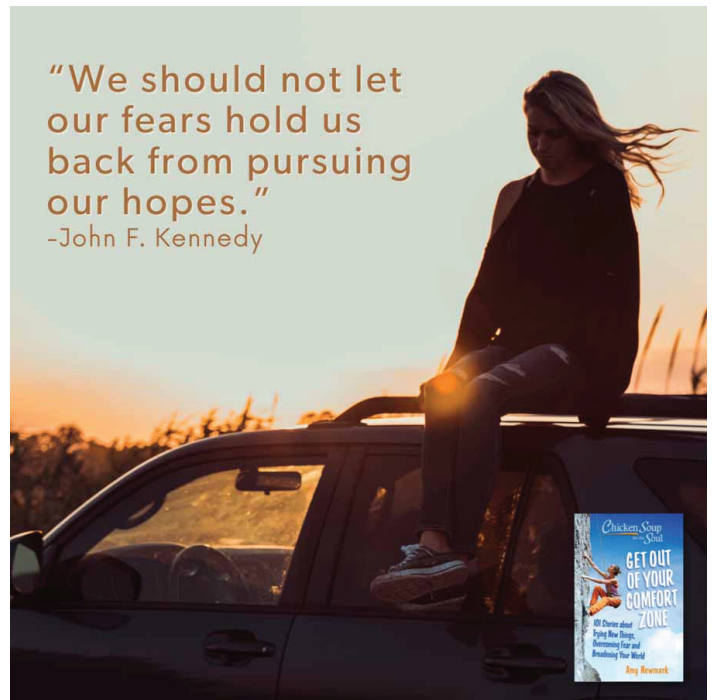


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Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 21

Senior menu: Lasagna rotini, spinach salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Faculty In-Service

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. 22

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, oriental blend vegetables, fruit, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread.

Faculty In-Service

Northeast Conference Boys Golf at Redfield, 10 a.m.

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

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N

Wednesday, Aug. 23

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, cooked carrots.

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon bleu hot dish, broccoli with carrots, pears, chocolate pudding, whole wheat bread.

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

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

Thursday, Aug. 24

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, fries.

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, carrots, apricots, whole wheat bread.

Volleyball hosts Hamlin, 6 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

Guatemala. With over 99% of votes counted, Arévalo led former first lady Sandra Torres by 58% to 37%.

Donald Trump's ex-chief of staff Mark Meadows reportedly said he has no recollection of Trump ever attempting to declassify sensitive materials, blowing a hole in the former president's defense in the Mar-a-Lago case.

Rudy Giuliani said he has new "scientific evidence" that will corroborate claims of widespread election fraud and prove his innocence after being indicted on multiple charges in Georgia.

Canada is sending armed forces to tackle fast-spreading wildfires in British Columbia, which has declared a state of emergency and put over 35,000 people under evacuation orders.

Saudi Arabian border guards are accused of murdering hundreds of migrants along the Yemeni border over the past year by a Human Rights Watch report.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, at least two people were injured and dozens of flights in and out of Moscow were disrupted when parts of a Ukrainian drone destroyed by Russian air defenses fell on a house in the capital region.

TALKING POINTS

"I was never made aware of any broad-based effort to declassify documents. There is a process that the White House goes through to declassify materials, I'm aware of that occurring on several occasions over the course of our four years, but I don't have any knowledge of any broad-based directive from the president, but that doesn't mean it didn't occur. It's not something I ever heard about." Former Vice President Mike Pence said Donald Trump's claims of a standing order to declassify documents was new to him.

"For those of you who have never lived in L.A., this image is genuinely nuts. The L.A. 'River' is barely even a river most of the time. Usually it's either a tiny trickle of water at the bottom of a concrete bed, or just completely dry." Los Angeles resident Matthew Chapman wrote on X after heavy rains and flash flooding hit southern California as tropical storm Hilary made landfall.

"Mark Rutte and I agreed on the number of F-16s that will be provided to Ukraine after training our pilots and engineers is completed. 42 planes. And this is just the beginning." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said after the Netherlands and Denmark agreed to provide fourth-generation F-16 fighter jets to the war-torn country for the first time despite repeated pleas.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAYS AHEAD

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden are expected to travel to Hawaii to assess the damage caused by the wildfires on Maui earlier this month.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet with leaders of the BRICS nations during his four-day visit to South Africa, his second overseas trip this year as he looks to expand his geopolitical influence amid mounting tensions with the U.S.

The U.S. and South Korea will begin 10 days of joint military exercises following the latest provocations by North Korea.

Lucy Letby, the British neonatal nurse discussed above, will be sentenced for murdering seven babies from 2pm local time (9am Eastern.) Victim testimony from families is already well underway.

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"Challenges facing US health care"

Assuring effective health care to a population is a challenge for every society. As care options become more complex – and expensive – the challenges increase.

In the US both the organization and the financing of health care are perennial issues in public discussions, political campaigns and among social policy researchers. Basically there are two distinct but intimately related concerns – providing access to care and paying for that care. There is widespread agreement that when folks are sick or injured they should receive appropriate care. Disagreements emerge, however, in deciding how to pay for that care.

I believe it is instructive to look at the experience of other wealthy developed countries that have similar challenges. Doing so is actually quite sobering.

Using data from the Commonwealth Fund, a respected independent research organization, we can compare US experience with that of Sweden, Australia, France and Canada. These countries differ significantly in aspects of culture and geography. They do, however, all guarantee health care to 100% of their population. They spend approximately \$5000 per capita (range \$5447 to \$4965). In the US the expenditure is \$10,586 per capita and approximately 10% of the US population have no form of health care coverage. Life expectancy in each these countries exceeds that of the US - 82 yrs. (range 82.0 to 82.6) compared to a US average of 78 yrs. Recently the US life expectancy has actually gone down.

An area of particular concern in the US is maternal mortality – death related to child birth. In a modern society birthing mothers should not be dying. Nonetheless, maternal mortality in the US is higher than in any of these countries and it has gotten worse. US rates currently are 3X higher than Canada, 4X higher than the UK and 10X higher than Australia.

In some areas US performance is quite good. Outcomes in the treatment acute myocardial infarction (heart attack), stroke and some types of cancer in the US are significantly better than in comparable countries.

A troubling feature of care in the US is that all too often there is inadequate coordination between different parts of the care system. This leads to inefficiency and often poorer results. To further complicate the situation, patients, fearing high costs, often put off seeking care. Delayed care increases the risk of both poor outcomes and increased expenditures over the long run.

A contributor to high costs that has gotten relatively little attention is the complexity of US administrative and billing procedures. Providers (physicians, hospitals, therapists, etc.) have to document – and often justify - every service provided. Commonwealth Fund estimates are that administrative outlays account for as much as 1/3 of all health care expenditures. No other comparable country comes close to that rate.

There are differences between countries in patient populations, utilization of technology, etc. Researchers, however, have concluded that the single biggest difference between the US and others is that prices charged in the US are substantially higher.

How did all these problems develop? I believe that a major factor is that we have, with a few exceptions, consistently treated health care as a commodity to be bought and sold in the same manner as other consumer goods. The underlying belief has been that traditional market forces will insure efficiency, effectiveness and cost control. It has not worked.

A clear example of this failure is right here in South Dakota. In eastern South Dakota we have intense competition between two major health systems. Given that, traditional market analysis would predict that our costs would be competitive. The reality is quite the opposite. In November 2022, Forbes magazine listed South Dakota as having the most expensive health care in the nation.

Yes, there is intense competition but it is not focused on price. Competition is primarily on range of services, etc. In fact, some folks fear low cost care will be inferior even though lower cost can be a sign of just the opposite - prompt diagnosis, appropriate intervention and avoidance of complications.

The US population - our families, friends and neighbors – deserve effective and efficient health care delivered at an affordable cost. We clearly are not there. We need careful analysis coupled with serious policy discussions free of the polemics which tend to dominate today's discussions. We have a long way to go. But, it is important that we start.

This article was previously published in SD Searchlight.

Tom Dean, MD is a retired family physician who practiced for over 40 years in Wessington Springs, SD and a past member of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). Dr. Dean is a recent inductee into the SD Hall of Fame. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, streaming live on Facebook and on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



Tom Dean, M.D..

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Weekly Vikings Recap - Preseason Week 2

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

After hosting the Tennessee Titans in joint practices this week, the Minnesota Vikings got to face off against them in their preseason home opener on Saturday night. The Vikings, who sat over 30 players, did not come to play in the slightest as the Titans rushed for 281 yards on the ground and dominated both sides of the line of the scrimmage throughout the whole game.

With every preseason game, the result does not matter as much as the performance of certain players who are expected to be contributors to the Vikings during the regular season. The performance that was most concerning on Saturday had to be backup offensive tackle, Oli Udoh, who gave up multiple sacks in the game and looked more like an undrafted rookie rather than the 5-year veteran he is. It is unlikely that Udoh's performance today will impact his chance to make the team, as he is currently slotted to be the next man up for the offensive tackle position for the Vikings. However, with Brian O'Neill coming off a partially torn achilles tendon and Christian Darrisaw missing multiple games last year, it has to be concerning for the Vikings that Udoh will need to play offensive tackle at some point this season - especially given that Udoh could not even block the backups for the Titans on Saturday.

Saturday's preseason game offered nothing in terms of positives for any Vikings players. If there was to be one positive from the game, it would be that Greg Joseph, who officially won the starting kicking job for the Vikings for the third season in a row this week, made all of his kicks during the game. Besides that, the game was yet again not a great one for the Vikings.

Poor performances in the preseason are starting to become the story of the Vikings with Kevin O'Connell as their head coach. Last year, the Vikings went 0-3 in preseason, and this year it looks like that might happen as well. The preseason becomes irrelevant once the regular season starts but it would be nice if some of the young draft picks the Vikings have made the last couple years would shine a little more.

Both Lewis Cine and Andrew Booth, the top two picks in last year's draft, played late into Saturday's game, showing just how far they have to go to get significant playing time on the defense during the regular season. Cine, specifically, had a couple of nice tackles during Saturday's game, only to give up a long touchdown run on a poor angle in the first quarter. It seems for Cine that he is still lacking the mental consistency to be trusted as an every-down safety for this Vikings' defense. Booth, on the other hand, seems to always be a step behind. If he does not improve here quickly, I fully expect he will be buried on the cornerback depth chart for the entire Vikings' regular season.

Final Score: Titans 24 - Vikings 16

Looking ahead, the Vikings will host the Arizona Cardinals for joint practices this week before playing their final preseason game against them on August 26. It is safe to assume that no starters will play in the game as the team will not want to risk any sort of injury to a key player before the regular season kicks off on September 10. Hopefully, the Vikings can put up a more entertaining performance to give us fans something to enjoy before we have two weeks to wait for the season to start.

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Kory is turning 40

**Come join in on the fun
Saturday, August 26, 2023
At 4:00 at the Other Place Bar in Andover, SD**



EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Are carbon offsets an effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or are they just corporate greenwashing with little if any environmental impact?
-- Joe M., Milwaukee, WI

If you want to get environmental advocates agitated, bring up carbon offsetting. It is among the most hotly debated climate solution efforts, with opinions fanned out on the spectrum from whole-heartedly for, entirely against, and everywhere in between. But what actually is it?

Offsetting is the act of counterbalancing harmful emissions one might be responsible for by funding a project that removes the same amount of emissions from the atmosphere, i.e. planting trees to compensate for an airplane flight. Offsets are hooked up to a broader financial system called a "carbon market," where investors can buy "carbon credits" to compensate for their emissions. One credit equals one ton of CO₂.

There are two types of carbon markets, one "voluntary" and one called "compliance." Compliance markets are controlled by official policy, and a cap-and-trade system, whereby a government will set a "cap" (a limit) how much CO₂ an industry may release, and then divide it into permits, which are either given or sold to companies within that industry. If a company doesn't use all of its allowance, it can sell the extra to bigger emitters for a profit. Each year, the cap is supposed to get lower and lower, driving the price of polluting up and, in theory, sending companies careening towards renewables and clean energy.

The voluntary system is similar, but it functions outside of government regulation. Companies purchase credits from carbon offsetting projects in order to prove their environmental standards. On paper, this sounds great. But activists do have valid concerns. An investigation into Verra, the world's leading voluntary carbon credit certifier, found that over 90 percent of its credits were phantom ones with no environmental benefit. So, it is easy to see why some think it is a massive scam.

"Stop greenwashing!" shouted young climate activist Greta Thunberg at an assembly of experts at the 2021 United Nations Climate Conference (COP26) in Glasgow. The topic? Carbon offsetting. Greenpeace is very vocal on the matter too, seeing it as merely "[t]ree planting window dressing aimed at distracting [us] from ecosystem destruction." But solid belief in the potential in the market is also valid. Johan Rockström from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research says that offsetting generates much-needed investments even if it does lack proper regulation. In fact, investments in green spaces and local communities are a major upside to offsetting. By selling credits that maintain natural landscapes, often in developing countries, the carbon markets funnel money into wildlife, and could even eventually reverse the depressing maxim: "Our forests are worth more dead than alive."

And what about the carbon that is already in the atmosphere? Naveen Shivalingam, co-founder of Peak 365, a carbon market solutions company, notes that "the negatives [of the carbon markets] are pretty far reaching. But the fact remains that we have 60 billion tons [of CO₂] too many in the atmosphere. Even if the world magically switched to renewables tomorrow, we would still be in a climate disaster in 50 years." Offsetting projects provide a viable escape route.



Are carbon offsets just another form of corporate greenwashing? Credit: Simon Bowie, FlickrCC



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'The internet is no longer a luxury': \$667M from USDA for rural broadband **BY: JACOB FISCHLER - AUGUST 21, 2023 5:00 AM**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will spend another \$667 million on rural broadband loans and grants, the department said Monday, marking the fourth round of Biden administration funding under a program that the 2021 infrastructure law invigorated.

Nearly three-quarters of the funding, \$493 million, will go toward grants, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said on a Friday press call previewing the announcement. The latest round of funding awards will go to 38 projects in 22 states and the Marshall Islands, according to a release from the USDA.

Nearly \$100 million will go toward grants for three projects in Alaska, which is receiving more than any other state in this round of funding.

Among the states included in this round are: Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. South Dakota is not on the list.

Each recipient requires U.S. House and Senate sponsors and, because of the program's rural focus, many of the House sponsors are Republicans. Some of both chambers' most conservative members endorsed projects that are funded. A full list of projects is available here.

Most are small telecommunications companies or cooperatives.

The USDA's ReConnect program is responsible for selecting grant and loan recipients, seeking to fill gaps in high-speed internet access. The program was created on a trial basis in 2018, and Congress added billions in new funding for it in the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure law.

The grants and loans allow for broadband access in areas that otherwise would not be profitable for the private sector to provide service.

"We're delivering this funding because the internet is no longer a luxury," Mitch Landrieu, the White House coordinator for the infrastructure law, said on the Friday call. "It's a necessity to fully participate today's society."

High-speed internet would allow better access to services including telehealth, remote learning, precision farming and other opportunities in rural areas, Landrieu said.

President Joe Biden believes in building infrastructure in all parts of the country, Vilsack said.

"The reality is that we have faced some challenging times in rural places," the former Iowa governor said. "When we talk about broadband and high-speed internet it really is basically creating the opportunity for people, regardless of their ZIP code, to have a sense of connection, a sense that the federal government cares deeply about their economic opportunity and about their families."

The funding also serves a climate purpose, Vilsack said.

Farmers looking to take advantage of new climate-smart commodities markets, a program that pays agricultural producers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, would need access to technology that depends on high-speed internet, he said.

High-speed internet is also useful for precision farming, a management practice that requires a large amount of high-resolution data, Landrieu said.

The infrastructure law provided \$65 billion for high-speed broadband deployment. The administration is aiming to spend up to \$90 billion on broadband deployment, Landrieu said.

