-to-school season if the clothes don't hold up for a year. Retailers like Kohl's and online shirt retailer Untuckit have recently revamped their marketing campaigns — particularly for the fall — to focus on durability and versatility. American Eagle is touting the "longevity of your most-loved jeans" made of recycled cotton and polyester in an email campaigns to customers.

That means a \$200 classic sweater may end up being a better deal if you plan to wear it every week in comparison to a hot pink dress picked up for \$40 that might be worn only once a month.

"Cost-per-wear is another way that they think about how to combat some of the inflation," said Christie Raymond, Kohl's chief marketing officer. "Is this item going to last? Is it going to really be versatile? For back to school, for example, can my child wear it in a number of different ways?"

Some shoppers are also looking to be more eco-friendly by buying clothes that don't end up in a landfill after being worn a few times.

Still, the cost-per-wear calculation may only make sense for those consumers who can afford to prioritize quality and versatility over price. Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, notes that shoppers with tighter budgets will look at price and may not care whether something will last just as long as it looks good for now.

Indeed, fast-fashion purveyors are still faring well in the face of inflation. Chinese e-commerce retailer Temu, known for deep discounts and coupons, has continued its meteoric rise in the U.S., adding nearly 10 million new daily users since the turn of the year, according to market intelligence firm GWS. Meanwhile, Shein, the ultra-low-price, fast-fashion juggernaut founded in China, has been increasing its daily users from 3.1 million to 4.9 million daily users over the past year, according to GWS.

But there's a growing backlash to the cheap stuff.

Rohan Deuskar, founder and CEO of Stylics, a retail technology firm that powers personalized styling, outfitting and bundling suggestions for 150 retailers online, said he started seeing the trend this past holiday shopping season. He noted the average order was going up, particularly for holiday dresses, while shoppers were buying fewer items. And shoppers were also spending more time engaging with the virtual models that showed different ways to wear the item.

"Shoppers are being more considerate about every purchase and being willing to spend only if they get value — and that no longer just means cheap," Deuskar said. "We're reaching a little bit of an oversatura-

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tion of buying a bunch of stuff. "

According to market research firm Circana's Retail Tracking Service, higher prices are outpacing lower prices over the past 12-month period ending in June. Women's dresses priced \$200 and above grew about twice as fast as those priced under \$50. Sales of men's jeans that were less than \$30 declined, while higher price brands drove growth. Sales of women's jeans priced \$150 and above increased by 7%. And while the market for women's active pants declined 20%, women's active pants priced between \$125 to \$150 increased 19%, according to Circana.

Saunders notes that "price and quality aren't always linked." In fact, some retailers may be using any excuse to sell higher price goods. There's also the timeliness of the fashion item to consider. Shoppers may think about longevity when they look for a coat but not for a skirt or a top.

"People like to refresh or their tastes change," he said.

And cost-per-wear calculations don't factor in weight loss or gain, Saunders added.

Welch said his wardrobe consists of mostly blacks, greys and blues and items that can carry through multiple seasons. Higher inflation has helped him better separate his needs and wants.

"I ask myself a little bit harder: 'Is it something that I absolutely need?'" he said. "Consulting my spreadsheet, how many golf shorts do I really have?"

Welch noted that his formal wear and suits along with dress shirts are among the items that rank the highest in cost-per-wear. He chose a charcoal suit — not a tan version — for his wedding in 2018 that he bought for \$480 at Bonobos. He has worn it 44 times, resulting in a cost-per-wear of \$10.91. Not too bad but ideally he likes to get it down to 50 cents per wear, like the athletic shorts he bought at Outdoor Voices for \$20 and has worn 434 times, according to his spreadsheet he shared.

Kohl's said its marketing campaigns are showing different ways that items can be worn. For example, on the department store's Instagram account, it pairs a white T-shirt and denim shirts in different ways, including a beachy take and a more stylish approach with hoop earrings. Untuckit's fall campaign, "Made for the next journey," focuses on the different ways customers can wear the shirt or the jacket — taking it from the office to night time events.

As for Welch, he said his wife is now staying away from fast-fashion and focusing on quality, though she's not embracing the spreadsheets. And he's delighted that his two girls, ages 3 and seven months, fit with the new math.

"With my first daughter, the cost for use on her dresses and stuff like that have decreased with having another girl," he said. "So if we have a boy, great. But if we have another girl, that's just even more savings."

Far-right populist Javier Milei is the biggest vote-getter in Argentina's presidential primary

By DANIEL POLITI Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Far-right populist Javier Milei rocked Argentina's political establishment Sunday by emerging as the biggest vote-getter in primary elections to choose presidential candidates for the October general election in a nation battered by economic woes.

Milei, an admirer of former U.S. President Donald Trump, says Argentina's Central Bank should be abolished, thinks climate change is a lie, characterizes sex education as a ploy to destroy the family, believes the sale of human organs should be legal and wants to make it easier to own handguns.

Votes were still being counted late Sunday, but analysts agreed that the upstart candidate who gained notoriety — and a rockstar-like following — by angrily ranting against the "political caste" did much better than expected and is a real contender for the presidency in this South American country.

With around 92% of polling locations reporting, Milei had around 30% of the total vote, according to official results. The candidates in the main opposition coalition, United for Change, were at 28% and the current governing coalition, Union for the Homeland, had 27%.

Celebrating in his election headquarters, Milei vowed to bring "an end to the parasitic, corrupt and useless political caste that exists in this country."

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"Today we took the first step toward the reconstruction of Argentina," he said. "A different Argentina is impossible with the same people as always."

Before the election, analysts had warned that a better-than-expected showing for Milei, 52, would likely upset financial markets and lead to a sharp plunge in the value of Argentina's peso amid uncertainty about what economic policies he might implement if he became president.

Though Sunday's voting was officially to pick candidates for various political blocs, it was also viewed as a nationwide poll on where candidates stand with Argentines going into the October election.

Milei, who has been a lawmaker in the lower house of Argentina's Congress since 2021, did not have a competitor in the presidential primary of his Liberty Advances party.

The initial results suggested Argentina has become the latest country in the region where voters are looking to an outsider candidate as a way of expressing anger against traditional politicians.

Discontent is widespread in Argentina, which is struggling with annual inflation over 100%, rising poverty and a rapidly depreciating currency, Milei attracted support by calling for the country to replace the peso with the U.S. dollar.

"I'm very happy, we're looking for a change. We're tired of living like this," Franco Lesertessur, 19, said as he celebrated outside Milei's election headquarters in downtown Buenos Aires. "All the countries that have been dollarized ended up moving forward and stopped having inflation."

In the main opposition coalition, United for Change, voters also appeared to be ready to move more to the right as former Security Minister Patricia Bullrich handily beat a more centrist contender, Buenos Aires Mayor Horacio Rodríguez Larreta.

Bullrich made clear she would work with her competitor ahead of October.

"As Argentines we live with distress, with fear, unable to dream, plan or live a normal life. But today we have reasons to work together, to guide and lead a profound change in Argentina, a change that leaves corruption behind forever, paving the way for austerity," Bullrich said.

The governing coalition, Union for the Homeland, took a beating from voters over the poor state of the economy, finishing in third place for total votes. As expected, Economy Minister Sergio Massa became the coalition's presidential candidate, easily defeating leftist Juan Grabois.

"We have 60 days to turn this election around," Massa told supporters.

But in the big result for Milei, many voters sent a message that they are tired of the two coalitions that have dominated Argentina's political scene for years.

The results "reflect people's fatigue on the political leadership, and the lack of solutions within the spaces that have been in power consecutively," said Mariel Feroni, director of Management and Fit, a political consulting firm.

Feroni said that during the campaigns, the political establishment was "focused on their own group dynamics rather than addressing the actual needs of the people,"

At Milei's electoral headquarters, party leaders were ecstatic while people celebrated outside, expressing optimism that their candidate's support would only grow in the run-up to October.

"I like his ideas about freedom. His ideas don't scare me. People are free to choose what they want," said Orlando Sánchez, 26, a retail worker. "If criminals walk around with guns on their belts, why can't an ordinary citizen have one lawfully and with the proper documentation? People are clearly tired of politics, being constantly lied to."

North Korea's Kim orders sharp increase in missile production, days before US-South Korea drills

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un again toured major munitions factories and ordered a drastic increase in production of missiles and other weapons, state media said Monday, as the South Korean and U.S. militaries announced they will begin major drills next week to hone their joint

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capability against the North's evolving nuclear threats.

Kim's push to produce more weapons also comes as U.S. officials believe Russia's defense minister recently talked with North Korea about selling more weapons to Russia for its war with Ukraine.

The Korean Central News Agency said Kim visited factories producing tactical missiles, mobile launch platforms, armored vehicles and artillery shells on Friday and Saturday. He visited a spate of other munitions factories in early August.

During a stop at the missile factory, Kim set a goal to "drastically boost" production capacity so the facility can mass produce missiles to meet the needs of front-line military units, KCNA said.

"The qualitative level of war preparations depends on the development of the munitions industry and the factory bears a very important responsibility in speeding up the war preparations of the (North) Korean People's Army," Kim said, according to the report.

Visiting other factories, Kim called for building more modern missile launch trucks and said there is an urgent need to boost production of large-caliber multiple rocket launcher shells "at an exponential rate," the report said. Kim also drove a new utility combat armored vehicle, KCNA said.

Kim has been focusing on enlarging his nuclear and missile arsenals since his high-stakes diplomacy with then-President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019. Since the start of 2022, Kim's military has conducted more than 100 missile tests, many of them in the name of warning the U.S. and South Korea over their expansion of joint military training exercises. Many experts say Kim eventually aims to use his modernized weapons arsenals to wrest U.S. concessions, such as sanctions relief, whenever diplomacy resumes with Washington.

North Korea could perform more weapons tests soon as the U.S. and South Korea are set to start their summer military exercises next Monday. North Korea calls the U.S.-South Korean training a practice for an invasion. The allies say they have no intentions of attacking North Korea.

KCNA quoted Kim as saying North Korea must have "an overwhelming military force and get fully prepared for coping with any war" with the power to "surely annihilate" its enemies.

The U.S.-South Korean drills, called Ulchi Freedom Shield, is a computer-simulated command post exercise. During this year's exercise that is scheduled to run through until Aug. 31, the allies said they'll also conduct large-scale field training events, which will reportedly be the largest of their kind in recent years.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson, Lee Sung Joon, told reporters that this year's UFS drills are aimed at further strengthening the allies' response capabilities by performing exercises based on scenarios that reflect North Korea's advancing nuclear and missile capabilities and other regional security situations. Col. Isaac L. Taylor, a spokesperson for the U.S. military, told the same news conference that the drills are designed to be "a tough and realistic exercise."

Earlier this month, the White House said U.S. intelligence officials had determined that Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu spoke to North Korean officials during a visit to Pyongyang last month about increasing the sale of munitions to Moscow for its war in Ukraine.