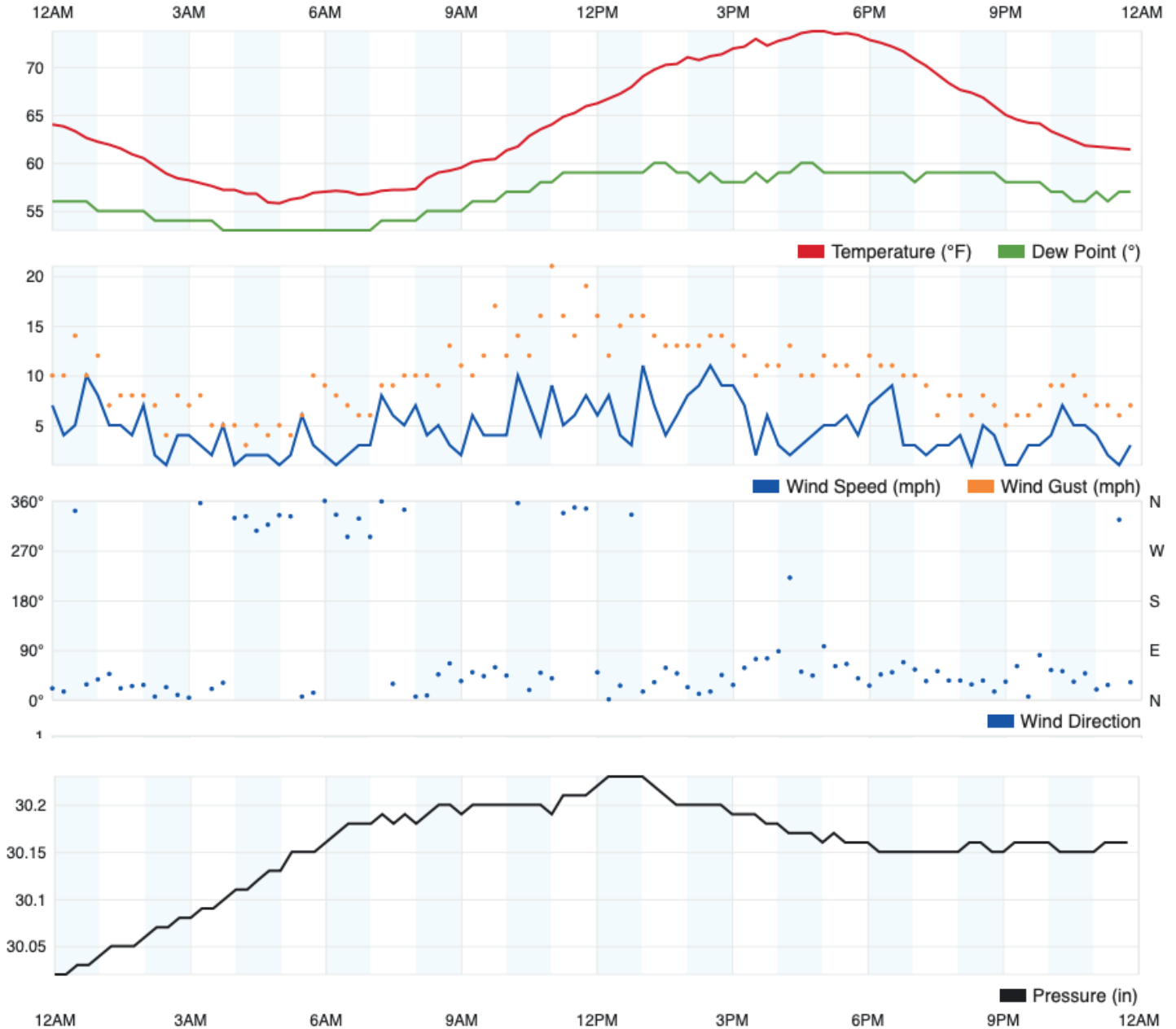
Vilsack announced \$714 million in ReConnect loans and grants in June and \$500 million in September 2022. More funding announcements should be expected in the coming months, he said Friday.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

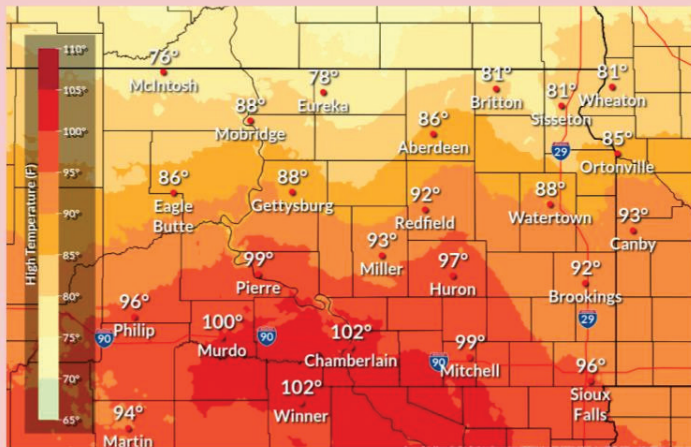


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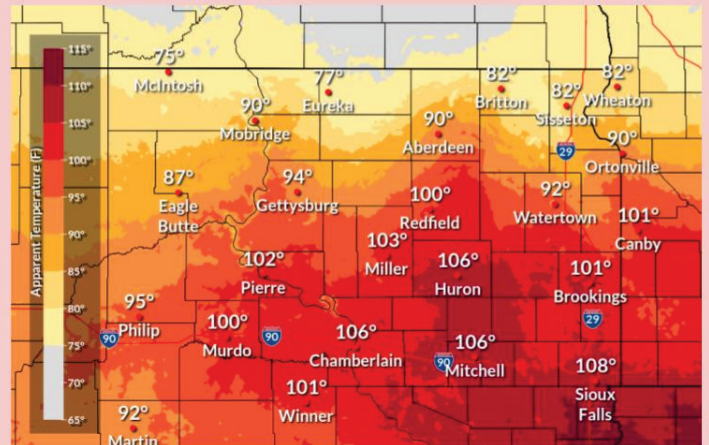
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Decreasing Clouds	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 86 °F	Low: 66 °F	High: 94 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 95 °F	Low: 68 °F	High: 87 °F

HOT TODAY



“FEELS LIKE” TEMPERATURE

ACTUAL FORECAST TEMPERATURE



Today starts our next round of hot days. The “feels like” temperatures out there are expected to near 100 degrees for central SD. Find a way to stay cool today!

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Today in Weather History

August 21, 1989: Baseball size hail caused near 100 percent crop damage to Correll in Big Stone County to 10 miles north of Appleton. Most of Swift County also received 4 to 8 inches of rain.

August 21, 2007: Thunderstorms produced large hail in southeastern South Dakota, mainly near the Missouri River, during the late afternoon and early evening of August 21st. Enormous hail fell in the Dante area in Charles Mix County, including a state record size hailstone certified as 6 and 7/8 inches in diameter, with a circumference of 18 inches and a weight of one pound. The most massive stone was verified at 6 1/8 inches in diameter with a weight of 1.25 lbs. Damage included holes in roofs, broken rafters, broken awnings, numerous broken windows and dented vehicles, damaged siding, divots in the ground up to 12 inches long and 3 inches deep, and damaged crops. The state record hailstone was broken on July 23rd, 2010 with the United States record hailstone in Vivian.

1856: The Charter Oak was an unusually large white oak tree growing from around the 12th or 13th century until it fell during a windstorm on this day in 1856. According to tradition, Connecticut's Royal Charter of 1662 was hidden within the hollow of the tree to thwart its confiscation by the English governor-general. The oak became a symbol of American independence and is commemorated on the Connecticut State Quarter.

1883: An estimated F5 tornado caused extensive damage to Rochester Minnesota on this day. The enormous roar was said to have warned most Rochester residents, as the massive funnel cut through the north side of town. Over 135 homes were destroyed, and another 200 damaged. Many of the 200 plus injuries were severe, and other deaths probably occurred but not listed as part of the 37 total mentioned. This damaging tornado eventually led to the formation of the Mayo Clinic.

1888 - A tornado swarm occurred in Maryland and Delaware. Many waterspouts were seen over Chesapeake Bay. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1918 - A tornado struck Tyler, MN, killing 36 persons and destroying most of the business section of the town resulting in a million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1983 - The temperature at Fayetteville, NC, soared to 110 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Early morning thunderstorms produced severe weather in eastern Iowa and west central Illinois. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 82 mph at Moline IL, and tennis ball size hail at Independence IA. Rock Island IL was drenched with 3.70 inches of rain. Total damage for the seven county area of west central Illinois was estimated at twelve million dollars. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms spawned several tornadoes in Iowa, produced wind gusts to 63 mph in the Council Bluffs area, and drenched Sioux Center IA with up to 6.61 inches of rain. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Kansas to Minnesota and North Dakota. Thunderstorms in Minnesota produced baseball size hail from Correll to north of Appleton. Thunderstorms in north central Kansas produced wind gusts higher than 100 mph at Wilson Dam. Thunderstorms around Lincoln NE produced baseball size hail and up to five inches of rain, and Boone NE was deluged with five inches of rain in an hour and a half. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

QUIET PLEASE

The young boys in a Paris school felt that they had learned enough for one week and decided that they would go to the park that Friday afternoon. One of them picked up a pebble and began to tap it on a bench as he sat gazing across a bed of flowers. Intrigued, a boy at the other end of the bench knelt down and put his ear to the board and was able to hear the tapping.

Smiling, he said to his friend, "I heard two gentle taps, a pause and then several loud taps."

A doctor sat watching them with great interest. Suddenly he stood up with a distant look in his eyes as though he was trying to imagine something he had not seen before. At that moment an idea was born in his mind. Whenever he wanted to hear the sounds going on in a person's body, he would place his ear above the organs he was trying to hear. Eventually, he wondered if it were possible to hear the sounds of a patient's organs more clearly if he placed a hollow tube on the person's body. From that idea, the stethoscope was born.

You and I are "God's stethoscopes." He has given us ears to hear the cries of those around us who are suffering and crying out for His hope, help, and healing. It is sad, however, that our ears are often "stuffed" with the noises of this world that we cannot hear their cries and help them find the solution to their problems through the love of God!

Prayer: Lord, all around us are those who need someone to hear their cries, wipe away their tears, and share Your love. Help us to see, hear and help those in need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do



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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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.18.23

10 20 29 44 66 11

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$33,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 54
DRAW: Mins 32 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.19.23

4 22 29 32 39 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$8,540,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 9 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.20.23

2 18 34 41 47 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 24 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.19.23

4 8 19 26 27

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 24
DRAW: Mins 32 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.19.23

19 26 39 65 68 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 53 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.19.23

1 25 27 38 62 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$291,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 53 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

More hearings begin soon for Summit's proposed CO2 pipeline. Where does the project stand?

By JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Public utility regulators in Iowa will begin a hearing Tuesday on a proposed carbon dioxide pipeline for transporting emissions of the climate-warming greenhouse gas for storage underground that has been met by resistant landowners who fear the taking of their land and dangers of a pipeline rupture.

Summit Carbon Solutions' proposed \$5.5 billion, 2,000-mile pipeline network would carry CO2 from 34 ethanol plants in five states to North Dakota for storage deep underground — a project involving carbon capture technology, which has attracted both interest and scrutiny in the U.S.

North Dakota regulators earlier this month denied a siting permit for Summit's proposed route in the state, citing myriad issues they say Summit didn't appropriately address, such as cultural resource impacts, geologic instability and landowner concerns. On Friday, Summit petitioned regulators to reconsider.

Other similar projects are proposed around the country, including ones by Navigator CO2 Ventures and Wolf Carbon Solutions, which would also have routes in Iowa.

Here is what to know about Summit's project as more proceedings begin.

WHAT IS CARBON CAPTURE?

Carbon capture entails the gathering and removal of planet-warming CO2 emissions from industrial plants to be pumped deep underground for permanent storage.

Supporters view the technology as a combatant of climate change. But opponents say carbon capture and storage isn't proven at scale and could require huge investments at the expense of cheaper alternatives such as solar and wind power, all at a time when there is an urgent need to phase out all fossil fuels.

Carbon capture also is viewed by opponents as a way for fossil fuel companies to claim they are addressing climate change without actually having to significantly change their ways.

"I think there's a recognition even in the fossil fuel industry that, whether you like it or not and agree or not, (climate change) is a reality you're going to deal with from a regulatory standpoint, and you'd better get out in front of it or you're going to get left behind," said Derrick Braaten, a Bismarck-based attorney involved in issues related to Summit's project.

New federal tax incentives have made carbon capture a lucrative enterprise. The technology has the support of the Biden administration, with billions of dollars approved by Congress for various carbon capture efforts.

High-profile supporters of Summit's project include North Dakota Republican Gov. Doug Burgum, a presidential candidate who has hailed the state's underground CO2 storage ability as a "geologic jackpot," and oil magnate Harold Hamm, whose company last year announced a \$250 million commitment to Summit's project.

"Carbon capture and storage is going to be more and more important every day as we go forward in America," Hamm has said.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE FIVE STATES?

The Iowa Utilities Board begins its public evidentiary hearing Tuesday in Fort Dodge, a hearing "anticipated to last several weeks," according to a news release. The board's final decision on Summit's permit request will come sometime after the hearing.

Minnesota's Public Utilities Commission has a hearing set for Aug. 31 in which the panel "will make decisions about the scope of environmental review" regarding Summit's permit application for its pipeline in two counties, said Charley Bruce, an energy facilities planner with the commission.

A Summit attorney recently indicated to Minnesota that North Dakota regulators' decision to deny a permit will not affect the company's plans, including for other proposed routes in southern Minnesota.

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The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission is set to begin its evidentiary hearing for the project on Sept. 11 and expects to make a final decision by Nov. 15.

Nebraska has no state-level regulatory authority for CO2 pipelines. Summit is working with counties individually in Nebraska.

Counties don't approve or deny a route, but can institute ordinances' setbacks for land-use purposes that can dictate where a pipeline may go, and can enter into road haul agreements and road crossing permits, said Omaha-based attorney Brian Jorde. He represents more than 1,000 landowners opposed to CO2 pipeline projects in four states.

Summit hasn't hit "an insurmountable legal obstacle" in North Dakota regulators' denial "because they literally said 'try again,'" Braaten said.

"If they get over themselves I think that they could do it and get approved, but I think they certainly shot themselves in the foot and they're making it much harder in those other states because they're going to come in with those commissioners there looking at them with a certain level of skepticism because you literally just got denied a permit in North Dakota," he said.

WHY ARE LANDOWNERS OPPOSED?

Landowners have raised concerns about the pipeline breaking, as well as eminent domain, or the taking of private land for the project, with compensation.

Eminent domain laws vary state by state, said Jorde, who represents hundreds of people Summit has sued in South Dakota to take their land for its pipeline.

"When you have the power of eminent domain like a hammer over a landowner's head, you can intimidate them into doing things they wouldn't otherwise do, which is sign easements, which Summit then turns around and says, 'Look at all these "voluntary" easements we have. Look at all the "support" we have,' which is completely false," Jorde said.

Summit has submitted eminent domain requests to the Iowa board. A Summit spokesperson did not specifically address the company's intentions related to eminent domain when asked by the AP.

"Our team remains incredibly encouraged that Iowa landowners have signed voluntary easement agreements accounting for nearly 75% of the proposed pipeline route," spokesperson Sabrina Ahmed Zenor said in an email. "This overwhelming level of support is a clear reflection that they believe like we do that our project will ensure the long-term viability of the ethanol industry, strengthen the agricultural marketplace for farmers, and generate tens of millions of dollars in new revenue for local communities across the Midwest."

WHAT ABOUT UNDERGROUND STORAGE?

Summit submitted a draft application for underground storage to a three-member state panel which Burgum chairs and includes the attorney general. The timeline for a hearing and decision by the panel is unclear.

Last year, Summit and Minnkota Power Cooperative agreed to "co-develop" CO2 storage facilities in central North Dakota. Their agreement gives Summit access to Minnkota's storage site and sets a framework for jointly developing more CO2 storage nearby.

Minnkota is pursuing Project Tundra, a project to install carbon capture technology at a coal-fired power plant.

Braaten views Summit's Minnkota partnership as a backup plan, to "piggyback on a sure thing," he said.

A North Dakota landowners group is suing over the state's process for allowing CO2 and gas storage on private land, and land survey laws.

Braaten said the lawsuit, which would affect the permitting of a Summit storage site in North Dakota, is not directed at Summit but is tied to longtime legal battles related to landowner rights.

Sweltering temperatures bring misery to large portion of central US, setting heat records

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Sweltering temperatures lingered Sunday in a large swath of the central U.S., causing misery from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes.

Record high temperatures were recorded in Texas and other states. People were told to chug extra water while mowing lawns or exercising outdoors, and to check on neighbors to ensure air conditioning is available. The extreme heat prompted Texas' electric power grid manager to ask residents to voluntarily conserve power for three hours on Sunday night.

"These high temperatures can impact our friends, families, and neighbors who may live alone, especially if they limit their use of air conditioning," Sarah Russell, commissioner for the St. Louis Emergency Management Agency, said in a statement. "We urge everyone to stop and visit loved ones to ensure they are healthy and well during this extreme heat."

The Dallas-Fort Worth area was expected to reach 110 F (43.3 C) Sunday after hitting 108 F (42.2 C) Saturday, said Sarah Barnes, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The record high for those dates was 107 F (41.7 C), set in 2011.

The area is not cooling off enough at night, Barnes said.

"That's really going to contribute to an increased risk of heat-related illnesses," Barnes said Sunday. "That's the main concern when it comes to people and the heat."

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or ERCOT, on Sunday asked the state's 30 million residents to voluntarily reduce power use from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. CDT because of "extreme temperatures, continued high demand and unexpected loss of thermal generation."

ERCOT's request for voluntary power conservation was the second such request in the past three days. The agency said it was not in emergency operations. Many residents still view the power grid nervously more than 2.5 years after a deadly winter blackout.

The heat wave causing misery this weekend is just the latest to punish the U.S. this year.

Scientists have long warned that climate change, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation and by certain agricultural practices, will lead to more and prolonged bouts of extreme weather, including hotter temperatures.

The entire globe has simmered to record heat both in June and July. And if that's not enough, smoke from wildfires, floods and droughts have caused problems globally.

The National Weather Service set an excessive heat warning Sunday for parts of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. Heat advisories or watches were also in place in parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota.

Tourism in New Orleans often slows during the peak of summer heat, and that's happening as temperatures approach 100 F (37.8 C).

NOLA Poboys is closing two days a week for now, said Lucas McQueen, one of the restaurant's chefs. "I can't wait to be complaining about being cold," McQueen told WWL-TV.

The temperature reached a record high for the date of 104 F (40 C) Saturday in Jackson, Mississippi, as people walked between indoor and outdoor events at the Mississippi Book Festival. Volunteers distributed chilled water, and people used handheld fans while chatting with authors and shopping for books at large tents outside the state Capitol building.

Houston on Sunday added to its ongoing streak of high temperatures at or above 100 F (37.8 C). Through Sunday, the high temperature in Houston has been at least 100 F for 22 days. Sunday's high was 108 F (42.2 C), breaking a record for the date that goes back to 1909.

The stifling heat in Texas overwhelmed people taking part in orientation for new students at Prairie View A&M University, 48 miles (77 kilometers) northwest of Houston. University officials said they were reviewing operations after 38 students were hospitalized Friday night after suffering heat-related illnesses, including dehydration. One student was taken by helicopter to a hospital in nearby College Station, while

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37 were taken in ambulances to other facilities, Waller County EMS Chief Rhonda Getschman told KBTX. "It's very easy to overheat quickly in this Texas heat. We highly encourage everyone to stay indoors as much as possible," Getschman said.

Much of Iowa is expected to see high temperatures in the upper 90s Sunday and Monday, followed by three days where the reading will likely top 100 F (37.8 C).

The heat was worrisome for Sunday as thousands were expected for the final day of the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines. In a Facebook post, fair officials urged patrons to visit air-conditioned buildings, take regular breaks and stay hydrated.

Forecasters expected high temperatures to reach 99 F (37.2 C) to 103 F (39.4 C) through Friday in St. Louis, and the heat's only part of the problem: Excessive humidity will lead to a heat index of up to 115 F (46.1 C) each day. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that if the prediction holds, it will be the worst stretch of heat in St. Louis since August 2014, when temperatures rose to about 95 F (35 C) for seven straight days.

Similar heat is expected all week in Little Rock, Arkansas, prompting the community to open several cooling centers for people who live on the streets or without air conditioning.

Last month, the Phoenix area broiled under a record-setting 31 days of daily high temperatures of 110 F (43.4 C) or above. The historic heat began blasting the region in June, stretching from Texas across New Mexico and Arizona and into California's desert. The previous record was 18 straight days in 1974. In July, the continental United States set a record for overnight warmth, providing little relief from daytime heat for people, animals, plants and the electric grid, meteorologists said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports just 600 to 700 heat deaths annually in the United States. But experts say the mishmash of ways that more than 3,000 counties calculate heat deaths means the public doesn't really know how many people die in the U.S. each year.

Two people killed after car is struck by train in South Dakota

ELKTON, S.D. (AP) — Two people died when a car was struck by train in South Dakota, an accident that caused the train to derail and crash into a grain elevator.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol said the accident that happened Friday night remains under investigation. The names of the two victims, both of whom were in the car struck by the train, have not been released.

The patrol said a 2011 Kia Sorento was traveling south on South Dakota Highway 13 when it crashed through a warning arm at a train crossing and struck the train.

The car caught fire, trapping both people inside. Meanwhile, the train derailed and crashed into the grain elevator.

Both of the car's occupants were pronounced dead at the scene.

The GOP presidential debate puts a spotlight on Wisconsin, one of the few remaining swing states

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — When Republican candidates for president gather for their first debate Wednesday in Milwaukee, the spotlight will not only be on them but also on Wisconsin's role as one of a shrinking handful of genuine battleground states.

Republicans chose Milwaukee for the first debate and for the national convention in just 11 months largely because of Wisconsin's well-earned status as a swing state. Four of the past six presidential elections have been decided by less than a percentage point here, with Donald Trump winning narrowly in 2016 before losing by a similar margin in 2020.

"Everybody needs to be prepared for all-out war as usual," said longtime Republican strategist Stephan Thompson.

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To participate in Wednesday's debate, the Republican National Committee required candidates to meet donor and polling thresholds and sign a pledge to support the GOP candidate in the general election. Trump, the frontrunner who faces criminal charges in four separate cases, says he will not attend.

Those expected to be on the stage include Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, former Vice President Mike Pence, ex-Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey, and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum. Former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and Michigan businessman Perry Johnson also say they have met the requirements to make the stage. The official lineup is still coming together because candidates have until Monday evening to provide evidence to the RNC that they have qualified.

The first GOP primary voters will weigh in on the nomination in less than five months, when Iowa holds its Jan. 15 caucus, followed by other early states in February. The eventual nominee is expected to face President Joe Biden in November.

Wisconsin will be one of the biggest toss-ups in the general election. It's a distinction held by a shrinking but often-shifting number of places, as former swing states like Ohio and Florida become more reliably Republican and Virginia and Colorado more Democratic. That leaves Wisconsin along with Georgia, Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Nevada as among the most competitive states that could decide the presidency.

In a sign of Wisconsin's importance, Biden traveled to Milwaukee last week to talk up his work to create manufacturing jobs. On Sunday, his campaign announced it is spending \$25 million to run ads in seven states, including Wisconsin, to counter Republicans as they debate. The ad buy includes the campaign's first investments in Hispanic and Black media, the campaign said.

Wisconsin's status as a top electoral target dates back more than 20 years.

In 2000, Democrat Al Gore carried Wisconsin by a scant 5,700 votes, or just .22% of the total votes cast. That makes Biden's win in 2020 by nearly 21,000 votes, or a .56% margin, look like a blow out. Two other races — John Kerry's .38% margin of victory in 2004 and Trump's .77% win in 2016 — were also razor close.

And there's no sign of Wisconsin becoming any less evenly divided.

Democrats have been able to chip into the once-reliably conservative Milwaukee suburbs that saw GOP support drop in the Trump era. Democrats also capitalized on population gains in Dane County, home to the liberal capital city of Madison and the University of Wisconsin.

The Democratic moves have been able to help offset Republican gains made in rural areas during the Trump era.

"Wisconsin has almost the exact mix of urban, suburban and rural populations that are needed to maintain a competitive status," said Anthony Chergosky, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse political science professor. "It all adds up to a state that is highly contested politically but a state that does not look like it did 10, 20 or 30 years ago."

Democratic U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, whose district includes Madison, noted Republicans chose Wisconsin to be the first state to launch its early voting effort, embracing a tactic long used by Democrats but that Trump and others in the GOP shunned and falsely asserted was rife with fraud. Trump also now is encouraging early voting.

Democrats in Wisconsin are headed into the 2024 presidential season feeling emboldened.

They have won 14 of the past 17 statewide elections, including Biden in 2020, Gov. Tony Evers in 2022 and Janet Protasiewicz in April. Her victory in the Wisconsin Supreme Court race took majority control of the court away from conservatives for the first time in 15 years, with major decisions looming on abortion access, redistricting and voting rules.

Republicans have had wins, including reelecting U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson last year, picking up a congressional seat and increasing majorities in the state Senate and Assembly. But those gains were overshadowed by the losses in the presidential, governor and Supreme Court races, Thompson said.

In addition to the presidential race, Democratic U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin is up for reelection to a third term next year. And both sides are preparing for the possibility that the new liberal-controlled Wisconsin

Supreme Court orders new legislative maps and forces every current lawmaker to stand for election.

On the presidential race, DeSantis was showing strength this summer while he struggled nationally.

Trump was favored by 31% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents surveyed, while DeSantis was at 30% in a Marquette University Law School poll released June 29. But in a head-to-head matchup, DeSantis was favored by 57% and Trump by 41%.

Since that poll was done, Trump was indicted for a third and fourth time and DeSantis shook up his campaign as he struggles to chip into Trump's support nationally.

Wisconsin Republicans are more divided on Trump than the past two times he ran. Trump's refusal to accept defeat in 2020, and his repeated lies about the outcome in Wisconsin and calls to decertify the results, alienated him from many top Republicans.

"He's kind of like a warm beer," the Democrat Pocan said of Trump. "He's not exactly what we strive for here in the state. I just don't think there's a lot of growth potential for him should he be the Republican nominee."

DeSantis, during a July fundraising swing to Wisconsin, attracted more than a dozen Republican state lawmakers to an event, including former Gov. Tommy Thompson, former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch and Tim Michels, the 2022 Republican candidate for governor. The hosts included Republican mega-donors Dick and Liz Uihlein, who donated to efforts to get Trump elected in 2016 and 2020.

"Wisconsin Republicans are going to think about one, is this somebody who can beat Trump in a primary and two, can they beat Biden?" Thompson said. "At the end of the day, people here just want to win. Plain and simple."

Associated Press writer Sara Burnett in Chicago contributed to this report.

Guatemala elects progressive Arévalo as president but there are legal moves to block him from office

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — A progressive from outside Guatemala's power structure was resoundingly elected the country's next president Sunday in a reprimand to the governing elite over widespread allegations of corruption.

Despite preliminary results showing a potential landslide for anti-corruption crusader Bernardo Arévalo, the attention immediately turned to whether he would be allowed to assume power as the Attorney General's Office attempts to suspend his party's legal status.

With 100% of votes counted, preliminary results gave Arévalo 58% of the vote to 37% for former first lady Sandra Torres in her third bid for the presidency. The official results will still have to be certified.

"We know that there is a political persecution underway that is being carried out through the institutions and prosecutor's offices and judges that have been corruptly co-opted," Arévalo said Sunday night. "We want to think that the force of this victory is going to make it clear that there is no place for the attempts to derail the electoral process. The Guatemalan people have spoken forcefully."

Arévalo said outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei congratulated him and told him that they would begin planning the transition the day after the results were certified.

But Guatemalans still remember that an hour before the results from the first round of voting were certified last month, the Attorney General's Office announced it was investigating the signatures gathered by Arévalo's Seed Movement party to register years earlier. A judge briefly suspended the party's legal status before a higher court intervened.

Eduardo Núñez, the Guatemala resident senior director for the National Democratic Institute, expected two trends to continue and intensify in the coming days: the country's polarization and the judicialization of the electoral process.

Núñez said there will be three key moments: the immediate positions staked out by Arévalo's Seed Movement and Torres' National Unity of Hope party about the results; then on Oct. 31, when Guatemala's

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electoral process officially ends and the Seed Movement will no longer enjoy the legal protection that would keep it from being cancelled, and finally on Jan. 14, when Giammattei is constitutionally mandated to leave office.

"It is likely that there could be a series of official actions that look to modify in one way or another what happened in the June elections and what could happen now in the August elections," Núñez said.

A big question remained how Guatemalans could react to any government actions that appear to go against the will of the voters.

Alec Escobar celebrated Arévalo's victory in downtown Guatemala City but said he knew difficult days lie ahead.

Even if Torres or others do not accept the result, and the attorney general moves against the Seed Movement, Escobar said he and other young people who formed Arévalo's base of support were ready to act.

"Just like we protected the first electoral round, we are going to protect the country's democracy," he said.

Edmond Mulet is a former Guatemalan diplomat and president of Congress, who competed in the first round of the election as the presidential candidate for the Cabal party. Prosecutors have three open cases against him and his party, in what he said was a safeguard in case he had made it to the runoff.

He noted that in 2015, massive street protests pushed President Otto Pérez Molina, accused of massive corruption, to resign. Mulet does not see the current situation as clear-cut and believes Guatemala's power structure will use legal tools to create confusion and sow doubt in hopes of avoiding a massive united public reaction.

"In any other country in the world, the people would have been out in the streets a long time ago, but in Guatemala there's another solution: migration," Mulet said. "That's the pressure valve. Elsewhere this would have exploded already."

Hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans have emigrated to the United States in recent years, and the Biden administration considers Guatemala's corruption to be a major push factor for migrants.

Mulet sees at least two possible scenarios in the coming weeks and months.

In one, the Seed Movement is cancelled and Arévalo is allowed to assume the presidency without a party. It would have dire effects on his party's representatives in the Congress, who would be barred from holding leadership positions or leading committees. They would already be in the minority.

Arévalo could expect almost immediate attempts from Congress to remove him from office and struggle to advance any sort of legislation.

In the other scenario described by Mulet, the Attorney General's Office succeeds in cancelling the legal status of the Seed Movement. Then it makes the argument that because the party was improperly registered, everything that occurred afterward, including Arévalo's nomination, is nullified and he cannot assume the presidency.

If Giammattei leaves office as constitutionally mandated on Jan. 14 and there is not a president-elect -- or vice president-elect -- to take his place, the next in line would be the president of the Congress, almost certainly a Giammattei ally. The president of Congress would then present a list of three names, possibly including his or her own, to Congress and lawmakers would select a temporary president for the nation.

It is such new legal territory that it is unclear if that would be to serve out Arévalo's full term or if a new election could be called sooner, Núñez said.

Before Sunday's results were known, Mulet speculated that a large margin of victory for Arévalo could make his opponents think twice about their next steps.

"I think they've been testing Guatemalans ... to see if they're going to mobilize," Mulet said.

Immigrant workers' lives, livelihoods and documents in limbo after the Hawaii fire

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN, JULIE WATSON and ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — Freddy Tomas was working in his yard in Lahaina when the fire advanced with stunning speed right up to his fence. He rushed to save valuables from a safe inside his house but realized he didn't have time and fled, his face blackened with soot.

Days after fleeing in his pickup truck, amid smoke so thick he could only follow the red taillights of the vehicle in front of him and pray they were going the right way, the retired hotel worker from the Philippines returned to his destroyed home with his son to look for the safe. Tomas, 65, said it had contained passports, naturalization papers, other important documents and \$35,000.

After sifting through the ashes, father and son found the safe, but it had popped open in the fire, whipped by hurricane-force winds, and its contents were incinerated.

For immigrants like Tomas, Lahaina was an oasis, with nearly double the foreign-born population of the U.S. mainland. Now, those workers are trying to piece their lives back together after the Aug. 8 fire leveled the town.

Maui County and the Maui Police Department on Sunday confirmed the identities of another five victims of the wildfires that devastated the area, the county website said. The confirmed death toll remained at 114 as investigators continued to search the area.

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said Sunday on the CBS News show "Face the Nation" that "an army of search and rescue teams" with 41 dogs have covered 85% of the impacted area.

Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen said in a social media post Sunday that 27 victims have been identified and 11 families were notified of the losses. The FBI and the Maui County Medical Examiner and Coroner office are working together to identify the recovered remains.

"There are currently 850 names on the list of missing persons," Bissen said, adding that the number represented a positive change from the original list containing more than 2,000 names.

"Over 1,285 individuals have been located safe. We are both saddened and relieved about these numbers as we continue the recovery process. The number of identified will rise, and the number of missing may decrease," Bissen said, explaining there is an expectation of daily fluctuations and that he plans to provide an update each day.

Jobs had been plentiful in the town that boasted a row of restaurants and shops along Lahaina's Front Street, bordering the azure waters of the Pacific. Lured as well by its beautiful vistas and laid-back lifestyle, foreign workers had flocked to Lahaina from all over the world.

And they contributed significantly to the population and economy.

The presence of immigrant workers in Lahaina boosted the proportion of its foreign-born residents to 32%, which is almost double the 13.5% for the United States as a whole, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated in July 2022.

Still the labor shortage related to the COVID-19 pandemic took a toll in Hawaii, just as it did on the mainland. In February, almost three years after the start of the pandemic, employers were trying to fill 14,000 jobs in Hawaii — roughly double the number of unfilled job openings pre-pandemic, Hawaii News Now reported, citing state economists. Restaurants in Lahaina were literally hiring people off the street.

Many foreign-born workers lost everything in the inferno. Some residents perished.

The Mexican Consulate in San Francisco said two men were confirmed dead and was helping to arrange the return of their remains to their families in Mexico. A Costa Rican man was also among the 100-plus dead and many more remain missing.

The consulate said some 3,000 Mexican nationals are believed to be living on Maui, many working in pineapple fields, in hotels and restaurants, and other establishments with ties to tourism.

Mexico's Consul General in San Francisco, Remedios Gomez Arnau, dispatched three staff members to Maui to help Mexican citizens deal with the tragedy. The Mexican government has been in contact with at least 250 of its citizens in Maui, she said, and reissued passports and birth certificates lost in the fire.

"Many of them lost everything because their homes burned down, and they lost their documents," she said in an interview Friday.

With businesses burned down, legions of those who survived are now jobless. Many are also without a place to live after the blaze also tore through housing of many people who worked at the town's hotels and resorts. And others are without a clear path forward.

Immigration attorney Kevin Block noted that some immigrants have permanent residency or temporary protected status, and some are in the United States illegally.

"A lot of those folks are nervous about applying for any kind of help," he said. "When (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) rolls into town or when there's government agencies around or even medical help, they're very scared to get it because they're scared of getting deported."

A document provided by FEMA says anyone affected by a major disaster may be eligible for disaster assistance, including noncitizens whose deportation status is being withheld for at least one year, as well as noncitizens granted asylum. That assistance can include crisis counseling, legal assistance, medical care, food and shelter, and other relief services.

However, callers to the FEMA assistance hotline are told in recorded messages that they should provide a social security number and are warned that lying in an application for aid is a federal offense.

For immigrants who were brought to Maui as children, it is the only home they know.

"They are working as first responders, providing food, delivering supplies," Block said. "They are right there with everybody else checking to see who needs help. It's become more apparent than ever how vital they are to the community."

Chuy Madrigal fled the blaze with nine members of his extended family, which originally is from Mexico.

They lost the home that his mom worked 30 years to save up enough money to buy and the food truck they started operating just three months ago, said Madrigal, who is a recipient of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, for immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children but don't have legal status.

Madrigal said he and others from the immigrant community have been knocking on doors to gather supplies for those in need and offering to translate. They have tried to comfort those, like him, who lost everything.

"There has been a lot of fear," he said. "But once you talk to people and tell them, 'When we got here, we started from zero, this is zero again, we just got to get back on it and continue' — a lot of people have said, 'You're right.'"

The family is planning to rebuild their lives again on Maui.

Zelenskyy thanks Danes in person for F-16s, though the planes won't have an immediate war impact

By JAN M. OLSEN Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked Danish lawmakers on Monday for helping his country resist Russia's invasion, a day after Denmark and the Netherlands announced they will provide Kyiv with American-made F-16 warplanes that could be delivered around the end of the year.

Zelenskyy told the lawmakers in Copenhagen that if Russia's invasion is successful, other parts of Europe would be at risk from the Kremlin's military aggression.

"All of Russia's neighbors are under threat if Ukraine does not prevail," he said in a speech.

Zelenskyy portrays Ukraine as defending Western values of freedom and democracy against tyranny. He has argued that Ukraine needs to be properly provisioned to fend off Russia's much bigger force.

Ukraine has been pressing its Western allies for months to give it F-16s. Its armed forces are still using aging Soviet-era combat planes from the 1970s and '80s, and its counteroffensive against Russian positions is advancing without air support, which analysts say is a major handicap.

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Zelenskyy said on Telegram that Ukraine would get 42 jets. Denmark pledged 19 F-16s, which could be delivered around the end of the year when pilot training lasting four to six months is completed.

However, getting Ukrainian squadrons battle-ready could take much longer.

U.S. Air Force Gen. James Hecker, commander of U.S. air forces in Europe and Africa, said last week that he did not expect the F-16s to be a game-changer for Ukraine. Getting F-16 squadrons ready for battle could take "four or five years," he said.

While some training has already begun for Ukrainian pilots, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Sunday it's just language lessons so far.

Training Ukrainian pilots is just one of the challenges in the anticipated deployment of F-16s. Questions also remain over who will carry out crucial aircraft maintenance, the supply of spare parts, runway maintenance and protective shelters for the planes on the ground, and what weapons the West will supply to arm the fighter jets.

Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat said the F-16s will help Ukraine "change the course of events" in the war.

"Air superiority is the key to success on the ground," he said in televised remarks.

Denmark rolled out the red carpet for Zelenskyy's trip to Copenhagen. He also met at the Christiansborg Palace, the building housing the Danish parliament, with Denmark's 83-year-old figurehead monarch, Queen Margrethe, who returned from vacation for the occasion. Afterward, he addressed the crowds gathered outside from the parliament steps.

The United States last week announced its approval for the Netherlands and Denmark to deliver the F-16s. That is needed because the aircraft are made in the United States.

On Sunday, Zelenskyy visited the Netherlands and inspected two gray F-16s parked in a hangar at a Dutch base in the southern city of Eindhoven together with Rutte.

Rutte didn't provide a number or timeframe for deliveries, saying it depends on how soon Ukrainian crews and infrastructure are ready.

Zelenskyy started his trip Saturday in Sweden, where he asked Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson for Swedish Gripen fighter jets. Sweden has said it will allow Ukrainian pilots to test the planes but has not made any commitments to hand them over.

Kristersson said Monday that Sweden needs the Gripen planes for its own defense, noting that the country's bid to join NATO has not been finalized.

"We don't rule anything out in the future," he told the TV4 channel. "We will do everything we can to support them also with aircraft. But right now there are no new commitments to provide Swedish aircraft to Ukraine."

On Monday, Russian air defenses jammed a Ukrainian drone west of Moscow and shot down another one on the outskirts of the city, Russia's Defense Ministry said.

Two people were injured and one of them was hospitalized when drone fragments fell on a private house, Andrei Vorobyov, the governor of the Moscow region, said.