North Korea has denied American claims that it shipped artillery shells and ammunition to Russia. But the North has publicly supported Russia over the war and hinted at sending workers to help rebuild Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine.

Kim has been trying to beef up ties with China and Russia in the face of U.S.-led pressure campaigns over its nuclear program and pandemic-related economic difficulties.

KCNA said Monday that 200-some hectares (494 acres) of farmland in North Korea's eastern region were flooded because of Tropical Storm Khanun. Kim visited typhoon-hit areas, called for immediate steps to protect crops there and criticized local officials for failing to prevent the farmlands' flooding, the report said.

North Korea is prone to weather-related disasters such as flooding and droughts. Observers say North Korea's food shortage has worsened due to several reasons including draconian pandemic restrictions, unsuccessful attempts to supply grain via state-run facilities and dwindling personal incomes.

Maui officials and scientists warn that after the flames flicker out, toxic particles will remain

By SAM METZ and CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — When flames swept through western Maui, engulfing the town of Lahaina, residents saw toxic fumes spewing into the air as burning homes, pipes and cars combusted, transforming rubber, metal and plastic into poisonous, particulate matter-filled smoke.

Retired mailman and Vietnam veteran Thomas Leonard heard a boom as a propane tank at a nearby home exploded, leaving a cloud that looked like “a gigantic mushroom” in its wake.

Thirty-seven year old Mike Cicchino, who grew up on Maui, said he could tell how close the flames were based on how far away cars sounded as their gas tanks erupted. He and his family sought refuge in the ocean across a knee-high sea wall and as he helped others onto the rocks, his rib cage ached, his eyes were nearly swollen shut and he vomited.

“It was like a war,” Cicchino said.

About 46,000 residents and visitors have flown out of West Maui since the devastation became clear last week, according to the Hawaii Tourism Authority. Officials are now mourning the deaths of more than 90 people and preparing the island, particularly Lahaina, for a long recovery.

In addition to lives lost, property damaged and a culture forever transformed, authorities are worried about returning to some parts of the island where toxic byproducts of the fire likely remain.

Residents of some parts of the island have begun returning home, finding melted cars, flattened homes and burnt elevator shafts rising from ashy lots where apartment buildings once stood. But even in places where the destruction has begun to subside, officials are warning residents that it remains too dangerous to return and Federal Emergency Management Agency officials are surveying the area for additional hazards.

“It is not safe. It is a hazardous area and that’s why experts are here,” Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen said in a news conference Saturday. “We’re not doing anybody any favors by letting them back in there quickly, just so they can get sick.”

Hawaii’s state toxicologist Diana Felton told Hawaii Public Radio that it could take weeks or months to clean up the pollutants.

Officials like Bissen and Felton have taken their cue from scientists who warn that fires — even once extinguished in a particular neighborhood or area — can leave lasting health hazards, including in the air and drinking water.

Such lasting effects could prolong recovery, compound residents’ agony and complicate the return of the island’s tourism-driven economy.

Maui water officials warned Lahaina and Kula residents not to drink running water, which may be contaminated even after boiling, and to only take short, lukewarm showers in well-ventilated rooms to avoid possible chemical vapor exposure.

Though others have returned, some residents, like JP Mayoga, are electing to stay away. Mayoga said on Sunday that he, his wife and two daughters planned to stay at the hotel where he works north of Lahaina because they worry toxic debris now covering Lahaina might negatively impact members of the family with sensitive health.

“It’s safer than it is at home right now,” he said of the hotel.

Unlike factory pollution or forest fires where scientists have a strong grasp about the kind of toxins emitted, fires like the one in Maui can leave a less unpredictable trail of destruction in their wake. As towns like Lahaina burn, propane tanks explode, pipes melt and oil spills.

“When you burn people’s belongings, vehicles and boats, we don’t necessarily have a good understanding of what those chemicals are,” said Professor Andrew Whelton, the director of Purdue University’s Center for Plumbing Safety. “When much of that infrastructure burns, it’s transformed into other materials that are never meant for human contact.”

Whelton said airborne pollutants from smoke often fall to the ground and can require removal by emergency response teams to ensure they aren’t kicked up and inhaled as people return to the burn areas.

Melted pipes can compromise the water supply, a concern reflected in the unsafe water alert issued Friday for upper Kula and Lahaina.

Though these concerns may be less apparent than charred trees and homes, the invisible hazards can often extend beyond burned areas to wherever smoke plumes have traveled.

"If you go back into some zones even where maybe all the fires have been put out, you can then be really exposed. If there's dust and debris kicked up, you can get it in your eyes, on your hands or you can inhale it," Whelton added, imploring people to wear protective gear, cover their arms and legs and follow evacuation orders.

Landslide at Myanmar jade mine leaves more than 30 people missing, rescue official says

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A landslide at a jade mine in northern Myanmar left more than 30 people missing, and a search and rescue operation was underway on Monday, a rescue official said.

The incident occurred in Hpakant, a remote mountainous town in Kachin state about 950 kilometers (600 miles) north of Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon. The area is the epicenter of the world's biggest and most lucrative jade mines.

The leader of a local rescue team coordinating search efforts told The Associated Press on Monday that more than 30 miners who were digging for jade were swept into a lake when the landslide hit near Manna village around 3:30 p.m. on Sunday. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared being arrested by the military.

Earth and debris from several mines near the village slid 304 meters (about 1,000 feet) down a cliff into the lake below and struck the miners on the way, he said.

He said 34 people were confirmed missing and local rescue teams were searching the lake on Monday. Eight miners were injured and taken to a local hospital on Sunday, he said.

A miner who asked not to be identified because he feared for his safety said three of his colleagues who were digging for jade were carried down into the lake by the landslide. He said most of the victims were men.

Similar accidents usually occur on a smaller scale and do not get much attention.

The victims are usually independent miners who settle near giant mounds of discarded earth that have been excavated by heavy machinery used by mining companies. They scavenge for bits of jade and usually work and live in abandoned mining pits at the base of the unstable mounds of earth. Most of the scavengers are unregistered migrants from other areas.

In July 2020, at least 162 people died in a landslide in the same area, while a November 2015 accident left 113 dead.

Human rights activists say jade mining is an important source of revenue for Myanmar's military-installed government. Opponents of army rule advocate sanctions and boycotts to reduce jade sales.

The mines are also a main source of revenue for the Kachin Independence Army, an ethnic armed group that is based in Kachin state and has been fighting for decades against the central government for greater autonomy.

A ceasefire in the region has been disrupted since the military seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The region is now embroiled in an armed conflict between the military and the Kachin Independence Army that has driven many civilians into refugee camps and nearby townships.

A central Kansas police force comes under constitutional criticism after raiding a newspaper

By JOHN HANNA and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

MARION, Kan. (AP) — A small central Kansas police department is facing a torrent of criticism for raiding a local newspaper's office and the home of its owner and publisher, seizing computers and cellphones, and, in the publisher's view, stressing his 98-year-old mother enough to cause her weekend death.

Several press freedom watchdogs condemned the Marion Police Department's actions as a blatant violation of the U.S. Constitution's protection for a free press. The Marion County Record's editor and publisher, Eric Meyer, worked with his staff Sunday to reconstruct stories, ads and other materials for its next edition Wednesday, even as he took time in the afternoon to provide a local funeral home with information about his mother, Joan, the paper's co-owner.

A search warrant tied Friday morning raids, led by Marion Police Chief Gideon Cody, to a dispute between the newspaper and a local restaurant owner, Kari Newell. She is accusing the newspaper of invading her privacy and illegally accessing information about her and her driving record and suggested that the newspaper targeted her after she threw Meyer and a reporter out of restaurant during a political event.

While Meyer saw Newell's complaints — which he said were untrue — as prompting the raids, he also believes the newspaper's aggressive coverage of local politics and issues played a role. He said the newspaper was examining Cody's past work with the Kansas City, Missouri, police as well.

"This is the type of stuff that, you know, that Vladimir Putin does, that Third World dictators do," Meyer said during an interview in his office. "This is Gestapo tactics from World War II."

Cody said Sunday that the raid was legal and tied to an investigation.

The raids occurred in a town of about 1,900 people, nestled among rolling prairie hills, about 150 miles (241 kilometers) southwest of Kansas City, making the small weekly newspaper the latest to find itself in the headlines and possibly targeted for its reporting.

Last year in New Hampshire, the publisher of a weekly newspaper accused the state attorney general's office of government overreach after she was arrested for allegedly publishing advertisements for local races without properly marking them as political advertising. In Las Vegas, former Democratic elected official Robert Telles is scheduled to face trial in November for allegedly fatally stabbing Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German after German wrote articles critical of Telles and his managerial conduct.

Meyer said that on Friday, one Record reporter suffered an injury to a finger when Cody wrested her cellphone out of her hand, according to the report. The newspaper's surveillance video showed officers reading that reporter her rights while Cody watched, though she wasn't arrested or detained. Newspaper employees were hustled out of the building while the search continued for more than 90 minutes, according to the footage.

Meanwhile, Meyer said, police simultaneously raided his home, seizing computers, his cellphone and the home's internet router.

But as Meyer fielded messages from reporters and editors as far away as London and reviewed footage from the newsroom's surveillance camera, Newell was receiving death threats from as far away, she said. She said the Record engages in "tabloid trash reporting" and was trying to hush her up.

"I fully believe that the intent was to do harm and merely tarnish my reputation, and I think if had it been left at that, I don't think that it would have blown up as big as it was," Newell said in a telephone interview.

Newell said she threw Meyer and the Record reporter out of the event for Republican U.S. Rep. Jake LaTurner at the request of others who are upset with the "toxic" newspaper. On the town's main street, one storefront included a handmade "Support Marion PD" sign.

The police chief and other officials also attended and were acknowledged at the reception, and the Marion Police Department highlighted the event on its Facebook page.

LaTurner's office did not immediately return phone messages left Sunday at his Washington and district offices seeking comment.

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Newell said she believes the newspaper violated the law to get her personal information as it checked on the status of her driver's license following a 2008 drunken driving conviction and other driving violations.

The newspaper countered that it received that information unsolicited, which it verified through public online records. It eventually decided not to run a story because it wasn't sure the source who supplied it had obtained it legally. But the newspaper did run a story on the city council meeting, in which Newell herself confirmed she'd had a DUI conviction and that she had continued to drive even after her license was suspended.

A two-page search warrant, signed by a local judge, lists Newell as the victim of alleged crimes by the newspaper. When the newspaper asked for a copy of the probable cause affidavit required by law to issue a search warrant, the district court issued a signed statement saying no such affidavit was on file, the Record reported.

Cody, the police chief, defended the raid on Sunday, saying in an email to The Associated Press that while federal law usually requires a subpoena — not just a search warrant — to raid a newsroom, there is an exception "when there is reason to believe the journalist is taking part in the underlying wrongdoing."

Cody did not give details about what that alleged wrongdoing entailed.

Cody, who was hired in late April as Marion's police chief after serving 24 years in the Kansas City police, did not respond to questions about whether police filed a probable cause affidavit for the search warrant. He also did not answer questions about how police believe Newell was victimized.