Such drone attacks have become an almost daily occurrence in Russia in recent weeks.

Also, Russian rail officials said that a relay cabinet used to run train traffic was set ablaze on the outskirts of Moscow, causing delays, according to the state RIA Novosti news agency.

Russian authorities have reported multiple similar incidents across the country, some of which have been blamed on acts of sabotage encouraged by Ukrainian security agencies.

In Ukraine, at least four civilians were killed and 25 others wounded by the latest Russian attacks, according to the Ukrainian presidential office.

The dead included a 71-year-old man killed by Russian shelling in the northeastern Kharkiv region, near the border with Russia.

UK judge set to sentence Lucy Letby, the most prolific child killer in modern UK history

By DANICA KIRKA and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A judge on Monday is set to sentence Lucy Letby, the most prolific child killer in modern U.K. history, for murdering seven babies and attempting to kill six others while working as a neonatal nurse at a hospital in northern England.

Justice James Goss could level the most severe sentence possible under British law by imposing multiple life terms to ensure that Letby will spend the rest of her life behind bars.

Following 22 days of deliberation, a jury at Manchester Crown Court convicted Letby, 33, of killing the babies over a yearlong period that saw her prey on the vulnerabilities of sick newborns and their anxious parents.

The victims died in the neonatal unit at the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England between June 2015 and June 2016.

Letby did not attend the hearing. That has fueled anger from the families of the victims, who wanted her to listen to statements read out in court by the parents of her victims about the devastation caused by her crimes.

"You thought it was your right to play God with our children's lives," the mother of twins, one of whom was murdered and the other whom Letby tried to kill, said in a statement to the court.

Politicians and victim advocates have called for changes in the law to force criminals to appear for sentencing after several high-profile convicts chose not to face their victims in recent months.

During Letby's 10-month trial, prosecutors said that in 2015 the hospital started to see a significant rise in the number of babies who were dying or suffering sudden declines in their health for no apparent reason.

Some suffered "serious catastrophic collapses" but survived after help from medical staff.

Letby was on duty in all of the cases, with prosecutors describing her as a "constant malevolent presence" in the neonatal unit when the children collapsed or died. The nurse harmed babies in ways that were difficult to detect, and she persuaded colleagues that their collapses and deaths were normal, they said.

Senior doctors said over the weekend that they had raised concerns about Letby as early as October 2015 and that children might have been saved if managers had taken their concerns seriously.

Dr. Stephen Brearey, head consultant at the Countess of Chester Hospital's neonatal unit, told the Guardian newspaper that deaths could arguably have been avoided as early as February 2016 if executives had "responded appropriately" to an urgent meeting request from concerned doctors.

Letby was finally removed from frontline duties in late June of 2016. She was arrested at her home in July 2018.

An independent inquiry will be conducted into how the hospital responded to the deaths.

Rights group says Saudi Arabian border guards fired on and killed hundreds of Ethiopian migrants

By JON GAMBRELL and EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Border guards in Saudi Arabia have fired machine guns and launched mortars at Ethiopians trying to cross into the kingdom from Yemen, likely killing hundreds of the unarmed migrants in recent years, Human Rights Watch said in a report released Monday.

The rights group cited eyewitness reports of attacks by troops and images that showed dead bodies and burial sites on migrant routes, saying the death toll could even be "possibly thousands."

The United Nations has already questioned Saudi Arabia about its troops opening fire on the migrants in an escalating pattern of attacks along its southern border with war-torn Yemen.

A Saudi government official, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak publicly, called the Human Rights Watch report "unfounded and not based on reliable sources," without

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of a convicted former president vie against the principal heir of a banana growing and exporting empire.

No candidate in Sunday's special presidential election received enough support to be declared winner. The election process took place under the watch of tens of thousands of police officers and soldiers deployed across the country, partly in response to the assassination of a presidential candidate earlier this month.

With more than 85% the votes counted late Sunday, results from the National Electoral Council had leftist Luisa González in the lead, with about 33% of support. She had been the frontrunner heading into the contest, but the Election Day's surprise came from former lawmaker Daniel Noboa who received about 24% votes even though he never placed above fifth place in polls.

To win outright, a candidate needed 50% of the vote, or to have at least 40% with a 10-point lead over the closest opponent.

Early Monday, a magnitude 5.5. earthquake rattled Guayaquil, the port city that has been the epicenter of the country's violence. Buildings shook and people rushed into the streets, evacuating a hotel in the business district. The quake was centered 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) east of Machala and was 60 kilometers (37 miles) deep, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

Christian Zurita was in third place with 16%. His name was not on the ballot, but he replaced Fernando Villavicencio, whose killing this month as he left a campaign rally in Quito, the capital, laid bare people's fears over unprecedented violence in a country they considered peaceful up until three years ago.

"For me, it is an honor to be in third place in these elections," Zurita said while wearing a bulletproof vest. "We have a lot to be proud of. This candidacy has been a light for the country because it is based on the moral stature of those of us who have fought for this country and even died (for it)."

Villavicencio's killing heightened people's concerns over the violent crime affecting Ecuadorians in low-income and wealthy neighborhoods nationwide. Many people interpreted it as a sign that not even politicians are safe anymore.

Gen. Fausto Salinas, commander general of the National Police, said one person was arrested for false voting, two for harassment and resisting arrest and more than 20 for unlawfully carrying guns.

González, a lawyer and former lawmaker, spent much of her campaign highlighting her affiliation with the party of former President Rafael Correa. The former president remains influential even though in 2020 he was found guilty of corruption and sentenced in absentia to eight years in prison. He has been living in his wife's native Belgium since 2017.

Noboa, 35, was the youngest of the eight candidates and had not appeared higher than fifth place in polls going into the election. He is the son of Alvaro Noboa, who sought Ecuador's presidency five times and grew an empire based on bananas, the country's main crop.

María Cristina Bayas, a professor at the University of the Americas, said Sunday's results were "unexpected, surprising, but hopeful in a certain way, because they give rise to a new voice, which is Noboa." She added that he represents an electorate looking for a new political presence with a good academic background.

Surrounded by supporters, the younger Noboa told reporters that he has not achieved his goal because he has not yet won the presidency. "Tomorrow, we will have to start working again campaigning. There's a runoff."

The election was called after President Guillermo Lasso, a conservative former banker, dissolved the National Assembly by decree in May to avoid being impeached over allegations that he failed to intervene to end a faulty contract between the state-owned oil transport company and a private tanker company. He decided not to run in the special election.

The winner of the Oct. 15 runoff will govern only for the remainder of Lasso's unfinished term, meaning less than two years.

Voting in Ecuador is mandatory for most voters, and many of them weighed the risk of getting robbed against a fine and inconveniences they could face for not voting.

In addition to a universal demand for safety, the new president will need to address an economy strug-

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gling to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The country's Central Bank reduced its growth expectation for 2023 from 3.1% to 2.6%, an annual economic performance that analysts forecast will be even lower.

"Those of us who have children hope for a better economy," said Karina Navarro, 44. "If the economy grows, jobs will be generated, and there will be a domino effect. It will improve the crisis in terms of assaults, robberies, killings."

Navarro, an accountant, voted in Samborondón, an upper-class area with gated communities separated from Guayaquil by a river. "Honestly, I don't go out anymore because they even rob in gated communities," she said.

Voters were also electing a new National Assembly and deciding two ballot measures — one on whether to stop oil extraction in a portion of the Amazon jungle and the other on whether to authorize the exploitation of minerals such as gold, silver and copper in forests of the Andean Choco around Quito.

On Sunday, children joined parents and grandparents who voted at the University of Guayaquil.

Jamndrye Correa, 18, voted for president for the first time. He said he cast his ballot with crime and violence in mind.

"Everyone is afraid of crime," said Correa, a student who was robbed at gunpoint about two years ago outside his home.

Vote count in Ecuador points to likely runoff between ally of ex-president and banana tycoon's son

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP) — Ecuadorians put aside fears of leaving their homes amid unprecedented violence and voted for a new president Sunday in a special election that was heavily guarded by police and soldiers in part due to the assassination of a presidential candidate this month.

No candidate received enough support to be declared winner, with early results pointing to a leftist backed by a fugitive ex-president likely facing a runoff with the son of a banana tycoon. Trailing them was the substitute of Fernando Villavicencio, who was killed Aug. 9 while leaving a campaign rally.

Authorities deployed more than 100,000 police and soldiers to protect the vote against more violence. Gen. Fausto Salinas, commander general of the National Police, said one person was arrested for false voting, two for harassment and resisting arrest and more than 20 for unlawfully carrying guns.

With about 88% of the votes counted late Sunday, results from the National Electoral Council had leftist Luisa González in the lead with about 33% of support. Former lawmaker Daniel Noboa was second with about 24%. To win outright, a candidate needed 50% of the vote, or to have at least 40% with a 10-point lead over the closest opponent.

Christian Zurita was in third place with 16%. His name was not on the ballot, but he substituted for Fernando Villavicencio, whose killing this month laid bare people's fears over unprecedented violence in a country they considered peaceful up until three years ago.

"For me, it is an honor to be in third place in these elections," Zurita said. "We have a lot to be proud of. This candidacy has been a light for the country because it is based on the moral stature of those of us who have fought for this country and even died (for it)."

The front-runner in opinion polling had been González, a lawyer and former lawmaker whose campaign highlighted her affiliation with the party of Correa. The former president remains influential even though in 2020 he was found guilty of corruption and sentenced in absentia to eight years in prison. He has been living in his wife's native Belgium since 2017.

Noboa, 35, was the youngest of the eight candidates and had not appeared higher than fifth place in polls going into the election. He is the son of Alvaro Noboa, who built his wealth on a huge banana-growing and exporting business and attempted to win Ecuador's presidency several times.

Surrounded by supporters, the younger Noboa told reporters Sunday night that he has not achieved his goal because he has not yet won the presidency. "Tomorrow, we will have to start working again campaigning. There's a runoff."

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The election was called after President Guillermo Lasso, a conservative former banker, dissolved the National Assembly by decree in May to avoid being impeached over allegations that he failed to intervene to end a faulty contract between the state-owned oil transport company and a private tanker company. He decided not to run in the special election.

The winner of the Oct. 15 runoff will govern only for the remainder of Lasso's unfinished term, meaning less than two years.

The country's top electoral authority, Diana Atamaint, reported no violent incidents affected voting centers and characterized the election as "peaceful and safe" after polls closed.

Voting in Ecuador is mandatory for most voters, and many of them weighed the risk of getting robbed against a fine and inconveniences they could face for not voting.

"Nobody votes for pleasure. We must go out (to vote)," Isaac Pérez, a 31-year-old warehouse worker, said after casting a ballot at the University of Guayaquil.

Pérez has been robbed twice in public transit buses and doesn't think any of the candidates will fix the country's social problems.

"I don't think anyone is going to change anything. On Monday, one will still have to go work to support one's family," he said.

Ecuadorians were already struggling to make sense of the violent crime their once calm South American country has experienced over the last three years, and then Villavicencio was assassinated as he left a campaign rally in Quito, the capital. His killing heightened people's fears of spending time anywhere other than their homes and becoming victims of robberies, kidnappings, extortions, homicides or any of the other crimes that have become commonplace.

Villavicencio's slaying was the third and most prominent in a string of killings of political leaders this year. Six Colombian men have been arrested in connection with his killing.

In addition to a universal demand for safety, the new president will need to address an economy that is struggling to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The country's Central Bank reduced its growth expectation for 2023 from 3.1% to 2.6%, an annual economic performance that analysts forecast will be even lower.

"Those of us who have children hope for a better economy," said Karina Navarro, 44. "If the economy grows, jobs will be generated, and there will be a domino effect. It will improve the crisis in terms of assaults, robberies, killings."

Navarro, an accountant, voted in Samborondón, an upper-class area with gated communities separated from Guayaquil by a river. "Honestly, I don't go out anymore because they even rob in gated communities," she said.

Voters were also electing a new National Assembly and deciding two ballot measures — one on whether to stop oil extraction in a portion of the Amazon jungle and the other on whether to authorize the exploitation of minerals such as gold, silver and copper in forests of the Andean Choco around Quito.

On Sunday, children joined parents and grandparents who voted at the University of Guayaquil.

Jamndrye Correa, 18, voted for president for the first time. He said he cast his ballot with crime and violence in mind.

"The crime is very advanced. Everyone is afraid of crime," said Correa, a student who was robbed at gunpoint about two years ago outside his home.

Progressive Arévalo is 'virtual winner' of Guatemala election after corruption angered voters

By SONIA PÉREZ D. and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Outsider Bernardo Arévalo appeared to be the "virtual winner" of Sunday's election to be Guatemala's next president after voters angry at widespread corruption and leaders' failure to tackle it made a decisive choice for change.

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A potential victory by the progressive candidate is almost certainly distressing politicians who have been enjoying impunity for corruption, along with some members of the monied elite and their allies in organized crime.

With more than 99% of the votes counted, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal reported that the son of former president Juan José Arévalo, representing the Seed Movement, led former first lady Sandra Torres by 58% to 37%.

Supreme Electoral Tribunal Magistrate Blanca Alfaro called Arévalo the "virtual winner" and called for an immediate national dialogue to begin to reconcile the country's deep political divides.

"We are going to make a government that is for all Guatemalans, a government that takes care of all people, despite differences," Arévalo said. "All of us share a love for Guatemala. That's what we have been working for and we will continue tirelessly to build a new spring."

Arévalo said he had received calls from outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei, El Salvador President Nayib Bukele and Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador congratulating him.

He said Giammattei invited him to begin an orderly transition the day after the results are certified.

Some of Arévalo's supporters gathered at a plaza downtown in the capital waving flags and blowing horns.

Jhamy Lucas, 27, cried tears of joy in the Obelisk plaza. "I am so happy because I am going to be able to live in my country," she said. "I'm not going to have to migrate to survive."

Arévalo posted a brief message to X, saying "Long live Guatemala!"

The results are unlikely to be the last word: It took more than two weeks for the results of the first round of voting in June to be certified. Losing parties got the courts to intervene and order a review of precinct vote tallies.

When electoral authorities were finally ready to certify, the Attorney General's Office announced an investigation into signatures that the Seed Movement had gathered to register years earlier as a party. That investigation continues, and prosecutors appear to be on a path to stripping Arévalo of his party.

Arévalo made it into the runoff with only about 654,000 votes or 11% of the total in the first round in June. On Sunday, he received more than 2.4 million.

The two candidates offered starkly different paths forward. Torres became an ally of the outgoing, deeply unpopular Giammattei in her third bid for the presidency. Arévalo, with the progressive Seed Movement, rode a wave of popular resentment toward politics to his surprise spot in the runoff.

But moves to drag the electoral process into the courts after the first round of voting in June led many Guatemalans to wonder what was to come between Sunday's results and the transfer of power Jan. 14.

Central America's most populous country and the region's largest economy continues to struggle with poverty and violence that have driven hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans to migrate to the U.S.

Voting appeared to have been peaceful. The Attorney General's Office, which sought unsuccessfully to suspend Arévalo's party before the vote, announced several arrests for interference with the process, but they appeared to be minor.

Political analyst Renzo Rosal noted the heavier than usual presence of uniformed agents from the Attorney General's Office at voting centers across the country "could be taken as a form of intimidation." The Associated Press saw such agents at several voting centers.

Antonio González voted late Sunday, shortly before polls closed, at a teachers' school in the capital.

The 42-year-old tractor-trailer driver said he hoped Guatemala's powerful would respect the will of the voters. He wants someone to tackle corruption and improve education and the economy. Without those things, Guatemalans will continue to migrate to the U.S. like two of his co-workers recently had.

Thinking of the future of his children, he said, "We hope that they improve the economy, that there's work."

Poll workers at each voting table immediately began tallying ballots. One person would unfold each ballot, show it to the party observers at the table and announce which party received the vote.

Earlier Sunday, Roxana Abigail González voted for Arévalo, hoping that he would make a difference for her future. "I think he could be a good president," she said.

The 25-year-old student lives in Villa Nueva, a gritty hillside suburb above the capital. Thieves and gangs that extort businesses and kill those who don't pay roam its cratered streets. González said she has had the possessions she carried stolen multiple times, making her nervous to venture out alone.

Among her hopes for Guatemala's next government are more security, jobs for the poor families whose children she sees begging in the streets and more hospitals.

González wants to continue on to college and study business administration. She loves to cook and dreams of having her own restaurant one day, but the threat of extortion is so great that she's unsure if it's possible. "People can't keep a business," she said.

At the school where she voted, the election coordinator estimated that by late morning the flow of voters was only about half of what they had for the first round of voting in June. Turnout was considerably lower at about 45% compared to 60% in June, according to electoral authorities.

The first round of voting on June 25 went relatively smoothly until Arévalo landed in the runoff. The fact that the preliminary results were dragged into Guatemala's co-opted justice system has raised anxiety among many Guatemalans that voters will not have the final word Sunday.

Torres, in her closing campaign event Friday, suggested she would not accept a result that didn't go her way. "We're going to defend vote by vote because today democracy is at risk (and) because they want to steal the elections," she said.

Torres has painted her opponent as a radical leftist who threatens Guatemalans' conservative values on issues including sexual identity and abortion.

"We're not going to let them influence our children with strange and foreign ideologies," she said Friday.

Having run largely populist campaigns, capitalizing on her oversight of the government's social programs during the presidency of her then-husband Alvaro Colom, Torres drifted sharply rightward this time, abandoning the social democratic history of her National Unity of Hope party and launching unsubstantiated attacks at Arévalo that she herself suffered during earlier failed campaigns.

Delmi Espino, a 46-year-old teacher, came to vote in Guatemala City with her mother. "It's incredible how we managed to get to this point after everything that has happened in the electoral process," she said. "How's it possible that now there's an investigation of one of the two parties?"

"It doesn't matter that we need security, education or health, if you don't fight corruption," she said. "We want a president who cares about the country."

Rain from Tropical Storm Hilary lashes California and Mexico, swamping roads and trapping cars

By DAMIAN DOVARGANES and JORDI LEBRIJA Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Tropical Storm Hilary inundated streets across Mexico's arid Baja California Peninsula with deadly floodwaters Sunday before moving over Southern California, where it swamped roads and downed trees, as concerns mounted that flash floods could strike in places as far north as Idaho.

Forecasters said Hilary was the first tropical storm to hit Southern California in 84 years, bringing floods, mudslides, high winds, power outages and the potential for isolated tornadoes. The storm already dumped more than 6 inches (15.24 centimeters) of rain in some mountain communities and threatened more than an average year's worth of rain in inland desert areas.

Hilary made landfall along the Mexican coast in a sparsely populated area about 150 miles (250 kilometers) south of Ensenada Sunday, then moved through mudslide-prone Tijuana, threatening the improvised homes that cling to hillsides just south of the U.S. border. By Sunday evening, the storm had moved over San Diego and was headed north into inland desert areas.

As evening fell in California, the National Weather Service in Los Angeles warned of significant flooding risk throughout populous mountain areas along the coast northeast of Los Angeles.

"PLEASE ... STAY OFF THE ROADS," the agency posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Mud and boulders spilled onto highways, water gushed onto roadways and tree branches fell in neighborhoods from San Diego to Los Angeles. Dozens of cars were trapped in floodwaters in typically hot and

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offering evidence to support the assertion. Yemen's Houthi rebels, who allegedly make tens of thousands of dollars a week smuggling migrants over the border, did not respond to requests for comment.

Some 750,000 Ethiopians live in Saudi Arabia, with as many as 450,000 likely having entered the kingdom without authorization, according to 2022 statistics from the International Organization for Migration. The two-year civil war in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region displaced tens of thousands of people.

Saudi Arabia, struggling with youth unemployment, has been sending thousands back to Ethiopia in concert with Addis Abba.

Human Rights Watch said it spoke to 38 Ethiopian migrants and four relatives of people who attempted to cross the border between March 2022 and June 2023 who said they saw Saudi guards shoot at migrants or launch explosives at groups.

The report said the group also analyzed over 350 videos and photographs posted to social media or gathered from other sources filmed between May 12, 2021, and July 18, 2023. It also examined several hundred square kilometers (miles) of satellite imagery captured between February 2022 and July 2023.

"These show dead and wounded migrants on the trails, in camps and in medical facilities, how burial sites near the migrant camps grew in size, the expanding Saudi Arabian border security infrastructure, and the routes currently used by the migrants to attempt border crossings," the report said.

An April 27 satellite photo from Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed the same tent structures identified by the rights group near al-Raqw, Yemen, on the Saudi border. Two sets of fence lines could be seen just across the border into Saudi Arabia.

The site Human Rights Watch identified as the migrant camp at Al-Thabit also could be seen in satellite images, which corresponded to the group's narrative that the camp largely had been dismantled in early April.

Both areas are in northwestern Yemen, the stronghold of the country's Houthi rebels. The U.N. has said that the Houthi-controlled immigration office "collaborates with traffickers to systematically direct migrants" to Saudi Arabia, bringing in \$50,000 a week.

The Houthis have held Yemen's capital, Sanaa, since September 2014. A Saudi-led coalition has battled the Houthis since March 2015, without dislodging them from the capital. Fighting has largely halted between the Saudi-led forces and the Houthis as Riyadh seeks a way to end the war. However, throughout the war years, the Houthis claimed multiple incursions across the Saudi border in this mountainous region.

Migrants from Ethiopia have found themselves detained, abused and even killed in Saudi Arabia and Yemen during the war. But in recent months, there has been growing concern from the U.N. human rights body about Saudi forces attacking migrants coming in from Yemen.

An Oct. 3, 2022, letter to the kingdom from the U.N. said its investigators "received concerning allegations of cross-border artillery shelling and small arms fire allegedly by Saudi security forces causing the deaths of up to 430 and injuring 650 migrants."

"If migrants are captured, they are reportedly oftentimes subjected to torture by being lined up and shot through the side of the leg to see how far the bullet will go or asked if they prefer to be shot in the hand or the leg," the letter from the U.N. reads. "Survivors of such attacks reported having to 'play dead' for a period of time in order to escape."

A letter sent by Saudi Arabia's mission to the U.N. in Geneva in March said that it "categorically refutes" allegations that the kingdom carries out any "systematic" killings on the border. However, it also said the U.N. provided "limited information" so it could not "confirm or substantiate the allegations."

A presidential runoff is likely in Ecuador between an ally of ex-president and a banana tycoon's son

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP) — Ecuadorian voters looking for a new leader to help curb the country's unprecedented violence will have to head to the polls again in October for a runoff that is likely to see the ally

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dry Palm Desert and surrounding communities across the the Coachella Valley. Crews pumped floodwaters out of the emergency room at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage.

Hilary could wallop other Western states with once-in-a-century rains, with a good chance of it becoming the wettest known tropical cyclone to douse Nevada, Oregon and Idaho. Hilary was expected to remain a tropical storm into central Nevada early Monday before dissipating.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest school system, and said all campuses would be closed on Monday. San Diego schools postponed the first day of classes from Monday to Tuesday.

"There is no way we can compromise the safety of a single child or an employee, and our inability to survey buildings, our inability to determine access to schools makes it nearly impossible for us to open schools," Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said at a media briefing.

Southern California got another surprise in the afternoon as an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.1 hit near Ojai, about 80 miles (130 km) northwest of downtown Los Angeles, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It was felt widely and was followed by smaller aftershocks. There were no immediate reports of major damage or injury, according to a dispatcher with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

Hilary is just the latest major climate disaster to wreak havoc across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Hawaii's island of Maui is still reeling from a blaze that killed over 100 people and ravaged the historic town of Lahaina, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. Firefighters in Canada are battling that nation's worst fire season on record.

Beaches were closed across the Mexican cities of Ensenada and Tijuana while shelters were opened at sports complexes and government offices.

One person drowned Saturday in the Mexican town of Santa Rosalia when a vehicle was swept away in an overflowing stream. Rescue workers saved four other people, said Edith Aguilar Villavicencio, the mayor of Mulege township.

Mexican army troops fanned out across Mulege, where some of the worst damage occurred Saturday on the eastern side of the Baja Peninsula. Soldiers used bulldozers and dump trucks to help clear tons of boulders and earth clogging streets and roads that were turned into raging torrents a day earlier.

Power lines were toppled in many places, and emergency personnel were working to restore power and reach those cut off by the storm.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency said it has officials inside California's emergency preparedness office and teams on standby with food, water and other help.

To the north in Nevada, Gov. Joe Lombardo declared a state of emergency and activated 100 National Guard troops to assist with problems from predicted flooding in western Clark and Nye counties and southern Esmeralda County. In Arizona, wind gusts neared 60 mph (97 kph) in Yuma County, where officials gave out thousands of sandbags.

"I urge everyone, everyone in the path of this storm, to take precautions and listen to the guidance of state and local officials," President Joe Biden said. Biden said in a later statement that he was being briefed on the storm and was prepared to provide federal assistance.

The warnings from officials didn't keep everyone indoors. On Sunday morning in coastal Carlsbad, just north of San Diego, 19-year-old Jack Johnson and his friends kept an eye on the huge waves, determined to surf them at some point Sunday.

"It's really choppy out there, not really surfable yet, but I think we can find a good break somewhere later," Johnson said. "I can't remember a storm like this."

The weather service said tornadoes were possible in eastern San Diego County.

Death Valley National Park could get more rainfall from the storm than the area sees in an average year, officials said.

Meanwhile, one of several budding storm systems in the Atlantic Ocean became Tropical Storm Emily on Sunday, according to the National Hurricane Center. It was far from land, moving west in the open ocean. Also, Tropical Storm Franklin formed in the eastern Caribbean. Tropical storm watches were issued for the southern coasts of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In Sept. 1939, a tropical storm that roared into California ripped apart train tracks, tore houses from their foundations and capsized many boats, killing nearly 100 people on land and at sea.

Three years after a foiled plot to kidnap Michigan's governor, the final trial is set to begin

By JOHN FLESHER and ED WHITE Associated Press

BELLAIRE, Mich. (AP) — Nearly three years after authorities foiled a bizarre plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, the last defendants accused of taking part go on trial Monday.

Eric Molitor and brothers William Null and Michael Null were among 14 men, described by prosecutors as anti-government extremists, charged in the scheme weeks before the November 2020 election. They were angered by Whitmer's COVID-19 policies, which shut down schools and restricted the economy, investigators said in court filings.

The plotters were members of paramilitary groups and spoke of attacking the state Capitol and police to ignite civil war, the documents said.

Nine men so far have been convicted in state or federal court, including four who pleaded guilty. Two others were acquitted at trial.

Jury selection in the final case is set to begin Monday. Opening arguments are scheduled for Wednesday in rural Antrim County, a tourist haven known for cherry and apple orchards, sparkling lakes and quaint villages. Among them is Elk Rapids, where Whitmer has a vacation home.

Evidence presented in previous trials suggested the plotters intended to abduct the two-term Democratic governor there and blow up a bridge to prevent law enforcement officers from aiding her. But informants and undercover FBI agents were inside the group for months, leading to arrests. Whitmer was not physically harmed.

Molitor and the Null brothers, all from Michigan, are charged with providing material support for terrorist acts — punishable by up to 20 years in prison — and illegally possessing firearms. They have pleaded not guilty.

"These cases are very important in light of the times we live in," said Barbara McQuade, a former U.S. attorney in Michigan. "Acts of political violence have no place in a democracy."

After the plot was thwarted, Whitmer blamed then-President Donald Trump, saying he had given "comfort to those who spread fear and hatred and division." Trump called the kidnapping plan a "fake deal" in August 2022.

The Null brothers, both 41, have been portrayed as close allies of convicted plot leader Adam Fox, who spoke highly of them during a meeting in the basement of a Grand Rapids-area vacuum cleaner shop, according to authorities.

"Like, they're willing to go die ... if need be. They don't want to die in vain though," Fox said, not knowing an FBI informant was secretly recording him.

The Nulls and Molitor attended a training session in Luther, Michigan, where a "shoot house" was constructed to simulate Whitmer's vacation home, witnesses previously testified. That same weekend, the Nulls joined Fox, Barry Croft Jr. and others on a night ride to Elk Rapids to see the property.

"The assignment for that vehicle was to be a look out for 'suspicious' vehicles in Gov. Whitmer's neighborhood and to interact with the other two vehicles participating in the surveillance by using hand-held radios," prosecutors said in a court filing.

Molitor, 39, participated in daytime surveillance of Whitmer's home a few weeks earlier, riding with Fox and FBI informant Dan Chappel and recording video, according to evidence.

Molitor said "he was 'in' on Fox's plan for an extraction or 'snatch and grab' if it was done 'professionally,'" according to prosecutors.

Molitor has publicly claimed that he and others were entrapped by undercover FBI agents and informants who played key roles during firearms training and rides to Elk Rapids.

Fox, who is serving a 16-year prison sentence after his conviction on federal conspiracy charges, told state Judge Charles Hamlyn this month he would not testify in the upcoming trial, invoking his right against self-incrimination.

Two other defendants, Brian Higgins and Shawn Fix, pleaded guilty to reduced charges earlier this year and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors.

The main kidnapping conspiracy case was handled in federal court, where four men, including ringleaders Fox and Croft, were convicted. Two others were acquitted.

Separately, three men were convicted at trial in Jackson County, the site of training for self-styled militia members, and are serving long prison terms.

Antrim County drew attention from conspiracy theorists when an election night clerical error in 2020 briefly indicated Democrat Joe Biden had carried the staunchly Republican county. The problem was fixed and then-President Donald Trump properly credited with winning. But his supporters unsuccessfully sued to inspect voting machines.

Trump and his allies double down on election lies after indictments for trying to undo 2020 results

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal indictment and one in Georgia charging Donald Trump with lying about the 2020 election to overturn President Joe Biden's win have done nothing to slow the geyser of election falsehoods flowing from the former president and his supporters.

Just two days after the Georgia indictment, one of Trump's most enthusiastic backers took the stage at a conference in Missouri to again spread election misinformation. Mike Lindell, the owner of MyPillow who is a vocal promoter of the myth that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, kicked off an event on purported election crimes with a video about fraud.

It included footage from November 2020 that purported to show a Fulton County, Georgia, election worker pulling a briefcase of ballots from under a desk to surreptitiously add them to the tally.

As evidence has since shown, the worker, Ruby Freeman, was simply doing her job — pulling out a standard government container full of real ballots that had to be counted. Three different counts of the Georgia vote, including one by hand, showed the ballots were tallied properly and the results were accurate.

But Freeman and her daughter, who also worked in the elections office that night, were targeted by Trump and his allies and accused of helping throw the election to Biden, compared to drug dealers and deluged with threats. The women testified before the congressional Jan. 6 committee about their ordeal and sued several Trump backers, including former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, for libel. The lies about them are a central part of last week's indictment of Trump and his allies for allegedly conspiring to spread misinformation to steal the Georgia election.

Yet they persisted. During his conference, Lindell prefaced the video by saying "it isn't about evidence" and meant to evoke the atmosphere of December 2020, as Trump was challenging the election results and trying to find avenues to remain in power. The anonymously produced video, full of fevered reports of other "anomalies" in the election, opens with the words "this video is pure data."

"I never forgot this video," Lindell said.

Nor has the Republican electorate. Although Trump's allegations have repeatedly been disproven — often by his own advisers — they've taken a firm hold among his party. An Associated Press poll last week found 57% of Republicans said they didn't view Biden as a legitimately elected president.

The 98-page Georgia indictment lists several false allegations made by Trump that were quickly disproven by fellow Republicans, Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, and Gov. Brian Kemp. Still, Trump insists to this day that the election was stolen from him and continues to lie about it.

After the indictment, he promised a press conference this week revealing a report he claimed would show how the Georgia election was stolen from him — a pledge he rescinded on Thursday, saying his

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lawyers wanted to make his argument in a court filing instead.

"Does anybody really believe I lost Georgia?" Trump asked on his Truth Social network Saturday. "I DON'T."

By repeating the lie over and over, even when it has been repeatedly exposed as baseless, Trump is not only ensuring that his loyal followers remain energized, but also dominating the discussion and forcing others to relitigate the 2020 election on his terms.

At the recent Iowa State Fair, where he was campaigning for that state's presidential caucus next year, Trump again claimed the 2020 election was "rigged." In anticipation of the Georgia indictment, Trump's campaign issued a statement a week ago saying prosecutors were "taking away President Trump's First Amendment right to free speech, and the right to challenge a rigged and stolen election that the Democrats do all the time."

His attorneys have defended his actions by saying the former president sincerely believes fraud cost him reelection.

Lee McIntyre, a Boston University researcher, noted that many of Trump's followers no longer see other Americans as legitimate opposition, but rather as an enemy. "This is strategic," McIntyre said. "This is not a mistake. Somebody is profiting from this — politically, ideologically or financially — and we know it's Trump."

Known as "affective polarization," that phenomenon has led to increased violence and political destabilization in other nations. This month, FBI agents fatally shot an armed Utah man who had threatened to kill Biden and referred to himself online as a "MAGA Trumper."

"It's not just that the other side is wrong, it's that the other side is evil, and they deserve to be punished, maybe even physically harmed," McIntyre said. "It is no longer about facts, but about trust. It's about teams, and which side you're on."

Still, the political danger to Trump of continuing his false claims of widespread fraud in 2020 also was underscored last week. The same poll finding that 57% of Republicans don't believe Biden was legitimately elected also found that 7 out of 10 Americans overall saw his election as valid. Trump will need to convince some of those voters if he is to return to the White House in 2024.

By resurfacing his false claims about the 2020 election, Trump is reminding voters of how even some of his staunchest supporters opposed his scheme to stay in power.

Trump's vow to prove Georgia was stolen drew a sharp rebuke from Kemp on the site formerly known as Twitter: "The 2020 election in Georgia was not stolen," Kemp wrote on Tuesday. "For nearly three years now, anyone with evidence of fraud has failed to come forward - under oath - and prove anything in a court of law."

Trump's own vice president agreed.

"Despite what the President and his allies have now said for more than 2.5 years, and continue to insist at this very hour, the Georgia election was not stolen and I had no right to overturn the election on January 6th," Mike Pence wrote on the web site now known as X.

Indeed, the indictment lists numerous charges about the election Trump and his allies made in public, before subcommittees of the Georgia Legislature in a last-ditch effort to persuade them to replace Biden's electors with ones for Trump and even in a swiftly dismissed lawsuit they filed.

For example, Trump's supporters repeatedly claimed in testimony to lawmakers that they found 10,315 dead people had voted in the election. Georgia officials investigated and found only four.

Trump and his backers also claimed that a large number of underage people had registered to vote — 66,248, Trump attorney Ray Stallings told a legislative committee on Dec. 3, 2020. Raffensperger's office said no such voters exist.

They also repeatedly cited the recordings of Freeman and her daughter, with Giuliani telling lawmakers that the women, who are Black, were passing one USB drive back and forth like "vials of heroin or cocaine."

The baseless allegations continue. Trump has said he will use the movie "2000 Mules," which was produced by a conservative filmmaker and has been widely debunked for using flawed analysis, in his defense at trial. It alleges a conspiracy in Georgia and other swing states to bring fake mail ballots to drop boxes.

Georgia authorities investigated one man who was recorded allegedly making an illegal ballot drop in

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the movie and found the votes he deposited were for his family and therefore legal. He has sued the filmmakers. Georgia authorities, after repeatedly asking for more evidence of the crimes alleged and getting nothing, also have filed suit.

Reporting by The Associated Press also revealed no widespread problems with the use of drop boxes during the 2020 election.

Three years after the election, Trump's claims have been rejected by dozens of judges, including several he appointed, his own attorney general and dozens of reviews, audits and recounts in the battleground states, several overseen by Republican lawmakers.

Even if his gamble doesn't pay off for him in 2024, Trump's distortions have left a mark on the nation's political system by increasing polarization and convincing a sizeable chunk of the American public that its elections and justice system can no longer be trusted, said David Becker, executive director of the Center for Election Innovation & Research and co-author of "The Big Truth," a book warning of the dangers of Trump's election lies.

"The scary thing is, those pushing these lies don't need to get you to believe the loser won," Becker said. "They just need to get you to believe that no one ever wins. All of our democratic institutions that we've built up over 250 years are at risk."

Global food security is at crossroads as rice shortages and surging prices hit the most vulnerable

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

Francis Ndege isn't sure if his customers in Africa's largest slum can afford to keep buying rice from him. Prices for rice grown in Kenya soared a while ago because of higher fertilizer prices and a yearslong drought in the Horn of Africa that has reduced production. Cheap rice imported from India had filled the gap, feeding many of the hundreds of thousands of residents in Nairobi's Kibera slum who survive on less than \$2 a day.

But that is changing. The price of a 25-kilogram (55-pound) bag of rice has risen by a fifth since June. Wholesalers are yet to receive new stocks since India, the world's largest exporter of rice by far, said last month that it would ban some rice shipments.