Press freedom and civil rights organizations said that police, the local prosecutor's office and the judge who signed off on the search warrant overstepped their authority.

"It seems like one of the most aggressive police raids of a news organization or entity in quite some time," said Sharon Brett, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas, adding that it seemed "quite an alarming abuse of authority."

Seth Stern, director of advocacy for Freedom of the Press Foundation, said in a statement that the raid appeared to have violated federal law, the First Amendment, "and basic human decency."

"The anti-press rhetoric that's become so pervasive in this country has become more than just talk and is creating a dangerous environment for journalists trying to do their jobs," Stern said.

Meyer said he has been flooded with offers of help from press freedom groups and other news organizations. But he said what he and his staff need is more hours in the day to get their next edition put together.

Both he and Newell are contemplating lawsuits — Newell against the newspaper and Meyer against the public officials who staged the raid.

As for the criticism of the raid as a violation of First Amendment rights, Newell said her privacy rights were violated, and they are "just as important as anybody else's."

The Taliban are entrenched in Afghanistan after 2 years of rule. Women and girls pay the price

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Taliban have settled in as rulers of Afghanistan, two years after they seized power as U.S. and NATO forces withdrew from the country following two decades of war.

The Taliban face no significant opposition that could topple them. They have avoided internal divisions by falling in line behind their ideologically unbending leader. They have kept a struggling economy afloat, in part by holding investment talks with capital-rich regional countries, even as the international community withholds formal recognition. They have improved domestic security through crackdowns on armed groups such as the Islamic State, and say they are fighting corruption and opium production.

But it's their slew of bans on Afghan girls and women that dominated the Taliban's second year in charge. They barred them from parks, gyms, universities, and jobs at nongovernmental groups and the United Nations — all in the space of a few months — allegedly because they weren't wearing proper hijab — the Islamic head covering — or violated gender segregation rules. These orders followed a previous ban, issued in the first year of Taliban rule, on girls going to school beyond sixth grade.

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Here is a closer look at Taliban rule and where they are headed.

WHY DID THEY EXCLUDE WOMEN FROM HIGHER EDUCATION, MOST JOBS AND PUBLIC SPACES?

The Taliban say they are committed to implementing their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia, in Afghanistan. This leaves no space for anything they think is foreign or secular, such as women working or studying. It's what drove them in the late 1990s, when they first seized power in Afghanistan, and it propels them now, ever since they took control again on Aug. 15, 2021.

Their supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has praised the changes imposed since the takeover, claiming life improved for Afghan women after foreign troops left and the hijab became mandatory again.

WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE TO THESE BANS?

Foreign governments, rights groups, and global bodies condemned the restrictions. The U.N. said they were a major obstacle to the Taliban gaining international recognition as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Overseas aid is drying up as major donors stop their funding, pulled in different directions by other crises and worried their money might fall into Taliban hands.

The lack of funds, as well as the exclusion of Afghan women from delivering essential humanitarian services, is hitting the population hard, pushing more people into poverty.

WHAT ARE LIVING CONDITIONS LIKE IN AFGHANISTAN?

Nearly 80% of the previous, Western-backed Afghan government's budget came from the international community. That money — now largely cut off — financed hospitals, schools, factories and government ministries. The COVID-19 pandemic, medical shortages, climate change and malnutrition have made life more desperate for Afghans. Aid agencies have stepped into the breach to provide basic services like health care.

Afghanistan is struggling with its third consecutive year of drought-like conditions, the ongoing collapse in families' income, and restrictions on international banking. It's also still suffering from decades of war and natural disasters.

HOW IS THE ECONOMY DOING?

The World Bank said last month that the local currency, the afghani, gained value against major currencies. Customers can withdraw more money from individual deposits made before August 2021 and most civil servants are being paid. The World Bank described revenue collection as "healthy" and said most basic items remained available, although demand is low.

The Taliban have held investment talks with countries in the region, including China and Kazakhstan. They want sanctions removed and billions of dollars in frozen funds to be released, saying these measures will alleviate the suffering of Afghans. But the international community will only take such steps once the Taliban take certain actions, including lifting restrictions on women and girls.

HOW LIKELY ARE THE TALIBAN TO CHANGE DIRECTION?

It's largely up to the Taliban leader, Akhundzada. The cleric counts like-minded government ministers and Islamic scholars among his circle. He is behind the decrees on women and girls. His edicts, framed in the language of Islamic law, are absolute. The bans will only be lifted if Akhundzada orders it. Some Taliban figures have spoken out against the way decisions are made, and there has been disagreement about the bans on women and girls. But the Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid slammed these reports as propaganda.

"The secret of their success is that they are united," Abdul Salam Zaeef, who served as the Taliban envoy to Pakistan when they ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s, said. "If someone expresses his opinion or his thoughts, it doesn't mean someone is against the leadership or will go to another side," said Zaeef who spent several years at the Guantanamo Bay detention center after the 2001 U.S. invasion. "Disagreements are put in front of the emir (Akhundzada) and he decides. They follow his word."

WHAT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION?

Aid officials say the Taliban view recognition as an entitlement, not something to be negotiated. The officials also cite high-level meetings with powerful states like China and Russia as signs that the Taliban are building bilateral relations in their own way. Qatar's prime minister met Akhundzada in the southwestern

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The two victims, Michael Corey Jenkins and Eddie Terrell Parker, were targeted because a white neighbor complained that two Black men were staying at the home with a white woman, court documents show.

Parker was a childhood friend of the homeowner, Kristi Walley. She's been paralyzed since she was 15, and Parker was helping care for her.

"He's a blessing. Every time I've needed him he's been here," Walley said in a February interview. "There were times I've been living here by myself and I didn't know what I was going to do."

Parker and Jenkins have left Mississippi and aren't sure they will ever return to the state for an extended period. They took solace that at least one part of the justice system appears to have worked.

"With a little fight, with a lot of fight, you can come out with the truth," Parker said a day after the guilty pleas were announced. "And the truth always prevails over any lie or story you make up."

Jenkins still has difficulty speaking because of his injuries. The gunshot lacerated his tongue and broke his jaw before exiting his neck.

"As far as justice, I knew we were going to get it," Jenkins said. "But I thought it was maybe going to take longer."

After the officers pleaded guilty to the federal charges, Kristen Clarke, who heads the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, said they fomented distrust within the community they were supposed to serve. Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch said the abuse of power would not be tolerated.

Prominent Hong Kong democracy activists partially win bid to quash convictions over 2019 protest

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Seven of Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy advocates had part of their convictions quashed Monday over their roles in one of the biggest pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Jimmy Lai, founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper; Martin Lee, the founding chairman of the city's Democratic Party; and five former pro-democracy lawmakers, including barrister Margaret Ng, had been found guilty of organizing and participating an unauthorized assembly.

Lai, Lee Cheuk-yan, Leung Kwok-hung and Cyd Ho were jailed between eight and 18 months. Martin Lee, an octogenarian nicknamed the city's "Father of Democracy," Ng and Albert Ho were given suspended jail sentences.

Their convictions two years ago and their sentences were widely seen as another blow to the city's flagging democracy movement under an unprecedented crackdown by Beijing and Hong Kong authorities.

Judge Andrew Macrae said he and other judges of the Court of Appeal unanimously quashed their convictions over the charge of organizing an unauthorized assembly. But their convictions over taking part in an unauthorized assembly were upheld.

Hence, the four activists who served their jail terms in prison have had part of their sentences in the case quashed, he said.

Macrae and his colleagues said in a written judgment that an organizer must take some responsibility for or do something active to plan and arrange an action.

"An inference that because they were at the front of the procession, they must have organized it ... is not a realistic or suitable substitute for evidence that they were involved in its organization," the judgment said.

All appellants have served out their sentences for this case. But Lai, Leung, Ho and Lee Cheuk-yan remained in custody as they were also charged under a national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020 following the massive protests.

Ng, Martin Lee, Lee Cheuk-yan and Ho were in the courtroom to hear the judges' decision. Ho and Lee Cheuk-yan appeared tanned and spirited.

After the ruling, Ng told reporters at the entrance of the court building that they would have to study the judgment before making further comments and actions.

The charges involved a rally in August 2019 that drew an estimated 1.7 million people onto Hong Kong's

streets to call for greater police accountability and democracy. The march was relatively peaceful, compared to other protests that often morphed into violent clashes between police and protesters that year.

The 2019 movement was the city's most concerted challenge to the Hong Kong government since the former British colony returned to China's rule in 1997.

The pro-democracy movement waned with the arrests and exiles of democracy activists, the COVID-19 pandemic and the national security law.

Ecuador was calm and peaceful. Now hitmen, kidnappers and robbers walk the streets

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP) — Belen Diaz was walking home from college one evening when a motorcycle carrying two men made a menacing U-turn.

Terrified that she was about to be robbed for the eighth time in three years, the teaching student banged on a cab window until the driver drove her home. Diaz got away safe, but there was an unrelated fatal shooting the next day outside her gated community of two-story homes on the edge of the Ecuadorian port city of Guayaquil.

Ecuador was one of the calmest countries in Latin America until about three years ago. Today, criminals prowl relatively wealthy and working-class neighborhoods alike: professional hitmen, kidnappers, extortionists and thousands of thieves and robbers. Mexican and Colombian cartels have settled into coastal cities like Guayaquil and grabbed chunks of the trade shipping hundreds of millions of dollars of cocaine from neighboring Colombia and Peru to countries overseas.

One of the candidates in a special Aug. 20 presidential election had a famously tough stance on organized crime and corruption. Fernando Villavicencio was fatally shot in broad daylight Wednesday despite a security detail that included police and bodyguards.

"No one is safe from the insecurity in the country," Anthony Garcia, who packs shrimp, said after the Villavicencio assassination. "We are at the hands of drug trafficking, of evil in its entirety."

The country's National Police tallied 3,568 violent deaths in the first six months of this year, far more than the 2,042 reported during the same period in 2022. That year ended with 4,600 violent deaths, the country's highest in history and double the total in 2021.

The causes are complex. All, though, revolve around cocaine.

Cartel-aided gangs are battling for control of the streets, prisons and drug routes to the Pacific. Dwindling state coffers, political infighting, corruption and soaring debts created funding gaps in social and law-enforcement programs. The COVID-19 pandemic turned hungry children and unemployed adults into easy recruits for criminal groups.

Criminals are increasingly demanding payments from businesses and terming the fee a "vacuna" — vaccine — as in immunity from crime.

"COVID came and went and left us vaccines, but a different type of vaccines," said Holbach Muñeton, president of the National Federation of Provincial Chambers of Tourism of Ecuador.

Shopping and dining is a different experience these days. Convenience stores, auto part shops and pharmacies have floor-to-ceiling metal bars that prevent customers from entering from the sidewalk. Malls have metal detectors at the entrances. The bars and restaurants that survived the pandemic have fewer tables and close early.