It's an effort by the world's most populous nation to control domestic prices ahead of a key election year — but it's left a yawning gap of around 9.5 million metric tons (10.4 tons) of rice that people around the world need, roughly a fifth of global exports.

"I'm really hoping the imports keep coming," said Ndege, 51, who's sold rice for 30 years.

He isn't the only one. Global food security is already under threat since Russia halted an agreement allowing Ukraine to export wheat and the El Nino weather phenomenon hampers rice production. Now, rice prices are soaring — Vietnam's rice export prices, for instance, have reached a 15-year high — putting the most vulnerable people in some of the poorest nations at risk.

The world is at an "inflection point," said Beau Damen, a natural resources officer with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization based in Bangkok.

Even before India's restrictions, countries already were frantically buying rice in anticipation of scarcity later when the El Nino hit, creating a supply crunch and spiking prices.

What could make the situation worse is if India's ban on non-basmati rice creates a domino effect, with other countries following suit. Already, the United Arab Emirates has suspended rice exports to maintain its domestic stocks. Another threat is if extreme weather damages rice crops in other countries.

An El Nino is a natural, temporary and occasional warming of part of the Pacific Ocean that shifts global weather patterns, and climate change is making them stronger. Scientists expect the one underway to expand to supersized levels, and, in the past, they have resulted in extreme weather ranging from drought to flooding.

The impact would be felt worldwide. Rice consumption in Africa has been growing steadily, and most countries are heavily dependent on imports. While nations with growing populations like Senegal have

been trying to grow more of their own rice — many are struggling.

Amadou Khan, a 52-year-old unemployed father of five in Dakar, says his children eat rice with every meal except breakfast, which they often have to skip when he's out of work.

"I am just getting by — sometimes, I've trouble taking care of my kids," he said.

Imported rice — 70% of which comes from India — has become prohibitively expensive in Senegal, so he's eating homegrown rice that costs two-thirds as much.

Senegal will turn to other trading partners like Thailand or Cambodia for imports, though the West African country is not "far from being self-sufficient" on rice, with over half of its demand grown locally, Agriculture Ministry spokesperson Mamadou Aïcha Ndiaye said.

Asian countries, where 90% of the world's rice is grown and eaten, are struggling with production. The Philippines was carefully managing water in anticipation of less rain amid the El Nino when Typhoon Doksuri battered its northern rice-producing region, damaging \$32 million worth of rice crops — an estimated 22% of its annual production.

The archipelago nation is the second-largest importer of rice after China, and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has underscored the need to ensure adequate buffers.

India's rice restrictions also were motivated by erratic weather: An uneven monsoon along with a looming El Nino meant that the partial ban was needed to stop food prices from rising, Indian food policy expert Devinder Sharma said.

The restrictions will take offline nearly half the country's usual rice exports this year, said Ashok Gulati of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relation. Repeated restrictions make India an unreliable exporter, he added.

"That's not good for the export business because it takes years to develop these markets," Gulati said.

Vietnam, another major rice exporter, is hoping to capitalize. With rice export prices at a 15-year high and expectations that annual production to be marginally higher than last year, the Southeast Asian nation is trying to keep domestic prices stable while boosting exports.

The Agriculture Ministry says it's working to increase how much land in the Mekong Delta is dedicated to growing rice by around 500 square kilometers — an area larger than 90,000 football fields.

Already the Philippines is in talks with Vietnam to try to get the grain at lower prices, while Vietnam also looks to target the United Kingdom, which receives much of its rice from India.

But exporters like Charoen Laothamatas in neighboring Thailand are wary. The Thai government expects to ship more rice than it did last year, with its exports in the first six months of the year 15% higher than the same period of 2022.

But the lack of clarity about what India will do next and concerns about the El Nino means Thai exporters are reluctant to take orders, mill operators are unwilling to sell and farmers have increased the prices of unmilled rice, said Laothamatas, president of the Thai Rice Exporters Association.

With prices fluctuating, exporters don't know what prices to quote — because prices may spike again the next day.

"And no one wants to take the risk," Laothamatas said.

A Republican lawsuit threatens a Biden immigration policy thousands have used to come to the US

By REBECCA SANTANA and GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Valerie Laveus remembers when she first heard about an immigration program designed to allow people to come to the U.S. from four countries, including her native Haiti.

"I said, 'Whoa! This seems like it would work well for bringing my nephew and my brother into the country,'" said the Florida teacher, who received a WhatsApp message in January and verified with an immigration lawyer that the program was real.

After years of trying to get a green card, her brother arrived with her nephew in early August, ready to start a new life. They are two of the roughly 181,000 people who have entered the U.S. under the

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humanitarian parole program since President Joe Biden launched the initiative.

But 21 Republican-leaning states threaten to end the program through a lawsuit to determine its legality, which is set to be heard in a Texas court beginning Thursday, with a decision coming later.

If the Biden administration loses, it would undercut a broader policy seeking to encourage migrants to use the administration's preferred pathways into the U.S. or face stiff consequences. The administration has said it had to act in the absence of congressional action to overhaul the nation's immigration system.

But much of the administration's strategy is just one lawsuit away from collapse.

In the Texas trial, Republican states are expected to argue the Biden administration is basically usurping the power of Congress by allowing up to 360,000 people annually into the U.S. from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela under the humanitarian parole program. They say the program is an overreach of a parole power meant to be used on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit.

The administration argues it has the power to use humanitarian parole in this way and credits the initiative with drastically reducing illegal border crossings by immigrants from those four countries. Program applicants must pass background checks and have a financial sponsor in the U.S. who vouches for them. If approved, they must fly into a U.S. airport instead of crossing at the southern border. They can then stay in the U.S. for two years and get a work permit.

Immigrant rights groups successfully petitioned to join the legal proceedings on behalf of Laveus and six other people who are sponsoring migrants. Esther Sung, an attorney for Justice Action Center, said the groups want to show the real people who have volunteered to be sponsors and how ending the program would affect them.

Blas Nuñez-Neto, assistant secretary for border and immigration policy with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, said in a recent conference call that the government is worried about the upcoming trial and will appeal if the administration loses.

The case is scheduled to be heard by Judge Drew Tipton in Victoria, Texas, a Donald Trump appointee who has ruled against the Biden administration on who to prioritize for deportation. The federal government pushed unsuccessfully to have the humanitarian parole case transferred from Tipton's courtroom after suggesting the Republican states filed in Victoria because they were seeking a favorable judge.

The U.S. used its humanitarian parole powers to grant entry to tens of thousands of Ukrainians when Russia invaded, but the Republican states' lawsuit does not challenge that decision.

Just about anyone can be a sponsor provided they fill out the paperwork. Many, like Laveus, are sponsoring relatives who have no other way to come to the U.S.

Laveus said her brother was approved for a green card a few years ago, but the immigration system's quotas meant his arrival was estimated to be delayed another six years. In the meantime, she supported relatives from afar as they tried to survive in a country plagued by economic instability and largely controlled by gangs.

A former opposition political leader and human rights activist from Nicaragua, who was jailed in his homeland for his activities, was sponsored by his brother, a U.S. citizen living in El Paso, Texas. The man, who wanted his identity withheld to protect his family in Nicaragua, came to the U.S. in July and plans to work in construction.

"I wanted to take this opportunity to save my life," he said in Spanish.

Members of churches, synagogues and mosques have joined to sponsor people they don't know out of religious belief to help others.

Eric Sype is sponsoring a member of a family he stayed with when he lived and worked in Nicaragua as a college student in 2014. Sype is one of seven sponsors represented by immigrants rights groups in the legal challenge.

The person he is sponsoring plans to work in the U.S. for two years, then return to Nicaragua to be with his wife and two children. Sype said his friend will stay in Sype's childhood home in Washington state, where a cousin has offered him a job at an orchard growing pears, cherries and apples.

Sype said he had no hesitation about sponsoring the man, whom he said is part of his "chosen family."

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Sype has spent major holidays including Christmas with the family in Nicaragua and they talk or message weekly.

"I just can't really imagine how this program is doing anything but benefiting folks, bringing people back together," he said.

The Biden administration's program appears to be one of the largest single uses of the humanitarian parole authority, but it is certainly not the only administration to use it.

The authority has been used repeatedly in large and small ways including providing entry to Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians in the late 1970s, Iraqi Kurds who helped the U.S. in the 1990s Gulf War and Cubans fleeing their country at various times, according to data from the Cato Institute.

The Biden administration started the program for Venezuelans in October 2022 and added Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans in January.

Still, some who are generally supportive of the program have concerns. Critics say the need to have a financial sponsor essentially favors more affluent, well-connected migrants, while also fearing the program could be used to exploit migrants.

Muriel Sáenz, who helps immigrants through Nicaraguans Around the World, a Texas-based group, said it can be difficult to find sponsors for migrants who don't already have family ties in the U.S. She encourages U.S. citizens to sponsor people they don't know, which can be a harder sell.

"It is too much responsibility," Sáenz said. "Legally you are adopting people for two years."

From turmoil to triumph, Spain earns its first Women's World Cup title with a 1-0 win over England

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

SYDNEY (AP) — A champion's medal around her neck, Salma Paralluelo lay on the field for a while and nestled into the golden glitter that had fallen over Spain's Women's World Cup team as it celebrated a 1-0 victory over England.

Already a world champion in the Under-17 and Under-20 levels, Paralluelo took her time soaking up the atmosphere at Stadium Australia on Sunday after helping the Spanish women's team overcome adversity to win its first senior major global title.

Olga Carmona scored in the first half of the final and Spain held on to cap the month-long tournament. Carmona's triumph was tinged with sadness after learning of her father's death. The Spanish soccer federation issued a statement after the match to confirm Carmona's father had died, without giving specific details.

Overcoming the turmoil that had surrounded the team, the victory made Spain the first team to hold the under-17, under-20 and senior women's world titles at the same time. Spain also joined Germany as the only nations to win both the men's and women's titles.

At the final whistle the Spanish players piled on each other in front of their goal. They were still dancing on the field before and after the trophy presentations.

"We've suffered a lot throughout the past 12 months but I think everything has a reason to be. This has made us a stronger team," Carmona said soon after the game. "And it's really incredible. I don't know just why Spain is the world champions, but I think that we deserved it."

The Lionesses were trying to bring a World Cup back to England for the first time since the men won it in 1966. The wait will go on.

"At first you feel like you failed with not winning," England captain Millie Bright said. "I think in a couple of weeks and it settles, (we) will be really, really proud."

In an open game featuring multiple chances for both teams, Carmona's left-foot strike in the 29th minute — finishing off a fast-breaking counterattack after England's Lucy Bronze lost possession — was the only goal.

Carmona also scored the game-winner in the 89th minute of Spain's 2-1 semifinal victory over Sweden, becoming the first player since Carli Lloyd in 2015 to score in a World Cup semifinal and final.

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Spain had a chance to double the lead in the 68th after a VAR review awarded a penalty for Keira Walsh's handball, but Jenni Hermoso's penalty attempt was saved by Mary Earps.

Spain's victory comes despite a near-mutiny by players last year. Fifteen players said they were stepping away from the national team for their mental health while also calling for a more professional environment.

Three of those players — Ona Batlle, Aitana Bonmati and Mariona Caldentey — reconciled with the federation and were at the World Cup.

The victory was also a bit of redemption for La Roja, which lost 2-1 in the quarterfinals to eventual champion England at the European championship last year.

"I think all of us, we felt that this team had something special," Carmona said. "I believe that we've shown this on the field, we've shown this in the group stage, in the knockout stage. We've been fighting until the end. We never stopped.

"Last year was different, but football gives you second chances. What better chance than in a World Cup final and to be able to call ourselves world champion."

Spain grew over the course of the tournament. After a 4-0 loss to Japan in the group stage, Spain replaced Misa Rodriguez with Cata Coll in goal. La Roja rebounded quickly by trouncing Switzerland 5-1 to kick off the knockout round and built from there.

"When we found out that we had England in the final, we analyzed them and saw how they played," Bonmati said. "We prepared it well, we came out confident of what we were doing, of our game, of our fight, of our dedication."

England had momentum going into the tournament after winning the Euros, but three of the team's best players, captain Leah Williamson, Fran Kirby and Beth Mead, all had knee injuries that kept them off the World Cup squad.

Sarina Wiegman was the first coach to take her teams to back-to-back World Cup title matches. She led the Netherlands to the final in 2019, but fell 2-0 to the United States. She's now 0-2 in the championship match.

One of England's best chances was in the 16th when Lauren Hemp's blast caromed off the crossbar. A minute later, Paralluelo raced toward goal but couldn't get a clean shot and Earps stopped Alba Redondo's attempt in the scramble in front of the net.

England was coming off a 3-1 victory over host Australia in the semifinal. Lauren James, who was the team's top scorer with three goals and three assists, was forced to sit out two matches after being suspended for stomping on Nigeria's Michelle Alozie to open the knockout stage.

While James was available for the final, Wiegman started Ella Toone and used James as a second-half substitute in a double change to spark the attack.

Spain coach Jorge Vilda started 19-year-old Paralluelo, who scored the breakthrough goal for Spain against Sweden, and the game-winner in extra time over the Netherlands in the quarterfinal. Those efforts helped her win the young player of the tournament award. Earps won the Golden Glove for best goalkeeper and Bonmati won the Golden Ball for best player of World Cup.

Vilda had a challenge in working around two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas, who was still working her way back from a torn ACL last year. For the final, Putellas started on the bench.

Putellas went into the game with 15 seconds left in regulation, but there were 13 minutes of stoppage time. After the match Putellas was in tears as her teammates danced in front of the flag-waving fans behind the team's bench.

There were 75,784 fans at the final at Stadium Australia, including tennis great Billie Jean King, increasing the record attendance for the tournament to more than 1.975 million.

A tanker believed to hold sanctioned Iran oil starts offloading near Texas despite Tehran's threats

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — An oil tanker long suspected of carrying sanctioned Iranian crude oil offloaded its cargo near Texas on Sunday, tracking data showed, even as Tehran has threatened to target shipping in the Persian Gulf over it.

Ship-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed the Marshall Islands-flagged Suez Rajan began the hourslong ship-to-ship transfer of its oil to another tanker, the MR Euphrates, near Galveston, some 70 kilometers (45 miles) southeast of Houston.

The fate of the cargo aboard the Suez Rajan has become mired in the wider tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic, even as Tehran and Washington work toward a trade of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets in South Korea for the release of five Iranian-Americans held in Tehran. Iran has been trying to evade sanctions and continue selling its oil abroad, while the U.S. and its allies have been seizing cargoes since 2019 after the country's nuclear deal allowing the trade collapsed.

Already, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has warned that those involved in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo "should expect to be struck back." The U.S. Navy has increased its presence steadily in recent weeks in the Mideast, sending the troop-and-aircraft-carrying USS Bataan through the Strait of Hormuz in recent days and considering putting armed personnel on commercial ships traveling through the strait to stop Iran from seizing additional ships.

The Los Angeles-based private equity firm Oaktree Capital Management, which owned the vessel up until late May, repeatedly declined to comment publicly. Greek firm Empire Navigation, which operates the vessel, did not respond to requests for comment. An email sent to Alma Maritime Ltd., the ship's new owner, bounced back and a telephone number listed in its name rang unanswered.

The saga over the Suez Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United Against Nuclear Iran said it suspected the tanker carried oil from Iran's Kharg Island, its main oil distribution terminal in the Persian Gulf.

For months, the ship sat in the South China Sea off the northeast coast of Singapore before suddenly sailing for the Gulf of Mexico without explanation. Analysts believe the vessel's cargo likely has been seized by American officials, though there still were no public court documents early Sunday involving the Suez Rajan.

In the meantime, Iran has seized two tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, including one with cargo for U.S. oil major Chevron Corp. In July, the top commander of the Revolutionary Guard's naval arm threatened further action against anyone offloading the Suez Rajan, with state media linking the recent seizures to the cargo's fate.

"We hereby declare that we would hold any oil company that sought to unload our crude from the vessel responsible and we also hold America responsible," Rear Adm. Alireza Tangsiri said at the time. "The era of hit and run is over, and if they hit, they should expect to be struck back."

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment over the offloading of the Suez Rajan. The state-run IRNA news agency acknowledged this AP story, but did not elaborate. Western-backed naval organizations in the Persian Gulf in recent days also warned of an increased risk of ship seizures from Iran around the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers saw it regain the ability to sell oil openly on the international market. But in 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord and re-imposed American sanctions. That slammed the door on much of Iran's lucrative crude oil trade, a major engine for its economy and its government. It also began a cat-and-mouse hunt for Iranian oil cargo — as well as series of escalating attacks attributed to Iran since 2019.

The delay in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo had become a political issue as well for the Biden administration as the ship had sat for months in the Gulf of Mexico, possibly due to companies being worried about the threat from Iran.

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In a letter dated Wednesday, a group of Democratic and Republican U.S. senators asked the White House for an update on what was happening with the ship's cargo, estimated to be worth some \$56 million. They said the money could go toward the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, which compensates those affected by the Sept. 11 attacks, the 1979 Iran hostage crisis and other militant assaults.

"We owe it to these American families to enforce our sanctions," the letter read.

Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa, one of the letter's co-signers, said in a statement Sunday that "no foreign adversary should question America's strength."

"To ensure this never happens again, the Biden administration must enforce our existing sanctions, stop greenlighting the (Guard's) terrorism and hostage 'diplomacy' and end this posture of appeasement to a nation that chants 'death to America,'" she said.

The U.S. Treasury has said Iran's oil smuggling revenue supports the Quds Force, the expeditionary unit of the Revolutionary Guard that operates across the Mideast.

Claire Jungman, the chief of staff at United Against Nuclear Iran, praised the transfer finally happening.

"By depriving the (Guard) of crucial resources, we strike a blow against terrorism that targets not only American citizens but also our global allies and partners," Jungman told the AP.

On Sunday, Iranian state media released a video dated Thursday that showed the USS Bataan with small Guard fast boats trailing it as it traveled through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of the world's oil passes. One portion appeared to have been taken from a drone above the Bataan, while another claimed that the Guard hailed the Bataan over the radio and threatened to "open fire" on an American helicopter if it entered Iranian airspace.

Cmdr. Rick Chernitzer, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet, acknowledged to the AP that the Bataan had transited through the strait in recent days. A photograph earlier released by the Navy showed F-35 fighter jets providing cover for the Bataan and the USS Carter Hall, a landing ship accompanying it.

"The U.S. Navy will continue to fly and sail where international law allows," Chernitzer said.

Trump says he will skip GOP presidential primary debates

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump confirmed Sunday that he will be skipping Wednesday's first Republican presidential primary debate — and others as well.

"The public knows who I am & what a successful Presidency I had," Trump wrote on his social media site. "I WILL THEREFORE NOT BE DOING THE DEBATES!" His spokesman did not immediately clarify whether he plans to boycott every primary debate or just those that have currently been scheduled.

The former president and early GOP frontrunner had said for months that he saw little upside in joining his GOP rivals on stage when they gather for the first time in Milwaukee Wednesday, given his commanding lead in the race. And he had made clear to those he had spoken to in recent days that his opinion had not changed.

"Why would I allow people at 1 or 2% and 0% to be hitting me with questions all night?" he said in an interview in June with Fox News host Bret Baier, who will be serving as a moderator. Trump has also repeatedly criticized Fox, the host of the Aug. 23 primetime event, insisting it is a "hostile network" that he believes will not treat him fairly.

Trump had been discussing a number of debate counterprogramming options, including sitting for an interview with ex-Fox News host Tucker Carlson, who has been hosting a show on the website formerly known as Twitter. Carlson was spotted at Trump's Bedminster, New Jersey, golf club ahead of the announcement, according to a person familiar with the visit who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it. The New York Times reported Saturday the interview set to air Wednesday has already been taped.

"We cannot confirm or deny — stay tuned," said Trump spokesman Steven Cheung.

The idea had been one of several alternatives Trump had floated in conversations in recent weeks. They

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included possibly showing up in Milwaukee at the last minute or attending but sitting in the audience and offering live commentary on his Truth Social site. He had also discussed potentially calling into different networks to draw viewers from the debate, or holding a rally instead.

The decision marks another chapter in Trump's ongoing feud with Fox, which was once a staunch defender, but is now perceived to be more favorable to his leading rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Fox executives and hosts had lobbied Trump to attend, both privately and on the network's airwaves. But Trump, according to a person close to him, was unswayed, believing executives would not have been wooing him if they weren't concerned about their ratings.

A person familiar had said earlier Sunday that Trump and his team had not notified the Republican National Committee of his plans.

Meanwhile, Trump's rivals had been goading him to appear and preparing in the hopes that he might, concerned that a no-show might make them appear like second-tier candidates and deny them the opportunity to land a knockout blow against the race's Goliath that could change the trajectory of the race.

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, one of the few candidates willing to directly take on Trump, has been accusing the former president of lacking "the guts to show up" and calling him "a coward" if he doesn't.

A super PAC supporting DeSantis released an ad in which the narrator says: "We can't afford a nominee who is too weak to debate." And in a posting Sunday on X, the social media site formerly known as Twitter, DeSantis campaign spokesman Andrew Romeo said the Florida governor looked forward to sharing his vision Wednesday on what he'll do as president because "no one is entitled to this nomination, including Donald Trump. You have to show up and earn it."

Trump has pushed back on the attacks, telling Newsmax's Eric Bolling that he saw little benefit in participating when he's already leading by a wide margin.

"It's not a question of guts. It's a question of intelligence," he said.

Trump has also said that he will not sign a pledge to support the eventual Republican nominee if he loses the nomination — a requirement set by the Republican National Committee for appearing on stage.

"Why would I sign it?" he said. "I can name three or four people that I wouldn't support for president. So right there, there's a problem."

Nonetheless, his advisers insisted for weeks that he had yet to make a final decision, even as they acknowledged it was "pretty clear" from his public and private statements that he was unlikely to appear.

It's not the first time Trump has chosen to skip a major GOP debate.

During his 2016 campaign, Trump decided to forgo the final GOP primary face-off before the Iowa caucuses and instead held his own campaign event — a flashy telethon-style gathering in Iowa that was billed as a fundraiser for veterans.

While the event earned him headlines and drew attention away from his rivals, Trump went on to lose the Iowa caucuses to Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas — a loss some former aides have blamed, at least in part, on his decision to skip the debate.

In 2020, Trump pulled out of the second general election debate against now-President Joe Biden after the Commission on Presidential Debates, a nonpartisan group that has hosted general election debates for more than three decades, sought to make it virtual after Trump tested positive for COVID-19. Trump refused, saying he would only debate on stage.

Trump is not the only candidate who will likely be missing Wednesday's event. Several lesser-known rivals appear unlikely to reach the threshold set by the RNC to participate. To qualify, candidates must have received contributions from at least 40,000 individual donors, with at least 200 unique donors in 20 or more states. They also must poll at at least 1% in three designated national polls, or a mix of national and early-state polls, between July 1 and Aug. 21.

Candidates who have met the qualifications include DeSantis, Christie, former vice president Mike Pence, tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, and South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott.

Beyond the fundraising and polling requirements, the RNC has said candidates must also sign the pledge

agreeing to support the eventual party nominee as well as agreeing not to participate in any non-RNC sanctioned debate for the remainder of the election cycle. The RNC is boycotting events organized by the Commission for Presidential Debates, alleging bias.

"I affirm that if I do not win the 2024 Republican nomination of President of the United States, I will honor the will of the primary voters and support the nominee in order to save our country and beat Joe Biden," reads the pledge, according to a copy posted by DeSantis to the social media site X. Candidates also must pledge not to run as an independent, write-in candidate or third-party nominee.

While several candidates, including Christie and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson have taken issue with the requirement, former Texas Rep. Will Hurd so far is the only one who has said definitively that he will not sign the pledge because he refuses to support Trump if he becomes the eventual nominee. Christie has said he will sign whatever is needed to get him on the stage.

In addition to voicing opposition to the loyalty pledge, Trump has suggested he is opposed to boycotting general election debates hosted by the Commission on Presidential Debates. "You have, really, an obligation to do that," he said in a radio interview this spring.

Sweltering temperatures bring misery to large portion of central US, setting heat records

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Sweltering temperatures lingered Sunday in a large swath of the central U.S., causing misery from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes.

Record high temperatures were recorded in Texas and other states. People were told to chug extra water while mowing lawns or exercising outdoors, and to check on neighbors to ensure air conditioning is available. The extreme heat prompted Texas' electric power grid manager to ask residents to voluntarily conserve power for three hours on Sunday night.

"These high temperatures can impact our friends, families, and neighbors who may live alone, especially if they limit their use of air conditioning," Sarah Russell, commissioner for the St. Louis Emergency Management Agency, said in a statement. "We urge everyone to stop and visit loved ones to ensure they are healthy and well during this extreme heat."

The Dallas-Fort Worth area was expected to reach 110 F (43.3 C) Sunday after hitting 108 F (42.2 C) Saturday, said Sarah Barnes, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The record high for those dates was 107 F (41.7 C), set in 2011.

The area is not cooling off enough at night, Barnes said.

"That's really going to contribute to an increased risk of heat-related illnesses," Barnes said Sunday. "That's the main concern when it comes to people and the heat."

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or ERCOT, on Sunday asked the state's 30 million residents to voluntarily reduce power use from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. CDT because of "extreme temperatures, continued high demand and unexpected loss of thermal generation."

ERCOT's request for voluntary power conservation was the second such request in the past three days. The agency said it was not in emergency operations. Many residents still view the power grid nervously more than 2.5 years after a deadly winter blackout.

The heat wave causing misery this weekend is just the latest to punish the U.S. this year.

Scientists have long warned that climate change, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation and by certain agricultural practices, will lead to more and prolonged bouts of extreme weather, including hotter temperatures.

The entire globe has simmered to record heat both in June and July. And if that's not enough, smoke from wildfires, floods and droughts have caused problems globally.

The National Weather Service set an excessive heat warning Sunday for parts of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. Heat advisories or watches were also in place in parts of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Dakota.

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Tourism in New Orleans often slows during the peak of summer heat, and that's happening as temperatures approach 100 F (37.8 C).

NOLA Poboys is closing two days a week for now, said Lucas McQueen, one of the restaurant's chefs. "I can't wait to be complaining about being cold," McQueen told WWL-TV.

The temperature reached a record high for the date of 104 F (40 C) Saturday in Jackson, Mississippi, as people walked between indoor and outdoor events at the Mississippi Book Festival. Volunteers distributed chilled water, and people used handheld fans while chatting with authors and shopping for books at large tents outside the state Capitol building.

Houston on Sunday added to its ongoing streak of high temperatures at or above 100 F (37.8 C). Through Sunday, the high temperature in Houston has been at least 100 F for 22 days. Sunday's high was 108 F (42.2 C), breaking a record for the date that goes back to 1909.

The stifling heat in Texas overwhelmed people taking part in orientation for new students at Prairie View A&M University, 48 miles (77 kilometers) northwest of Houston. University officials said they were reviewing operations after 38 students were hospitalized Friday night after suffering heat-related illnesses, including dehydration. One student was taken by helicopter to a hospital in nearby College Station, while 37 were taken in ambulances to other facilities, Waller County EMS Chief Rhonda Getschman told KBTX.

"It's very easy to overheat quickly in this Texas heat. We highly encourage everyone to stay indoors as much as possible," Getschman said.

Much of Iowa is expected to see high temperatures in the upper 90s Sunday and Monday, followed by three days where the reading will likely top 100 F (37.8 C).

The heat was worrisome for Sunday as thousands were expected for the final day of the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines. In a Facebook post, fair officials urged patrons to visit air-conditioned buildings, take regular breaks and stay hydrated.

Forecasters expected high temperatures to reach 99 F (37.2 C) to 103 F (39.4 C) through Friday in St. Louis, and the heat's only part of the problem: Excessive humidity will lead to a heat index of up to 115 F (46.1 C) each day. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that if the prediction holds, it will be the worst stretch of heat in St. Louis since August 2014, when temperatures rose to about 95 F (35 C) for seven straight days.

Similar heat is expected all week in Little Rock, Arkansas, prompting the community to open several cooling centers for people who live on the streets or without air conditioning.

Last month, the Phoenix area broiled under a record-setting 31 days of daily high temperatures of 110 F (43.4 C) or above. The historic heat began blasting the region in June, stretching from Texas across New Mexico and Arizona and into California's desert. The previous record was 18 straight days in 1974. In July, the continental United States set a record for overnight warmth, providing little relief from daytime heat for people, animals, plants and the electric grid, meteorologists said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports just 600 to 700 heat deaths annually in the United States. But experts say the mishmash of ways that more than 3,000 counties calculate heat deaths means the public doesn't really know how many people die in the U.S. each year.

Denmark and Netherlands pledge to give F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine as Zelenskyy visits

By MIKE CORDER and KARL RITTER Associated Press

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands (AP) — The Netherlands and Denmark announced Sunday they will give F-16 warplanes to Ukraine, a long-awaited announcement that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called an important motivation for his country's forces, embroiled in a difficult counteroffensive against Russia.

The promise of new fighter jets came the day after an unusually brazen Russian missile strike on a Ukrainian theater that killed seven people and wounded almost 150 others in the northern city of Chernihiv. Zelenskyy vowed stern retaliation for the attack, whose victims included a slain 6-year-old girl dead and 15 wounded children.

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After months of entreaties from Zelenskyy for F-16s to bolster the Ukrainian air force, the U.S. recently gave approval for the Netherlands and Denmark to provide Ukraine the American-made jets. Zelenskyy travelled to both countries Sunday to finalize the delivery deals.

"F-16s will certainly give new energy, confidence, and motivation to fighters and civilians. I'm sure it will deliver new results for Ukraine and the entire Europe," the Ukrainian leader said.

Ukraine hopes the jets will give it a combat edge, after launching a counteroffensive against the Kremlin's forces without air cover from Western aircraft, placing its troops at the mercy of Russian aviation and artillery.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen pledged 19 F-16s to Ukraine and said she hoped the first six could be handed over around New Year. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte didn't provide a number or timeframe, saying it depends on how soon Ukrainian crews and infrastructure are ready. Zelenskyy said on his Telegram channel that Ukraine would get 42 jets.

"The F-16s will not help immediately now with the war effort. It is anyway a long-term commitment from the Netherlands," Rutte said. "We want them to be active and operational as soon as possible. ... Not for the next month, that's impossible, but hopefully soon afterward."

He and Zelenskyy inspected two gray F-16s parked in a hangar at a Dutch base in the southern city of Eindhoven.

A few hours later, Zelenskyy and his wife were received by Frederiksen, other Danish Cabinet ministers and Crown Princess Mary at the Skrydstrup air base in southern Denmark where Ukrainian pilots will receive F-16 training in coming months. The two leaders climbed into a Danish F-16 and tried out the seats.

Frederiksen said "hopefully" six fighter jets could be delivered around New Year, eight more next year and the remaining five in 2025.

"Please take this donation as a token of Denmark's unwavering support for your country's fight for freedom," she said.

Zelenskyy called the Dutch and Danish donations a "huge push for other countries who were in doubt" about providing Ukraine with F-16s. Asked whether there were conditions attached to the donations, such as a commitment not to use them in Russian territory, Zelenskyy said that had not been discussed but added that defending Ukrainian territory was the "main goal."

The Dutch and Danish governments are also spearheading a coalition that is working to train Ukrainian pilots to fly the advanced fighter jets.

Zelenskyy declined to say how many Ukrainian pilots would undergo training in Denmark and later in Romania, citing security reasons. Frederiksen said "more than 70" Ukrainian personnel were already in Denmark and getting ready to start training.

The Danish Armed Forces said the Ukrainians must pass a security review and tests of their health and language skills before the training can begin.

"The training is expected to last a minimum of six months. Exactly how long it will take to teach Ukrainians to operate the F-16 capability cannot be said precisely, as it will depend on their experience and language skills, among other things," the Danish Armed Forces said in a statement.

Officials have previously said that Ukrainian pilots will need six to eight months of training.

Sunday's announcements came two days after the Netherlands and Denmark said the U.S. had authorized them to deliver American-made F-16s to Ukraine in what was seen as a major boost for Kyiv.

Washington says the F-16s — like the advanced U.S. Abrams tanks — will be crucial in the long term as Kyiv faces down Russia.

During a visit to Sweden on Saturday, Zelenskyy also asked for Swedish Gripen fighter jets. Sweden has not decided on that request but has agreed to let Ukrainian pilots test the aircraft.

Ukraine has been relying on older aircraft, such as Russian-made MiG29 and Sukhoi jets. F-16s have newer technology and targeting capabilities. They are also more versatile, experts say.

Zelenskyy was set to address the Danish Parliament on Monday.

In Ukraine, the governor of the Chernihiv region, Vyacheslav Chaus, said Sunday that the number of

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people wounded in the theater attack Saturday had risen to 148.

"I am sure our soldiers will respond to Russia for this terrorist attack. Respond tangibly," Zelenskyy said in a video address published in the early hours of Sunday.

In eastern Ukraine, Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said Sunday that Russia was shelling the city of Kupiansk "all day long," with an attack in the city center wounding 11 people. A man was killed in Russian shelling of Vovchansk, also in the Kharkiv region, according to Ukraine's Internal Affairs Ministry.

Meanwhile in Russia, the Defense Ministry said Sunday that its air defense systems had prevented an attack by three drones on the Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine.

Russian air defenses also jammed a drone flying towards Moscow early Sunday, causing it to crash. Russia's Defense Ministry called it "an attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack."

Moscow's Vnukovo and Domodedovo airports briefly suspended flights, but no victims or damage were reported.

In the city of Kursk, five people were wounded when a Ukrainian drone hit a train station, regional Gov. Roman Starovoit said. Kursk is the capital of the western region of the same name, which borders Ukraine.

Ukrainian authorities, who generally avoid commenting on attacks on Russian soil, didn't say whether Ukraine had any involvement.

Drone strikes on the Russian border regions are a fairly regular occurrence. Attacks deeper inside Russian territory have been on the rise since a drone was destroyed over the Kremlin in early May. Successful strikes have exposed the vulnerabilities of Moscow's air defense systems.

'Blue Beetle' unseats 'Barbie' atop box office, ending four-week reign

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The DC superhero film "Blue Beetle" led weekend ticket sales with a modest \$25.4 million opening, according to studio estimates Sunday, dethroning "Barbie" from the top spot after a record-setting run that left movie theaters colored pink for a month.

The "Barbie" phenomenon is far from over. Greta Gerwig's film, which earlier this week became the highest-grossing Warner Bros. release ever domestically, nearly managed to stay No. 1 again with \$21.5 million in its fifth weekend. It's up to \$567.3 million in North America and an eye-popping \$1.28 billion globally.

The other half of "Barbenheimer" also continues to perform remarkably well for a movie so far into its run.

Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer" took in \$10.6 million in its fifth week. With a \$285.2 million domestic total, "Oppenheimer" now owns the distinction of being the biggest box-office hit never to land No. 1 at the weekend box office. The previous record-holder for that unlikely stat is 2016's "Sing," which grossed \$270.3 million in the shadow of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" and "Hidden Figures."

Universal Pictures' "Oppenheimer" has done even better overseas. Its global gross stands at an estimated \$717.8 million through Sunday.

"Blue Beetle," starring Xolo Maridueña, came in on the lower side of expectations and notched one of the lower debuts for a DC Comics movie. Though earlier planned as a streaming-only release, Warner Bros. elected to put "Blue Beetle," the first DC movie to star a Latino superhero, into theaters in the late summer, a typically quiet period at the box office.

The production price tag of about \$105 million was lower for "Blue Beetle" than the average superhero film. It's one of the last releases produced under an earlier regime at DC Studios, which James Gunn and Peter Safran took the reins of last year.

The film, directed by Ángel Manuel Soto and written by Gareth Dunnet-Alcocer, drew solid reviews — certainly better than the three previous DC releases this year ("The Flash," "Black Adam" and "Shazam! Fury of the Gods"). "Blue Beetle" (76% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) is the rare comic-book film to put a Hispanic cast front and center.

But it also faced some tough luck, and not just in the unexpected staying power of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer." Southern California was bracing Sunday for Hurricane Hilary — potentially dampening ticket

sales in the region. (Los Angeles was still its top market.) And like recent releases, "Blue Beetle," which added \$18 million internationally, didn't have its cast available to promote the movie due to the ongoing actors strike.

Universal's raunchy R-rated canine comedy "Strays" showed even less bite. The film, with a voice cast including Will Ferrell and Jamie Foxx, landed in fifth place with \$8.4 million. Comedies have generally struggled in theaters in recent years, but "Strays" had it particularly rough given that its starry cast was unavailable.