Reports of robberies have soared. Data from the National Police show 31,485 cases were reported last year, about 11,000 more than in 2020.

Garcia, the 26-year-old shrimp packer, has been robbed twice this year. Thieves in Guayaquil stole his phone one time during his morning commute. Another time, he was robbed after he went out to have a couple of drinks.

Restaurant owner Carlos Barrezueta said there are spots in Guayaquil where sales have dropped to a tenth of what they once were.

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Ecuadorian authorities attribute the unprecedented violence to a power vacuum triggered by the killing in December 2020 of Jorge Zambrano, alias "Rasquiña" or "JL," the leader of Los Choneros. Founded in the 1990s, the group is the country's largest and most feared gang. Members carry out contract killings, run extortion operations, move and sell drugs, and are the law inside prisons.

Los Choneros and the similar groups Los Lobos and Los Tiguerones have been fighting over territory and control, including within detention facilities, where at least 400 inmates have died since 2021. The gangs have links to cartels from Colombia and Mexico, including the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation groups.

"Since the year 2000, we had already seen the Mexican cartels here," said Rob Peralta, a former member of a National Police intelligence unit. "But definitely, in recent years, these criminal groups have garnered more influence here through local gangs, which they empowered, and today they have more weapons than the police themselves."

Outgunned, unprepared and underpaid, law-enforcement officers don't dare enter parts of crime-ridden neighborhoods or the wings of some prisons, where dismembered bodies, as well as high-caliber weapons, grenades, belt feeders and drugs, have been found when the government deploys the military and additional police after vicious riots.

Guayaquil is the epicenter of violence. About a third of this year's violent deaths took place in Ecuador's second-largest city, home to the country's main commercial port and a large prison complex.

Built on flat land at the end of the Andes, the city stretches along the brown Amazonian waters of the Guayas River, with only a few tall buildings, and homes and small businesses such as pharmacies dominating the landscape.

The province of Guayas, which includes Guayaquil, is the country's most populous with about 4.5 million people. In the first half of the year, the province saw 976 business robberies, according to National Police data, just 12 short of last year's total.

In Socio Vivienda, a sprawling public housing neighborhood, shop owners, pedestrians, police — everyone — talks in whispers. Their eyes bounce around as if someone is watching them 24/7.

The neighborhood's police station is surrounded by bags of dirt placed as protection after a shootout earlier this year. Save for a handful of officers chatting by the door, the building looks abandoned.

Police officers across the country walk around with outdated bulletproof vests, and a shortage of ammunition was not addressed until recently. People in some neighborhoods have pitched in to buy gasoline for police cars.

Muñeton said the tourism industry in Guayaquil recently arranged for a private university to let police officers use its dorms because their barracks have leaking roofs and lack air conditioning.

Stray bullets are now everyone's concern. One pierced the door of the home of 12-year-old Daniel Mosquera on July 19 and hit him in the back. His mother, Caterina Aguirre, said he lost a kidney and the ability to move from the waist down.

But unlike many mothers of gun violence victims in other countries, Aguirre, 29, said she is not demanding punishment for the perpetrators. She prefers "divine justice" and only wants better health care for her son. That's common even among the nonreligious, as nobody wants to attract additional attention.

Indeed, fear and distrust have tinged the warmth and politeness characteristic of Ecuadorian society.

People constantly look behind their backs, and some, like Diaz, have come up with elaborate plans to avoid being victimized.

Diaz, who is studying to one day become a college professor, carries two cellphones. She never uses one of them, but has downloaded apps to make it look like her everyday phone. She plans to hand thieves that one next time she is robbed. She does not go out in the evenings or dare download dating apps.

"We don't know who we're friends with anymore," Diaz, 32, said. "I'm going to stay single forever. I can't go dating on these weird apps. I mean, imagine, they could kidnap me! Life is not what it used to be."

More states expect schools to keep trans girls off girls teams as K-12 classes resume

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — As children across the U.S. head back to classes and practices for fall sports, four more states are expecting their K-12 schools to keep transgender girls off their girls teams.

Kansas, North Dakota and Wyoming had new laws in place restricting transgender athletes before classes resumed, and a Missouri law takes effect at the end of this month, bringing the number of states with restrictions to 23.

North Carolina could enact a ban later this month, and Ohio could follow in the fall. A few laws, including ones in Arizona and West Virginia, are on hold because of federal lawsuits.

This year's new restrictions are part of a larger wave of legislation across the U.S. against transgender rights. Republican legislators in some states have banned gender-affirming care for minors, restricted transgender people's use of school and public restrooms, limited what public schools can teach about gender and sexuality and barred schools from requiring the use of a transgender student's preferred pronouns.

The sports laws have been imposed since 2020, and most are aimed at transgender girls. A majority cover less formal intramural contests organized within a single school's student body as well as contests among different schools, and some restrict transgender boys as well. Almost all say other students and their parents can sue schools that don't enforce the restrictions.

Lawmakers expect a child's earliest birth certificate to determine which sports teams they can join. Principals and coaches are expected to be the enforcers.

"Those are uncomfortable conversations," said Jeanne Woodbury, interim executive director of the LG-BGT+ rights group Equality Arizona. "Everyone is going through that process."

She added: "For trans kids, it's never been a walk in the park, but now they have this law to contend with on top of everything else."

In Oklahoma, where a law has been in place since 2022, athletes or their parents must file an annual affidavit "acknowledging the biological sex of the student at birth."

Kansas and other states expect school officials to review a child's earliest birth certificate if questions arise about an athlete's eligibility.

Bill Faflick, executive director of the Kansas State High School Activities Association, said his state's law has been greeted by a "matter of fact" acceptance in rules seminars for administrators and coaches.

"It has not been met with any resistance and has not been met with any outpouring of support or opposition, one way or the other," Faflick said.

Even before the laws against transgender girls on girls teams passed, some states largely blocked the practice by handling questions or concerns on a case-by-case level at the school or state athletic association level.

Supporters of the restrictions argue that they're protecting fair competition and scholarship opportunities for young women that took decades to win. They say that well before puberty, boys have physical advantages over girls in speed, strength and lung capacity.

"It's a puzzlement to me that more people aren't feeling sympathy for the girls whose sports careers are ruined," said Tom Horne, the elected Republican state school superintendent in Arizona, who is defending his state's law in federal court.

Doctors, parents, and LGBTQ+ rights advocates counter that boys' physical advantages come with a surge in testosterone during puberty — changes gender-affirming care blocks.

Critics also argue that transgender athletes are so few that schools and associations governing school sports can handle their individual cases without a state law.

For example, in Kansas, the State High School Activities Association recorded 11 transgender athletes during the 2022-23 school year, and three were trans girls. Before Florida's law took effect in 2021, its High School Athletic Association had cleared 13 transgender students to play in the previous eight years.

Becky Pepper-Jackson appeared to be the only transgender girl seeking to play girls' sports in West

Virginia in 2021 when the then-11-year-old and her mother, Heather Jackson, sued the state over its law. Because of their lawsuit, the West Virginia law is on hold, and Becky, now a 13-year-old entering eighth grade, threw the discus and the shot put in seven track meets this spring.

The state is trying to persuade a federal appeals court to let it enforce its law, and in a filing last month, it cited the longer distances Becky threw this year as a reason. The state said any time another girl finished behind Becky in either event — more than 180 times — the other athlete had been unfairly “displaced.”

Jackson said the state knows her daughter only “on paper,” and Becky improved by training relentlessly at home with her own equipment.

“As a parent, all we want for our children is for them to be successful and happy, period,” Jackson told The Associated Press. “That should be an opportunity for everybody, every time, everywhere in this country.”

Educators and LGBTQ+ rights advocates argue that transgender kids aren’t the only athletes likely to feel the effects of the laws. Some worry that parents will challenge the right to play of cisgendered girls who are taller or more muscular than their peers — or just a whole lot better.

One of athletes who sued Idaho over its 2020 law was a 17-year-old cisgendered girl, listed only as Jane Doe. The lawsuit said she had an “athletic build” and wanted to avoid “invasive or uncomfortable” gender tests.

“It’s going to create this feeling in some people that, ‘I can go question someone’s gender, and it’s my right to do that,’” said G.A. Buie, executive director of United School Administrators of Kansas, an association representing public school leaders.

Parents, doctors and LGBTQ+ rights advocates say restrictions on transgender athletes are less about sports and more about trying to make transgender kids disappear from society.

“What lawmakers fail to understand is that transgender people, nonbinary people, intersex people, have always been here,” said Anne Lieberman, policy and programs director for Athlete Ally, a group that advocates for transgender athletes. “Unless it is known that a student is trans, it is very hard to keep somebody from playing sports.”

How Fani Willis oversaw what might be the most sprawling legal case against Donald Trump

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Long before the FBI began investigating Donald Trump’s hoarding of classified documents or Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed a special prosecutor to probe the former president, Fani Willis was at work.

Just one month after Trump’s infamous January 2021 phone call to suggest Georgia’s secretary of state could overturn his election loss, the Fulton County district attorney announced she was looking into possible illegal “attempts to influence” the results in what has become one of America’s premier political battlegrounds. As she built her case, Willis called a parade of high-profile witnesses before a special grand jury, presiding over an investigation that was so public it seemed she would become the first prosecutor in U.S. history to indict a former president.

She instead looks poised to become the third person to levy criminal charges against Trump, leapfrogged by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith. But the indictment that Willis may bring as soon as this week could be the most sprawling case against Trump in response to his desperate efforts to remain in power after he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. And some legal experts say it could be one of the more potent cases against Trump.

“I think people are going to be surprised at the level of preparedness and the level of sophistication of the prosecution,” said Clint Rucker, who was a prosecutor in Fulton County for more than 25 years before leaving in 2021. “That office is not some small backwoods country hick organization that fumbles the ball and doesn’t know how to do its job.”

Willis has not confirmed that an indictment will come this week, though her previous comments and security preparations around the Fulton County courthouse suggest that action could be imminent. Trump

Afghan city of Kandahar in June, the first-such publicly known meeting between the supreme leader and a foreign official.

Even though the Taliban are officially isolated on the global stage, they appear to have enough interactions and engagement for ties with countries to inch toward normalization. Cooperation with the Taliban on narcotics, refugees and counter-terrorism is of interest globally, including to the West. Countries like China, Russia and neighboring Pakistan want an end to sanctions.

"The political interactions are such that no country in the region is thinking of bringing Afghanistan under their power or control," said Zaeef. He said the Taliban's foreign outreach is hampered by blacklists preventing officials from traveling, and by lacking common ground with the rest of the world.

WHAT OPPOSITION IS THERE TO THE TALIBAN?

There's no armed or political opposition with enough domestic or foreign support to topple the Taliban. A fighting force resisting Taliban rule from the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul is being violently purged. Public protests are rare.

The Islamic State has struck high-profile targets in deadly bombings, including two government ministries, but the militants lack fighters, money and other resources to wage a major offensive against the Taliban.

Former Mississippi officers expected to plead guilty to state charges for racist assault

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press/Report for America

BRANDON, Miss. (AP) — Six former Mississippi law officers are expected to plead guilty to state charges on Monday for torturing two Black men in a racist assault after recently admitting their guilt in a connected federal civil rights case.

Prosecutors say the officers, who are all white, nicknamed themselves the "Goon Squad" because of their willingness to use excessive force and cover it up, including the attack that ended with a victim shot in the mouth.

In January, the officers entered a house without a warrant and handcuffed and assaulted the two men with stun guns, a sex toy and other objects. The officers mocked them with racial slurs throughout the 90-minute torture session. They then devised a cover-up that included planting drugs and a gun on one of the men, which could have sent him to prison for years.

The officers are expected to plead guilty to state charges including home invasion, obstruction of justice and conspiracy to hinder prosecution, as well as aggravated assault for the officer who pulled the trigger.

Each of the men reached individual plea agreements that include prison sentences ranging from five to 30 years, court records show. Time served for the state charges will run concurrently with the sentences they are scheduled to receive in federal court in November following their pleas on Aug. 3.

The men include five former Rankin County sheriff's deputies including Brett McAlpin, Hunter Elward, Christian Dedmon, Jeffrey Middleton and Daniel Opdyke, and a police officer from the city of Richland, Joshua Hartfield.

Elward admitted he shoved a gun into Jenkins's mouth and pulled the trigger in a "mock execution" that went awry.

After the brazen acts of police violence in Rankin County came to light, some residents pointed to a police culture they said gave officers carte blanche to abuse their power.

The civil rights charges followed an investigation by The Associated Press linking some of the officers to at least four violent encounters with Black men since 2019, which left two dead and another with lasting injuries. The Justice Department launched a civil rights probe into the case in February.

Rankin County's majority-white suburbs have been one of several destinations for white flight out of the capital, Jackson, which is home to one of the highest percentages of Black residents of any major U.S. city.

The officers warned Jenkins and Parker to "go back to Jackson or 'their side' of the Pearl River," the documents say.

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has stepped up his criticism of Willis in advance of the expected charges, calling the 52-year-old Black woman "a young woman, a young racist in Atlanta."

Willis has long declined to comment on Trump's insults. But with his campaign running a vicious attack ad last week, she emailed her staff to warn that it included "derogatory and false information" about her and instructed them not to react publicly.

"You may not comment in any way on the ad or any of the negativity that may be expressed against me, your colleagues, this office in coming days, weeks or months," she wrote. "We have no personal feelings against those we investigate or prosecute and we should not express any. This is business, it will never be personal."

Willis has led plenty of prominent prosecutions, but nothing that compares to indicting a former president, particularly one who fights his perceived enemies with the intensity of Trump. She is widely expected to use Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations, or RICO, law to charge not only the former president but also a collection of his allies for alleged participation in a wide-ranging conspiracy.

Some people who end up facing charges may challenge the indictment based on the fact that they were compelled to testify before the special grand jury in an investigation in which they ended up being a target. In Georgia and in the federal system, a grand jury that indicts people cannot force the testimony of a target. But the special grand jury was an investigative tool and lacked the power to indict.

Willis spent most of her career as an assistant district attorney in Fulton County and is known by both her colleagues and defense attorneys to be a tremendously talented litigator with a gift for connecting with juries. A few years after leaving that office, she returned as its leader in January 2021 after winning a bitter Democratic primary fight to oust her predecessor and former mentor.

Now a divorced mother of two grown daughters, Willis was raised mostly in Washington by her father, a defense attorney who she has said was a Black Panther. She graduated from Howard University and from Emory University School of Law four years later, choosing to stay on in Atlanta to practice law.

"She's really a tough-on-crime liberal, which is kind of a rare bird these days, but I think that's her brand," said Georgia State University law professor Anthony Michael Kreis.

Some critics say she overuses gang and RICO laws, unnecessarily complicating cases that could otherwise be tried in less time with fewer resources, just to get the enhanced penalties those statutes carry. Devin Franklin, an attorney for the Southern Center for Human Rights who spent 12 years in the Fulton County public defender's office before leaving last year, said using those laws drives a "narrative of violence in Atlanta that's not true, that's not necessarily reflected in the data" and has a tendency to "sensationalize the cases."

It is also taking too long for people to be indicted after they've been arrested, he said, leaving them languishing in terrible conditions at the county jail, which is currently under federal investigation. People are left "in a position where they can't force a trial, they can't plead out and if they have a bond they can't pay, they're effectively stuck in the Fulton County system with no legitimate recourse," Franklin said. To illustrate the problem, he pointed to the death earlier this month of a 40-year-old man who was arrested on a second-degree burglary charge in October and was being held on \$3,000 bond.

Of the 3,571 people in custody in Fulton County on Friday, 1,683, or 47%, had not yet been indicted. Franklin suggested that Willis' office should move more quickly to indict people facing serious charges. For lower-level felony charges, he said, her office could proceed by "accusation," which doesn't require a formal indictment.

Trump has recently called Atlanta a "crime-ridden" city where "people are afraid to walk outside." While it's true that Atlanta, like most other major cities, saw a spike in violent crime in recent years, those levels have improved significantly. As of Aug. 5, homicides were down 25%, rapes had dropped by 56% and aggravated assaults had decreased by 22% compared with the same time last year, according to Atlanta police data.

Willis has said she likes the RICO statute because it allows prosecutors to paint a more complete picture of the alleged illegal activity.

Her most prominent case as an assistant district attorney was a RICO prosecution against a group of

Atlanta public school educators accused in a scheme to inflate students' standardized test scores. After a seven-month trial, a jury in April 2015 convicted 11 of them on the racketeering charge.

Since becoming district attorney, she has brought several RICO cases, some against well-known rappers. The first of those cases to go to trial has been tied up in jury selection since January and is expected to last six to nine months once testimony gets underway.

Gerald Griggs, president of the Georgia NAACP and an Atlanta defense attorney who represented an educator in the test cheating case, said he doesn't always agree with Willis' use of the RICO law but does think it's appropriate "if there was a scheme to interfere in the election and numerous actors were involved." But he thinks the investigation has dragged on far too long and that an unwieldy RICO indictment that scoops up too many people risks causing an undue strain on the overburdened court system.

"Charge the top individuals that did it," he said. "Maybe pass out immunity deals to everyone else to testify. Let's get the top 10, then let's move forward."

Willis has urged patience from the beginning of her investigation and is fond of saying she doesn't try "skinny cases," meaning she likes to have lots of evidence. And Rucker, her former colleague, said he's not surprised the investigation has stretched on so long, saying the two of them worked every day for almost two years to prepare for the school cheating case.

While she's likely to let her hand-picked group of prosecutors handle the trial, there's no question she's calling the shots, Rucker said. With a case of this magnitude, she would have required those on her team to gather and digest an enormous amount of information and would have grilled them to make sure there were no holes, he said.

"When she says stuff like, 'We're ready to go,' that's not being braggadocious," Rucker said. "It's her saying pretty much to anybody who's interested, 'Look, we're ready.'"

A central Kansas police force sparked a firestorm by raiding a newspaper and the publisher's home

By JOHN HANNA and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

MARION, Kan. (AP) — A small central Kansas police department is facing a torrent of criticism for raiding a local newspaper's office and the home of its owner and publisher, seizing computers and cellphones, and, in the publisher's view, stressing his 98-year-old mother enough to cause her weekend death.

Several press freedom watchdogs condemned the Marion Police Department's actions as a blatant violation of the U.S. Constitution's protection for a free press. The Marion County Record's editor and publisher, Eric Meyer, worked with his staff Sunday to reconstruct stories, ads and other materials for its next edition Wednesday, even as he took time in the afternoon to provide a local funeral home with information about his mother, Joan, the paper's co-owner.

A search warrant tied Friday morning raids, led by Marion Police Chief Gideon Cody, to a dispute between the newspaper and a local restaurant owner, Kari Newell. She is accusing the newspaper of invading her privacy and illegally accessing information about her and her driving record and suggested that the newspaper targeted her after she threw Meyer and a reporter out of restaurant during a political event.

While Meyer saw Newell's complaints — which he said were untrue — as prompting the raids, he also believes the newspaper's aggressive coverage of local politics and issues played a role. He said the newspaper was examining Cody's past work with the Kansas City, Missouri, police as well.

"This is the type of stuff that, you know, that Vladimir Putin does, that Third World dictators do," Meyer said during an interview in his office. "This is Gestapo tactics from World War II."

Cody said Sunday that the raid was legal and tied to an investigation.

The raids occurred in a town of about 1,900 people, nestled among rolling prairie hills, about 150 miles (241 kilometers) southwest of Kansas City, making the small weekly newspaper the latest to find itself in the headlines and possibly targeted for its reporting.

Last year in New Hampshire, the publisher of a weekly newspaper accused the state attorney general's

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office of government overreach after she was arrested for allegedly publishing advertisements for local races without properly marking them as political advertising. In Las Vegas, former Democratic elected official Robert Telles is scheduled to face trial in November for allegedly fatally stabbing Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German after German wrote articles critical of Telles and his managerial conduct.

Meyer said that on Friday, one Record reporter suffered an injury to a finger when Cody wrested her cellphone out of her hand, according to the report. The newspaper's surveillance video showed officers reading that reporter her rights while Cody watched, though she wasn't arrested or detained. Newspaper employees were hustled out of the building while the search continued for more than 90 minutes, according to the footage.

Meanwhile, Meyer said, police simultaneously raided his home, seizing computers, his cellphone and the home's internet router.

But as Meyer fielded messages from reporters and editors as far away as London and reviewed footage from the newsroom's surveillance camera, Newell was receiving death threats from as far away, she said. She said the Record engages in "tabloid trash reporting" and was trying to hush her up.

"I fully believe that the intent was to do harm and merely tarnish my reputation, and I think if had it been left at that, I don't think that it would have blown up as big as it was," Newell said in a telephone interview.

Newell said she threw Meyer and the Record reporter out of the event for Republican U.S. Rep. Jake LaTurner at the request of others who are upset with the "toxic" newspaper. On the town's main street, one storefront included a handmade "Support Marion PD" sign.

The police chief and other officials also attended and were acknowledged at the reception, and the Marion Police Department highlighted the event on its Facebook page.

LaTurner's office did not immediately return phone messages left Sunday at his Washington and district offices seeking comment.

Newell said she believes the newspaper violated the law to get her personal information as it checked on the status of her driver's license following a 2008 drunken driving conviction and other driving violations.

The newspaper countered that it received that information unsolicited, which it verified through public online records. It eventually decided not to run a story because it wasn't sure the source who supplied it had obtained it legally. But the newspaper did run a story on the city council meeting, in which Newell herself confirmed she'd had a DUI conviction and that she had continued to drive even after her license was suspended.

A two-page search warrant, signed by a local judge, lists Newell as the victim of alleged crimes by the newspaper. When the newspaper asked for a copy of the probable cause affidavit required by law to issue a search warrant, the district court issued a signed statement saying no such affidavit was on file, the Record reported.

Cody, the police chief, defended the raid on Sunday, saying in an email to The Associated Press that while federal law usually requires a subpoena — not just a search warrant — to raid a newsroom, there is an exception "when there is reason to believe the journalist is taking part in the underlying wrongdoing."

Cody did not give details about what that alleged wrongdoing entailed.

Cody, who was hired in late April as Marion's police chief after serving 24 years in the Kansas City police, did not respond to questions about whether police filed a probable cause affidavit for the search warrant. He also did not answer questions about how police believe Newell was victimized.

Press freedom and civil rights organizations said that police, the local prosecutor's office and the judge who signed off on the search warrant overstepped their authority.

"It seems like one of the most aggressive police raids of a news organization or entity in quite some time," said Sharon Brett, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas, adding that it seemed "quite an alarming abuse of authority."

Seth Stern, director of advocacy for Freedom of the Press Foundation, said in a statement that the raid appeared to have violated federal law, the First Amendment, "and basic human decency."

"The anti-press rhetoric that's become so pervasive in this country has become more than just talk and is creating a dangerous environment for journalists trying to do their jobs," Stern said.

Meyer said he has been flooded with offers of help from press freedom groups and other news organizations. But he said what he and his staff need is more hours in the day to get their next edition put together.

Both he and Newell are contemplating lawsuits — Newell against the newspaper and Meyer against the public officials who staged the raid.

As for the criticism of the raid as a violation of First Amendment rights, Newell said her privacy rights were violated, and they are "just as important as anybody else's."

US Steel rejects a \$7.3 billion offer from rival Cleveland-Cliffs; considers alternatives

By ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — United States Steel Corp. said Sunday that it rejected a \$7.3 billion buyout proposal from rival Cleveland Cliffs and was reviewing "strategic alternatives" after receiving several unsolicited offers.

Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel said it rejected the offer because Cleveland-Cliffs was pushing it to accept the terms without being allowed to conduct proper due diligence.

"At this juncture, we cannot determine whether your unsolicited proposal properly reflects the full and fair value of the Company. For all of the above reasons, the Board has no choice but to reject your unreasonable proposal," U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt said in a letter, released Sunday, to Cleveland Cliffs CEO Lourenco Goncalves.

Cleveland-Cliffs announced earlier Sunday that it had made an offer valuing the U.S. Steel at \$7.3 billion, based on \$17.50 a share in cash and 1.023 shares of Cliffs stock. Cleveland-Cliffs said the value of the offer was \$35 a share, a premium over U.S. Steel's closing stock price of \$22.72 on Friday. The company said it decided to reveal the private offer after U.S. Steel rejected it.

Burritt had revealed in an earlier statement that company received several unsolicited offers and had launched "a comprehensive and thorough review of strategic alternatives." U.S. Steel, which said it expects to receive more proposals, said there was no guarantee that any deal would emerge from the review process.

Burritt said the offers are "a validation of U.S. Steel's strategy" of transformation, including expanding its electric arc furnace steelmaking and finishing capabilities.

Cleveland-Cliffs said its proposal, first made on July 28, would create a company that would be among the 10 biggest steelmakers in the world and one of the top four outside of China. Cleveland-Cliffs CEO Lourenco Goncalves said in a statement that the proposal would create "lower-cost, more innovative and stronger domestic supplier for our customers," and that he stands ready to engage on it despite U.S. Steel's rejection.

Goncalves said the company's offer has the support of the United Steelworkers union, which has 14,000 members at Cleveland-Cliffs and 11,000 at U.S. Steel. In a letter of support posted to the company's website, the union said the company was "in the best position to ensure that U.S. based manufacturing remains strong in this country" and praised the company for not cutting union jobs when it acquired AK Steel in 2019 and ArcelorMittal in 2020.

Cleveland-Cliffs is the largest producer of flat-rolled steel and iron in North America. U.S. Steel has been a symbol of industrialization since it was founded in 1901 by J.P. Morgan, Andrew Carnegie and others, though its stock price has struggled in recent years as steel prices have fluctuated.

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7 killed in Ukraine's Kherson region, including a 23-day-old baby girl

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Seven people — including a 23-day-old baby girl — were killed in Russian shelling in Ukraine's southern Kherson region on Sunday, the country's Internal Affairs Ministry said.

Artillery shelling in the village of Shiroka Balka, on the banks of the Dnieper River killed a family — a husband, wife, 12-year-old boy and 23-day-old girl — and another resident.

Two men were killed in the neighboring village of Stanislav, where a woman was also wounded.

The attack on Kherson province followed Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar's comments on Saturday attempting to quell rumors that Ukrainian forces had landed on the occupied left (east) bank of the Dnieper in the Kherson region.

"Again, the expert hype around the left bank in the Kherson region began. There are no reasons for excitement," she said.

Kherson regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said Sunday that three people had been wounded in Russian attacks on the province on Saturday.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian military officials said Saturday evening that Kyiv's forces had made progress in the south, claiming some success near a key village in the southern Zaporizhzhia region and capturing other unspecified territories.

Ukraine's General Staff said they had "partial success" around the tactically important Robotyne area in the Zaporizhzhia region, a key Russian stronghold that Ukraine needs to retake in order to continue pushing south towards Melitopol.

"There are liberated territories. The defense forces are working," General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy, commander of Ukraine's southern forces, said of the southern front.

Battles in recent weeks have taken place on multiple points along the over 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line as Ukraine wages a counteroffensive with Western-supplied weapons and Western-trained troops against Russian forces who invaded nearly 18 months ago.

Ukrainian troops have made only incremental gains since launching a counteroffensive in early June.

Meanwhile, a Russian warship on Sunday fired warning shots at a Palau-flagged cargo ship in the south-western Black Sea, the first time Russia has fired on a merchant ship beyond Ukraine since exiting a landmark UN-brokered grain deal last month.

According to Russia's Defense Ministry, the Sukru Okan was heading northwards to the Ukrainian Danube River port of Izmail.

"The captain of the dry-cargo ship did not respond to the request to stop for inspection for the carriage of prohibited goods. To force the ship to stop, warning fire was opened from automatic small arms from a Russian warship," Russia's Ministry of Defense wrote on Telegram, adding that the ship later stopped and allowed an inspection team to board.

Four weeks ago, Moscow withdrew from a key export agreement that allowed Ukraine to ship millions of tons of grain across the Black Sea for sale on world markets. In the wake of that withdrawal, Russia carried out repeated strikes on Ukrainian ports, including Odesa, and declared wide areas of the Black Sea unsafe for shipping.

In Russia, local officials reported on Sunday that air defense systems shot down three drones over the Belgorod region and one over the neighboring Kursk region, both of which border Ukraine.

Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian border regions are a fairly regular occurrence. Drone attacks deeper inside Russian territory have been on the rise since a drone was destroyed over the Kremlin in early May. In recent weeks, attacks have increased both on Moscow and on Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 — a move that most of the world considered illegal.

Firing drones at Russia, after more than 17 months of war, has little apparent military value for Ukraine but the strategy has served to unsettle Russians and bring home to them the conflict's consequences.

Later Sunday afternoon, local officials in the Belgorod province reported an explosion in an apartment building in the regional capital, also called Belgorod.

Regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said that the facade of the apartment building had been damaged,

with windows shattered and air conditioning units broken. Fifteen cars parked nearby also sustained damage, but there were no casualties. Gladkov said that the cause of the explosion was under investigation.

The Wagner mercenary group has played a key role in Russia's military campaign, but there is a "realistic possibility" that the Kremlin is no longer providing funding, according to British defense officials.

In its latest intelligence briefing, the Ministry of Defense said it believed Wagner was "likely moving towards a down-sizing and reconfiguration process" in order to save money, and that the Kremlin had "acted against some other business interests" of Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin. The officials assessed that Belarusian authorities were the "second most plausible paymasters."

Thousands of Wagner fighters arrived in Russian-allied Belarus under a deal that ended their armed rebellion in late June and allowed them and Prigozhin to avoid criminal charges.

Polish government plans referendum asking if voters want 'thousands of illegal immigrants'

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Poland's ruling party wants to ask voters in a referendum whether they support accepting "thousands of illegal immigrants from the Middle East and Africa" as part of a European Union relocation plan, the prime minister said Sunday, as his conservative party seeks to hold onto power in an October parliamentary election.

Mateusz Morawiecki announced the referendum question in a new video published on social media. It indicated that his party, Law and Justice, is seeking to use migration in its election campaign, a tactic that helped it take power in 2015.

Poland currently hosts more than a million Ukrainian refugees, who are primarily white and Christian, but officials have long made clear that they consider Muslims and others from different cultures to be a threat to the nation's cultural identity and security.

EU interior ministers in June endorsed a plan to share out responsibility for migrants entering Europe without authorization, the root of one of the bloc's longest-running political crises.

The Polish government wants to hold the referendum alongside the parliamentary election, scheduled for Oct. 15. Morawiecki said that the question would say: "Do you support the admission of thousands of illegal immigrants from the Middle East and Africa under the forced relocation mechanism imposed by the European bureaucracy?"

The video announcing the question includes scenes of burning cars and other street violence in Western Europe. A Black man licks a huge knife in apparent anticipation of committing a crime. Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski then says: "Do you want this to happen in Poland as well? Do you want to cease being masters of your own country?"

An opposition politician, Robert Biedron, reacted by saying the migration question is pointless because participation in the EU mechanism is not mandatory and can be replaced by other forms of shared responsibility, while Poland itself could be eligible for support or for a waiver of its contribution due to the high number of Ukrainian refugees.

Biedron, a European Parliament member for the Left party, posted on the X platform, formerly known as Twitter, a letter from EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson. In it, she sets out the terms of the relocation mechanism and the grounds for seeking an exemption.

Leaders have announced two other questions in recent days. One will ask voters for their views on privatizing state-owned enterprises and the other will ask if they support raising the retirement age, which Law and Justice lowered to 60 for women and 65 for men.

The questions are set up to depict the opposition party, Civic Platform, as a threat to the interests of Poles. The pro-business and pro-EU party, which governed from 2007 to 2015, raised the retirement age during its time in power, favored some privatization and signaled a willingness to accept a few thousand refugees before it lost power.

The video takes aim directly at Civic Platform leader Donald Tusk, a former president of the European

Council. "Tusk is the greatest threat to our security, he is the greatest threat to Poland's security," Morawiecki says. "Let's not let Tusk — as an envoy of the Brussels elites — demolish security in Poland."

Europe's asylum system collapsed eight years ago after well over a million people entered the bloc — most of them fleeing conflict in Syria — and overwhelmed reception capacities in Greece and Italy, in the process sparking one of the EU's biggest political crises.

The 27 EU nations have bickered ever since over which countries should take responsibility for people arriving without authorization, and whether other members should be obliged to help them cope.

Initially Poland was neither an entry country nor a destination country for migrants and refugees. It became a front-line state two years ago when migrants began crossing from Belarus, something European authorities view as an effort by the Russian ally to generate turmoil in Poland and other European countries.

Poland responded by building a large wall on its border. It has recently increased its military presence on the border fearing an uptick in migration and other possible instability.

As well as disagreements over migration, Law and Justice has long been in conflict with the EU over a perception by the bloc that the Warsaw government has been eroding democratic norms.

4 people dead and 1 missing after explosion destroys 3 structures in western Pennsylvania

PLUM, Pa. (AP) — Four people were dead and a fifth was unaccounted for following a house explosion in western Pennsylvania that destroyed three structures and damaged at least a dozen others Saturday morning, authorities said.

Allegheny County officials said three people were taken to hospitals after the blast shortly before 10:30 a.m. in the borough of Plum, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) east of Pittsburgh.

Three people were transported to area hospitals, including one who was listed in critical condition and two who were treated and released. More than 20 firefighters were evaluated, many for heat exhaustion, authorities said.

The Allegheny County Medical Examiner's Office was expected to provide additional information about the deceased victims.

Emergency officials suspended operations Saturday night due to weather and concern for the safety of investigators. Crews were expected to resume working at the site on Sunday morning.

Emergency responders reported people trapped under debris after one house apparently exploded and two others were engulfed in flames, county spokesperson Amie Downs said.

Crews from at least 18 fire departments worked to douse the flames with the help of water tankers from Allegheny and Westmoreland counties, Downs said.

Officials told reporters at the scene they did not know exactly who was at home and who may have had visitors at the time of the explosion, so they could not provide an exact number of people considered missing.

The cause of the explosion is under investigation by Plum and county law enforcement and the county fire marshal's office. The state public utilities commission and local utilities also were at the scene.

George Emanuele, who lives three houses down from the home that exploded, told the Tribune-Review that he and a neighbor went to the home before the fire got out of control, where they found a man laying in the backyard and dragged him away from the scene.

Rafal Kolankowski, who lives a few houses away, told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that the explosion broke the windows in his house and knocked him and his wife to the ground.

After recovering and checking on his son, Kolankowski went outside and a woman told him another woman had been upstairs and a man was in the basement. The other woman later emerged covered in white ash, but the individual in the basement had not yet exited, he said.

"It's just tragic, I mean, it looks like a war zone — it looks like a bomb hit our neighborhood and it's just unfortunate," Kolankowski said. "I was just with some of the neighbors yesterday, right, and now this happens."

Jeremy Rogers, who lives two doors down, told the paper he had been out shopping when he got an alert about a problem at his house and saw "all sorts of stuff flying around." His family was able to get out safely and he was allowed to go inside quickly to rescue his dog, although he could not locate the family's three cats.

Niger's junta gains the upper hand over the regional bloc threatening military force, analysts say

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — One week after a deadline passed for mutinous soldiers in Niger to reinstate the country's ousted president or face military intervention, the junta has not acquiesced. No military action has been taken and the coup leaders appear to have gained the upper hand over the regional group that issued the threat, analysts say.

The West African bloc ECOWAS had given the soldiers that overthrew Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum until last Sunday to release and reinstate him or they threatened military action. On Thursday, the bloc ordered the deployment of a "standby" force to restore constitutional rule in Niger, with Nigeria, Benin, Senegal and Ivory Coast saying they would contribute troops.

But it's unclear when, how or if the troops will deploy. The move could take weeks or months to set into motion, and while the bloc decides what to do the junta is gaining power, some observers say.

"It looks as though the putschists have won and will stay ... The putschists are holding all the cards and have cemented their rule," said Ulf Laessing, head of the Sahel program at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a think tank.

ECOWAS is unlikely to intervene militarily and risk dragging Niger into civil war, he said, adding that ECOWAS and Western countries would instead likely press the junta to agree to a short transition period.

Europe and the United States will have little choice but to recognize the junta in order to continue the security cooperation in the region, Laessing said.

The July 26 coup is seen as a major blow to many Western nations, which viewed Niger as one of its last partners in the conflict-riddled Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert that they could work with to beat back a growing jihadi insurgency linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. The U.S. and France have more than 2,500 military personnel in the region and together with other European countries have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance and training Niger's forces.

There was still little clarity about what would happen days after ECOWAS announced the "standby" force deployment.

A meeting of the region's defense chiefs was postponed indefinitely. The African Union is expected to hold a meeting on Monday to discuss Niger's crisis. The group's Peace and Security Council could overrule the decision if it felt that wider peace and security on the continent were threatened by an intervention.

The delay of the defense chiefs' meeting to discuss the "standby" force shows that ECOWAS views the use of force as a last resort, said Nate Allen, an associate professor at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

"Given the likely challenges an intervention would face, (the use of force would) require a high degree of consensus and coordination not just within ECOWAS, but within the African Union and international community writ large," he said.

But those with ties to the junta say they are preparing for a fight, especially since the soldiers are unwilling to negotiate unless ECOWAS acknowledges its leader, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, who overthrew the president, as the new ruler.

"ECOWAS is demanding that (the junta) immediately release President Bazoum and restore him as head of state. Is this a joke?" said Insa Garba Saidou, a local activist who assists Niger's new military rulers with their communications and says he is in direct contact with them. "Whether Bazoum resigns or not, he will never be Niger's president again."

As time drags on, there is mounting concern for the safety of Bazoum, who has been under house arrest with his wife and son since the coup. Those close to him say his situation is deteriorating with no

water, electricity and a lack of food. Niger's junta told a top U.S. diplomat that they would kill the deposed president if neighboring countries attempted any military intervention to restore his rule, two Western officials told The Associated Press.

Most Nigeriens are trying to go about their lives as the standoff continues between the coup leaders and regional countries.

For the most part, the streets in the capital, Niamey, are calm with sporadic pockets of pro-junta demonstrations. Any pro-Bazoum demonstrations are quickly silenced by security forces.

On Sunday people marched, biked and drove through downtown Niamey, chanting "down with France" and expressing anger at ECOWAS.

"Niger is in a deplorable situation. We are very happy there was a coup d'état. Now everyone can go into the streets without a problem ... (but) if ECOWAS allows people to attack Niger, it will cross a red line," said resident Saidou Issaka.

On Friday hundreds of people, many waving Russian flags, marched toward France's military base demanding the French leave. Mercenaries from the Russian-linked Wagner group already operate in a handful of other African countries and are accused of committing human rights abuses. Earlier this month during a trip to neighboring Mali, which is also run by a military regime and cooperates with Wagner, the junta reportedly asked the mercenaries for help.

Boubacar Adamou, a tailor in the capital, said he had made at least 50 Russian flags in the weeks since the coup.

But many Nigeriens don't have time for protests and are more focused on feeding their families.

The country of some 25 million people is one of the poorest in the world and the harsh travel and economic sanctions imposed by ECOWAS are taking a toll.

Moussa Ahmed, a food seller in Niamey, said the prices of food items such as cooking oil and rice had increased by 20% since the coup and there wasn't enough electricity to power the fridges in his shop. Niger gets up to 90% of its power from neighboring Nigeria, which has cut off some of its supply.

Aid groups that were already grappling with the challenges of helping more than 4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance say the crisis will exacerbate an already dire situation.

"We cannot overstate the impact on civilians, both in terms of humanitarian and protection needs, when military imperatives take precedence over civilian governance," said Jan Egeland, secretary general for the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The sanctions and suspensions of development aid are expected to have a dramatic impact on living conditions for a country already under heavy strain, he said.

Popular weight-loss drugs like Wegovy may raise risk of complications under anesthesia

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Patients who take blockbuster drugs like Wegovy or Ozempic for weight loss may face life-threatening complications if they need surgery or other procedures that require empty stomachs for anesthesia. This summer's guidance to halt the medication for up to a week may not go far enough, either.

Some anesthesiologists in the U.S. and Canada say they've seen growing numbers of patients on the weight-loss drugs who inhaled food and liquid into their lungs while sedated because their stomachs were still full — even after following standard instructions to stop eating for six to eight hours in advance.

The drugs can slow digestion so much that it puts patients at increased risk for the problem, called pulmonary aspiration, which can cause dangerous lung damage, infections and even death, said Dr. Ion Hobai, an anesthesiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

"This is such a serious sort of potential complication that everybody who takes this drug should know about it," said Hobai, who was among the first to flag the issue.

Nearly 6 million prescriptions for the class of drugs that include Wegovy and Ozempic were written between January and May in the U.S. for people who don't have diabetes, according to Komodo Health,

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a health care technology company. The drugs induce weight loss by mimicking the actions of hormones, found primarily in the gut, that kick in after people eat. They also target signals between the gut and the brain that control appetite and feelings of fullness, and by slowing how fast the stomach empties.

In June, the American Society of Anesthesiologists issued guidance advising patients to skip daily weight-loss medications on the day of surgery and hold off on weekly injections for a week before any sedation procedures. Dr. Michael Champeau, the group's president, said the action was based on anecdotal reports of problems — including aspiration — from around the country.

It's not clear how many patients taking the anti-obesity drugs may be affected by the issue. But because the consequences can be so dire, Hobai and a group of colleagues decided to speak out. Writing in the Canadian Journal of Anesthesia, they called for the drug to be stopped for even longer — about three weeks before sedation.

That accounts for how long semaglutide, the active medication in Wegovy, remains in the body, said Dr. Philip Jones, a Mayo Clinic anesthesiologist who is also deputy editor-in-chief of the journal.

"When 90% of it is gone, which is after three weeks, hopefully everything should go back to normal," Jones said.

Champeau and Jones both acknowledged there's not enough evidence to say for certain how long semaglutide should be held to make anesthesia safe. Many patients won't see providers far enough in advance to stop the drug three weeks before procedures, Champeau noted.

Aspiration occurs in one of every 2,000 to 3,000 operations that require sedation, and almost half of patients who aspirate during surgery develop a related lung injury. But case reports show recent patients on semaglutide had problems even when they stopped food as long as 20 hours before their procedures.

"There's nothing that says if you fast twice as long, it will be OK," Champeau said.

Among the several reports detailing potentially serious problems was one of Hobai's patients, a 42-year-old man in Boston who recently began taking Wegovy, had to be intubated and suffered respiratory failure that put him in intensive care. He aspirated food that remained in his stomach despite fasting for 18 hours.

In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a 31-year-old woman on a low dose of Ozempic had fasted for 10 hours before a routine endoscopy prior to bariatric surgery last fall. The procedure had to be stopped because solid food remained in her stomach and she was at high risk for aspiration, the report said.

Since then, doctors have seen dozens of similar cases as use of the weight-loss medication has grown, said Dr. Elisa Lund, an anesthesiologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine. "It has exponentially increased," she said.

Hobai is completing a retrospective study of almost 200 patients taking semaglutide. While it'll be published later this year, the work so far appears to confirm a small study from Brazil, he said. In that study, about a quarter of patients taking semaglutide had residual food in their stomachs during procedures requiring sedation — even after stopping the drug for 10 days.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists advises doctors who are in doubt to treat patients who haven't paused the drug as if they have full stomachs, which can mean using different types of sedation protocols or delaying procedures, if possible. Jones added that research is urgently needed to update guidelines for doctors and patients.

Novo Nordisk, which makes Ozempic, Wegovy and similar drugs, said the firm's clinical trial and post-marketing safety data did not show that the medications led to aspiration. But the drugmaker noted that the medications are known to cause delayed emptying of the stomach and that the labels warn of possible gastrointestinal side effects.

Stopping the medications for three weeks can cause problems, too. Patients with diabetes will need another way to control their blood sugar and those seeking to lose weight may regain some, Hobai said.

Hobai suggests that people using Wegovy and similar drugs tell their doctors before sedation and discuss the risks and benefits.

"If you're taking this drug and you need an operation, you will need to have some extra precautions," he said.

Mishmash of how US heat deaths are counted complicates efforts to keep people safe as Earth warms

By ANITA SNOW and KENDRIA LaFLEUR Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Postal worker Eugene Gates Jr. was delivering mail in the suffocating Dallas heat this summer when he collapsed in a homeowner's yard and was taken to a hospital, where he died.

Carla Gates said she's sure heat was a factor in her 66-year-old husband's death, even though she's still waiting for the autopsy report. When Eugene Gates died on June 20, the temperature was 98 degrees Fahrenheit (36.6 Celsius) and the heat index, which also considers humidity, had soared over 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius).

"I will believe this until the day I die, that it was heat-related," Carla Gates said.

Even when it seems obvious that extreme heat was a factor, death certificates don't always reflect the role it played. Experts say a mishmash of ways more than 3,000 counties calculate heat deaths means we don't really know how many people die in the U.S. each year because of high temperatures in an ever warming world.

That imprecision harms efforts to better protect people from extreme heat because officials who set policies and fund programs can't get the financial and other support needed to make a difference.

"Essentially, all heat related deaths are preventable. People don't need to die from the heat," said epidemiologist Kristie L. Ebi, who focuses on global warming's impact on human health as a professor at the University of Washington.

With a better count, she said, "you can start developing much better heat wave early warning systems and target people who are at higher risk and make sure that they're aware of these risks."

Currently, about the only consistency in counting heat deaths in the U.S. is that officials and climate specialists acknowledge fatalities are grossly undercounted.

"Deaths are investigated in vastly different ways based on where a person died," said Dr. Greg Hess, the medical examiner for Pima County, Arizona's second most populous county and home to Tucson. "It should be no surprise that we don't have good nationwide data on heat-related deaths."

Many experts say a standard decades-old method known as counting excess deaths could better show how extreme heat harms people.

"You want to look at the number of people who would not have died during that time period and get a true sense of the magnitude of the impact," Ebi said, including people who would not have suffered a fatal heart attack or renal failure without the heat.

The excess deaths calculation is often used to estimate the death toll in natural disasters, with researchers tallying fatalities that exceeded those that occurred at the same time the previous year when circumstances were average.

Counting excess deaths was used to calculate the human impact of a heat wave in Chicago that killed more than 700 people in July 1995, many elderly Black people who lived alone. Researchers also counted excess deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide more complete information about deaths directly and indirectly related to the coronavirus.

But as things stand now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports just 600 to 700 heat deaths annually in the United States. A study published last month in the journal *Nature Medicine* estimated more than 61,000 heat-related deaths last summer across Europe, which has roughly double the U.S. population but more than 100 times as many heat deaths.

Dr. Sameed Khatana, a staff cardiologist at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center and assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, has said deaths in which heat contributed significantly to fatalities from causes like heart failure should also be considered.

Khatana participated in research published last year that counted excess deaths in all U.S. counties. The findings suggested that from 2008 to 2017 between 3,000 to 20,000 adult deaths from all causes listed on death certificates were linked to extreme heat. Heart disease was listed as the cause of about half of the deaths.

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After the Pacific Northwest heat wave in summer of 2021, the Canadian province of British Columbia reported more than 600 deaths due to heat exposure while Oregon and Washington each initially reported a little more than 100 such fatalities.

"It's frustrating that for 90 years public health officials in the United States have not had a good picture of heat-related mortality because we have such a bad data system," said Dr. David Jones, a Harvard Medical School professor who also teaches in the epidemiology department at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

There is no uniformity among who does the counting across U.S. jurisdictions. Death investigations in some places might be carried out by a medical examiner, typically a physician trained in forensic pathology. In other locales, the coroner could be an elected sheriff, such as the one in Orange County, California. In some small counties in Texas, a justice of peace might determine cause of death.

Utah and Massachusetts are among states that do not track heat-related deaths where exposure to extreme heat was a secondary factor.

The CDC, which is often several years behind in reporting, draws information on heat deaths from death certificate information included in local, state, tribal and territorial databases.

The CDC said in a statement that coroners and others who fill out death certificates "are encouraged to report all causes of death," but they may not always associate those contributing causes to an extreme heat exposure death and include the diagnostic codes for heat illnesses.

Hess, the Arizona coroner, said determining environmental heat was a factor in someone's death is difficult and can take weeks or even months of investigation including toxicological tests.

"If someone was shot in the head, it's pretty obvious what happened there," Hess said. "But when you find a body in a hot apartment 48 hours after they died, there is a lot of ambiguity."

Hess noted that Pima County this year began including heat-related deaths in its tally of environmental heat fatalities. Maricopa County, home to Phoenix, America's hottest big city, for years has included heat-related deaths. Clark County, Nevada, home to Las Vegas, now also considers deaths in which heat was a contributing factor.

Maricopa's Public Health Department counted 425 "heat associated" deaths last year, including those where heat was a secondary factor, such as a heart attack provoked by high temperatures.

It reports there were 59 heat-associated deaths confirmed this year through Aug. 5, with another 345 under investigation. The latest count follows the hottest month in Phoenix on record, and a record 31 consecutive days that hit 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius) or higher.

Dallas, which regularly sees summer highs over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 Celsius), sweltered through an excessive heat warning this month and also grapples with oppressive humidity.

Carla Gates, whose mail carrier husband died, noted cities worldwide now must learn to deal with extreme weather. She said her spouse, with 36 years on the job, tried to protect himself by taking a chest filled with ice and several bottles of cold water on his rounds.

"Our climate has changed," she said. "And I don't think it's going back to how it was 20 years ago. So we're going to have to get used to it and we're going to have to make some adjustments."

Now she wants to honor her husband by pushing legislation to ensure people working outside are better protected from the heat. Gates noted that the day her husband died he was in an old mail truck without working air conditioning.

"I don't wish this on anyone, anyone to get a phone call that their loved one died working, doing something that they love in the heat," she said.

Today in History: August 14, McVeigh sentenced to death

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Aug. 14, the 226th day of 2023. There are 139 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On Aug. 14, 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced that Imperial Japan had surrendered unconditionally, ending World War II.

On this date:

In 1848, the Oregon Territory was created.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill issued the Atlantic Charter, a statement of principles that renounced aggression.

In 1947, Pakistan became independent of British rule.

In 1948, the Summer Olympics in London, the first held since 1936, ended.

In 1973, U.S. bombing of Cambodia came to a halt.

In 1980, actor-model Dorothy Stratten was shot to death at age 20 by her estranged husband and manager, Paul Snider, who then killed himself.

In 1994, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, the terrorist known as "Carlos the Jackal," was captured by French agents in Sudan.

In 1995, Shannon Faulkner officially became the first female cadet in the history of The Citadel, South Carolina's state military college. (However, Faulkner quit the school less than a week later, citing the stress of her court fight, and her isolation among the male cadets.)

In 1997, an unrepentant Timothy McVeigh was formally sentenced to death for the Oklahoma City bombing. (McVeigh was executed by lethal injection in 2001.)

In 2009, Charles Manson follower Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, 60, convicted of trying to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975, was released from a Texas prison hospital after more than three decades behind bars.

In 2020, India's coronavirus death toll overtook Britain's to become the fourth-highest in the world after another single-day record increase in cases.

Ten years ago: Israeli and Palestinian negotiators kicked off their first substantive round of peace talks in nearly five years, meeting at an undisclosed location in Jerusalem. Riot police swept away two encampments of supporters of ousted Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi in Cairo, sparking running street battles. Former Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for illegally spending \$750,000 in campaign funds on personal items.

Five years ago: A highway bridge collapsed in the Italian city of Genoa during a storm, sending vehicles plunging nearly 150 feet and leaving 43 people dead. A state grand jury report concluded that some 300 Roman Catholic priests in Pennsylvania had molested more than 1,000 children since the 1940s and that church officials had covered up complaints. Puerto Rico officials announced that power was restored to the entire island for the first time since Hurricane Maria nearly 11 months earlier. Los Angeles transit officials said the city's subway system would become the first in the country to install body scanners to screen passengers for weapons and explosives.

One year ago: A delegation of American lawmakers arrived in Taiwan just 12 days after a visit by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that angered China. China responded to Pelosi's visit by sending missiles, warships and warplanes into the seas and air around Taiwan. The five-member delegation, led by Democratic Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts, was there to meet President Tsai Ing-wen and other officials, as well as members of the private sector, to discuss shared interests including reducing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and investments in semiconductors. Salman Rushdie's agent said the author was "on the road to recovery" two days after suffering serious injuries in a stabbing at a lecture in upstate New York. A fire ripped through a packed Coptic Orthodox church during morning services in Egypt's capital, killing 41 worshippers, including at least 15 children, and injuring 16 other people.

Today's Birthdays: Broadway lyricist Lee Adams ("Bye Bye Birdie") is 99. College Football Hall of Famer John Brodie is 88. Singer Dash Crofts is 85. Country singer Connie Smith is 82. Comedian-actor Steve Martin is 78. Movie director Wim Wenders is 78. Actor Antonio Fargas is 77. Singer-musician Larry Graham is 77. Actor Susan Saint James is 77. Author Danielle Steel is 76. Rock singer-musician Terry Adams (NRBQ) is

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75. "Far Side" cartoonist Gary Larson is 73. Actor Carl Lumbly is 72. Olympic gold medal swimmer Debbie Meyer is 71. Actor Jackee Harry is 67. Actor Marcia Gay Harden is 64. Basketball Hall of Famer Earvin "Magic" Johnson is 64. Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn., is 64. Singer Sarah Brightman is 63. Actor Susan Olsen is 62. Actor-turned-fashion/interior designer Cristi Conaway is 59. Rock musician Keith Howland (Chicago) is 59. Actor Halle Berry is 57. Actor Ben Bass is 55. Actor Catherine Bell is 55. Rock musician Kevin Cadogan is 53. Actor Scott Michael Campbell is 52. Actor Christopher Gorham is 49. Actor Mila Kunis is 40. Actor Lamorne Morris is 40. TV personality Spencer Pratt is 40. Former NFL player Tim Tebow is 36. Actor Marsai Martin is 19.