"Strays" was very narrowly bested by "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem." The Paramount Pictures animated release earned \$8.4 million in its third weekend, bringing its domestic total to \$88.1 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Blue Beetle," \$25.4 million.
2. "Barbie," \$21.5 million.
3. "Oppenheimer," \$10.6 million.
4. "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem," \$8.4 million.
5. "Strays," \$8.3 million.
6. "Meg 2: The Trench," \$6.7 million.
7. "Talk to Me," \$3.2 million.
8. "Haunted Mansion," \$3 million.
9. "Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One," \$2.7 million.
10. "The Last Voyage of the Demeter," \$2.5 million.

Hope is hard to let go after Maui fire, as odds wane over reuniting with still-missing loved ones

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — The days of waiting have become harder and harder as the odds grow longer and longer, but Kevin Baclig remains undeterred in his search for his wife and her parents, missing since Aug. 8 when a wildfire engulfed and flattened the Hawaiian town of Lahaina.

He has gone looking from one shelter to another, hoping strangers might recognize the faces on the flyers he brings with him. Baclig, 30, has driven back and forth to Lahaina, desperately scouting for anything that might lead him to his wife, Angelica, and her parents, Joel and Adela Villegas. Six other relatives who lived next door also remain unaccounted for.

"I'm not going to give up until I see them," he said. "Of course I'm hoping to find them alive. ... What else can I do?"

Even as he tries to sound optimistic, his voice is subdued.

"I've been searching and searching — in Lahaina, everywhere," Baclig said, speaking in Ilocano, a dialect of the northern Philippines.

The blaze took scores of lives and destroyed hundreds of homes, including the house Baclig's family bought three years ago on Kopili Street, about a 15-minute walk to historic Front Street, once a bustling tourist center but now a bleak avenue of flattened buildings lined with charred vehicles.

The remains of 114 people have been found, most of them yet to be identified. Hawaii Gov. Josh Green has said the death toll will likely rise in the days to come as the painstaking search for remains continues in the heaps of rubble and ash in Lahaina, a seaside community of 12,000 and a tourist hotspot on Maui.

Officials acknowledge they don't have a firm number on the missing. Many initially listed as unaccounted for have since been located.

Crews have sifted through about 60% of the fire zone, FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell said Saturday.

"We are making progress, and we will continue to be with the people of Hawaii every step of the way," Criswell said. The agency approved nearly \$7 million to aid more than 2,000 households, including \$3

million in rental assistance.

More than 1,000 federal personnel are on Maui, nearly half of whom are assigned to help in the search for remains, the White House said.

A spokesperson for Maui County, Mahina Martin, said Saturday that authorities involved in the search effort were working to compile a list of the missing and continued to vet the information being gathered.

The only publicly available list has been compiled by good Samaritans hoping to link family with loved ones, but isn't always up-to-date.

President Joe Biden is scheduled to visit Lahaina on Monday to survey the devastation and meet with survivors and local officials.

Earlier this week, Police Chief John Pelletier said authorities would do their best to track down the missing. "But I can't promise that we're going to get them all," he said.

On the day before the fire, Po'omaika'i Estores-Losano, a 28-year-old father of two, wished aloha to his ohana, the Hawaiian word for family. "Another beautiful day in Hawaii," he wrote on Facebook, ending his post by urging his circle to "have fun, enjoy," and to never be "unhappy and grumpy."

He was among the scores still missing Saturday. His family has scoured the island looking for him, checking hospitals and shelters. Without a car, Estores-Losano would have had to outrun the fire and smoke.

"We don't want him to think we stopped looking for him," said Ku'ulei Barut, who last spoke to her brother the day before he went missing.

His mother, Leona Castillo, wants to hang on to the possibility that her son is still alive, but she knows she may have to face a reality she's not yet ready to accept. Last week, as the talk of body counts intensified, she got herself swabbed for DNA.

She wants him found, no matter how and where.

"We don't want him to be lost," she said. "If we don't get his body back, he'll just be lost."

In the days after the fire, there was chaos and confusion, with so many families looking for missing loved ones. Castillo said she was relieved for friends and neighbors who were reunited.

But she wondered when would it be her turn.

"I just want closure," she said.

Ace Yabes is also waiting for word about his relatives — nine in all who are missing, including Angelica Baclig, whose family lived next door to an aunt and her family, five of whom have yet to be found.

Kevin Baclig was at work as a nurse at a skilled nursing facility when the fire raced down from the hills and into town, igniting nearly everything in its path.

"I've been searching all the shelters, hotels, possible places they might go — I've gone to all of them. I've gone to the houses of their friends," he said. "I've reported them missing to the MPD (Maui Police Department), to the FBI. I've been showing their pictures."

Baclig, who is staying with friends in Kahului on the northern flank of the island, holds out hope as he searches.

Maybe in their haste to flee, none had the time to grab their cellphones — which might explain why Baclig has yet to get a call. Maybe they are looking for him, too, and unsure about his whereabouts.

Amid anguish and uncertainty, and as he nears the end of his efforts, he continues to pray for help.

"Lord, guide me in everything," he wrote Thursday on Facebook. "I don't know what to do."

Tropical Storm Hilary swirls northward packing deadly rainfall along Mexico's Baja coast

By JORDI LEBRIJA Associated Press

ENSENADA, Mexico (AP) — Tropical Storm Hilary swirled northward Sunday just off the coast of Mexico's Baja California peninsula, no longer a hurricane but still carrying so much rain that forecasters said "catastrophic and life-threatening" flooding is likely across a broad region of the southwestern U.S.

As of 8 a.m. Pacific time, Hilary was located about 220 miles (350 kilometers) south-southeast of San Diego, the National Hurricane Center reported. Hilary had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph)

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and was moving northwest at 25 mph (41 kph).

The Mexican cities of Ensenada and Tijuana remained directly in the tropical storm's path, and meteorologists warned that despite weakening, the storm remained treacherous.

One person drowned Saturday in the Mexican town of Santa Rosalia, on the peninsula's eastern coast, when a vehicle was swept away in an overflowing stream. Rescue workers managed to save four other people, said Edith Aguilar Villavicencio, the mayor of Mulege township.

It was not immediately clear whether officials considered the fatality related to the hurricane, but video posted by local officials showed torrents of water coursing through the town's streets.

Forecasters said the storm was still expected to enter the history books as the first tropical storm to hit Southern California in 84 years, bringing flash floods, mudslides, isolated tornadoes, high winds and power outages. Authorities issued an evacuation advisory for Santa Catalina Island, urging residents and beachgoers to leave the tourist destination 23 miles (37 kilometers) off the coast.

Elizabeth Adams, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service San Diego office, said rain could fall up to 3 inches (7.62 centimeters) an hour across Southern California's mountains and deserts, from late Sunday morning into the afternoon. The intense rainfall during those hours could cause widespread and life-threatening flash floods.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency, and officials had urged people to finish their preparations before sundown Saturday. It would be too late by Sunday, one expert said.

The hurricane is the latest major climate disaster to wreak havoc across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Hawaii's island of Maui is still reeling from last week's blaze that killed over 100 people and ravaged the historic town of Lahaina, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. In Canada, firefighters on Saturday continued to battle blazes during the nation's worst fire season on record.

Hilary already brought heavy rain and flooding to Mexico and the southwestern U.S. on Saturday, ahead of the storm's expected Sunday border crossing. Forecasters warned it could dump up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) — a year's worth of rain for some areas — in southern California and southern Nevada.

"This does not lessen the threat, especially the flood threat," Jamie Rhome, the U.S. National Hurricane Center's deputy director, said during a Saturday briefing to announce the storm's downgraded status. "Don't let the weakening trend and the intensity lower your guard."

Meteorologists also expected the storm to churn up "life-threatening" surf and rip currents, including waves up to 40 feet (12 meters) high, along Mexico's Pacific coast. Dozens sought refuge at storm shelters in the twin resorts of Los Cabos at the southern tip of the Baja peninsula, and firefighters rescued a family in San Jose del Cabo after the resort was hit by driving rain and wind.

In Tijuana, fire department head Rafael Carrillo voiced the fear at the back of everyone's mind in the border city of 1.9 million people, particularly residents who live in homes on steep hillsides.

"If you hear noises, or the ground cracking, it is important for you to check it and get out as fast as possible, because the ground can weaken and your home could collapse," Carrillo said.

Tijuana ordered all beaches closed Saturday, and set up a half dozen storm shelters at sports complexes and government offices.

Mexico's navy evacuated 850 people from islands off the Baja coast, and deployed almost 3,000 troops for emergency operations. In La Paz, the picturesque capital of Baja California Sur state on the Sea of Cortez, police patrolled closed beaches to keep swimmers out of the whipped-up surf.

The U.S. hurricane center posted tropical storm and potential flood warnings for Southern California from the Pacific coast to interior mountains and deserts as far north as eastern Oregon and Idaho. The San Bernardino County sheriff issued evacuation warnings for several mountain and foothill communities ahead of the storm, while Orange County sent out its own alert for anyone living in a wildfire burn scar in the Santa Ana Mountains' Silverado and Williams canyons.

Authorities in Los Angeles scrambled to get the homeless off the streets and into shelters, and officials ordered all state beaches in San Diego and Orange counties closed.

Across the region, municipalities ran out of free sandbags and grocery shelves emptied out as residents stockpiled supplies. The U.S. National Park Service closed California's Joshua Tree National Park and Mojave

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National Preserve to keep visitors from becoming stranded amid flooding.

Major League Baseball rescheduled three Sunday games in Southern California, moving them to Saturday as part of split doubleheaders, and SpaceX delayed the launch of a satellite-carrying rocket from a base on California's central coast until at least Monday.

The White House said President Joe Biden had been briefed on the latest preparedness plans ahead of the hurricane's turn to the U.S. "I urge everyone, everyone in the path of this storm, to take precautions and listen to the guidance of state and local officials," he said.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that it has officials inside California's emergency preparedness office and teams on standby with food, water and other help as needed.

Hilary on Friday had rapidly grown into an exceedingly dangerous Category 4 major hurricane, with its top sustained winds peaking at 145 mph (230 kph). Its winds dropped to 115 mph (185 kph) early Saturday as a Category 3 storm, before further weakening to 100 mph (161 kph) as a Category 2.

By Sunday it was moving north-northwest at 21 mph (33 kph). The hurricane brushed past Punta Eugenia on the Pacific coast and was expected to make landfall along a sparsely populated area of the peninsula south of the Pacific port city of Ensenada.

Meanwhile one of several budding storm systems in the Atlantic Ocean became Tropical Storm Emily on Sunday, according to the National Hurricane Center. It was located far from land, about 1,000 miles (1,615 kilometers) west-northwest of the Cabo Verde Islands with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph). Emily was moving at about 10 mph (17 kph) in the open ocean.

Canadian firefighters wage epic battle to save communities after mass evacuations

By DAVID SHARP, JIM MORRIS and MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Firefighters battling wildfires in western Canada received help from reinforcements and milder weather Saturday, after the nation's worst fire season on record destroyed structures, fouled the air with thick smoke and prompted evacuation orders for tens of thousands of residents.

Flames were being held at bay 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, and weary firefighters had a reprieve around Kelowna in British Columbia. But the firefighters were nowhere close to declaring victory, especially with drier and windier weather forecast for the coming days.

"We're by no means out of the woods yet," Mike Westwick, wildfire information officer for Yellowknife, told The Associated Press. "We still have a serious situation. It's not safe to return."

The fires near Kelowna, about 90 miles (150 kilometers) north of the U.S. border, are among more than 380 blazes across the province, with 150 burning out of control, according to the Canadian Press. Another 236 fires are burning in the Northwest Territories.

At a Saturday evening news conference, Shane Thompson, the province's minister of environment and climate change, said the fires near Yellowknife had not grown very much in the past few days thanks to breaks in the weather.

"But I want to be clear, a little bit of rain doesn't mean it's safe to come back home," he said. Others warned that incoming hot weather would make the battle more challenging.

Yellowknife Mayor Rebecca Alty encouraged residents to stay away from the town to ensure their safety and help with firefighting efforts. She assured people that patrols were monitoring the streets and homes to protect against looting.

"This fire's taking a nap. Its going to wake up and we still got a serious situation to handle here," Westwick said.

Yellowknife has been a virtual ghost town since a majority of the city's 20,000 residents started to flee following an evacuation order issued Wednesday evening, officials said. Long caravans of cars choked the main highway for days and those who couldn't take to the road lined up for emergency flights out of the city. The last 39 hospital patients were flown out Friday night on a Canadian Forces plane, officials said.

On Saturday, officials said the escape route out of Yellowknife was safe, for the time being. About 2,600 people remained, including emergency teams, firefighters, utility workers and police officers, along with

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some residents who refused to leave.

Charlotte Morritt was among those who left Thursday, reaching that decision because of the unbearable smoke that she feared would be unhealthy for her 4-month-old son.

Morritt, a journalist with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and her son took an evacuation flight some 1,500 kilometers (950 miles) west to safety in Whitehorse, Yukon, while her partner stayed behind to monitor their property and help create firebreaks and fight fires.

"We knew it was only a matter of time," said Morritt, who had been following media updates and satellite images of the approaching wildfires.

Air tankers dropped water and fire retardant to keep the flames from Yellowknife. A 10-kilometer (6-mile) fire line was dug, and firefighters deployed 20 kilometers (12 miles) of hose and a plethora of pumps.

Canada has seen a record number of wildfires this year that have caused choking smoke in parts of the U.S. All told, there have been more than 5,700 fires, which have burned more than 137,000 square kilometers (53,000 square miles) from one end of Canada to the other, according to the Canadian Inter-agency Forest Fire Centre.

All of British Columbia was under a state of emergency Saturday. About 35,000 people have been ordered to evacuate wildfire zones across the province and an additional 30,000 people were under an evacuation alert, meaning they should be prepared to leave, Premier David Eby announced.

Eby told reporters Saturday that the situation was "grim" and warned that the "situation changes very quickly."

He said he was restricting non-essential travel to fire-affected areas to free up accommodations such as hotels, motels and campgrounds for displaced residents and firefighters.

Ian Stewart and his wife made the "anxiety producing" decision Friday to evacuate Kelowna with their 4-year-old border collie and drive 335 kilometers (210 miles) to the British Columbia town of Clearwater.

"The smoke was really oppressive and there were big chunks of ash falling everywhere," he said Saturday. They packed a couple of suitcases, passports, laptop computers and dog food, and drove in bumper-to-bumper traffic to escape.

A shift in the wind carried smoke and haze from British Columbia into the Seattle area on Saturday, said Dustin Guy, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The Puget Sound region was just recovering from record heat, and air quality could reach unhealthy levels Saturday night through Monday, Guy said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who met Friday with some of the Yellowknife evacuees who traveled south to Edmonton, Alberta, on Saturday shared on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter: "We've got your back."

Trudeau praised firefighters, police, military personnel, the Red Cross and others who responded to the fires and other natural disasters this summer.

"Terrible loss, increased extreme weather events. And all through it, we've seen Canadians step up," he told reporters in Edmonton.

Where do the 2024 presidential candidates stand on abortion?

Take a look

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — More than a year after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the federal right to abortion, the issue has at times dominated the discussion among the Republicans seeking their party's 2024 presidential nomination and is sure to be on display during the first GOP campaign debate Wednesday in Milwaukee.

Some of the division among the candidates has come over whether there should be a national ban on the practice — and after how many weeks — now that the justices have returned specific debate over abortion legality to the states.

A look at how the issue of abortion is playing out among Republican and Democratic candidates:

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REPUBLICANS

DONALD TRUMP

The former president, the current GOP front-runner, has often sidestepped the issue of abortion, even as Republicans across the country have celebrated the Supreme Court's decision.

In April, a major anti-abortion group assailed Trump on the issue, saying his contention that abortion restrictions should be left up to individual states, not the federal government, is a "morally indefensible position for a self-proclaimed pro-life presidential candidate."

The Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America group has said it would not support any White House candidate who did not at a minimum support a 15-week federal abortion ban.

Trump, who has referred to himself as "the most pro-life president in American history, has pointed to his successful nomination of three conservatives justices, a move that tilted the court to the conservative majority that overturned Roe v. Wade. Earlier this year, he characterized as "too harsh" a measure signed into law by fellow contender Gov. Ron DeSantis that would ban abortions in Florida after six weeks of pregnancy.

RON DESANTIS

While DeSantis has been governor, Florida passed an abortion ban after six weeks of pregnancy. But DeSantis, who says he is "pro-life," has suggested that individual states should decide the issue, adding in a recent interview that he is "running on doing things that I know I can accomplish."

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, criticized DeSantis for not supporting a national ban on the procedure, calling DeSantis' position "unacceptable" as he runs for president.

MIKE PENCE

The former vice president supports a federal ban on abortion at six weeks, before many women even know they're pregnant.

And he has advocated pulling from the market one of two widely used abortion pills — a medication with a better safety record than Viagra and penicillin. Sensing that such a position may be viewed as too extreme in a general election, no other major presidential candidate has joined his calls.

In a recent Associated Press interview, Pence went even further, saying abortion should be banned, even when a pregnancy is deemed nonviable. Such a standard would force women to carry pregnancies to term even when doctors have determined there is no chance a baby will survive outside the womb.

Earlier this month while touring the Iowa State Fair, Pence said he was expecting to use the debate as an opportunity to call out Trump and DeSantis for not insisting on a national abortion ban.

TIM SCOTT

The South Carolina senator has long voiced his opposition to abortion, pledging that as president "I would sign the most conservative pro-life legislation you can bring to my desk."

He has signaled support for a federal ban on the practice for as early as 12 weeks and also support for a bill sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., that would ban abortions nationally after 15 weeks.

In 2021, Scott also co-sponsored legislation that would have established a constitutional right to life from "the moment of fertilization."

NIKKI HALEY

Haley, the sole woman in the GOP field, pledged in May that she would sign a federal abortion ban if elected president.

But Haley has not specified a time frame for after how many weeks she feels abortion should be outlawed, noting that passing such a measure would be highly unlikely without more Republicans in Congress, and advocating for "consensus" around the issue. She's said she would "absolutely" sign a 15-week federal ban.

The former South Carolina governor and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said "no one has been honest" about how difficult a ban could be to achieve, in a closely divided federal government.

Haley campaign spokesman Ken Farnaso said in June that she would "sign pro-life legislation that includes exceptions for rape, incest, and for the life of the mother," suggesting she may be opposed to an exception for non-viable pregnancies — but declining to clarify.

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As governor, Haley signed an abortion ban after about 20 weeks. That law is still in effect while a six-week ban, passed by state lawmakers, is held up in the courts.

VIVEK RAMASWAMY

The wealthy biotech entrepreneur and author of "Woke, Inc." has said he would not support a federal ban on abortion because "the federal government should stay out of it." He has voiced support for states that have passed six-week bans.

Like some other hopefuls, he has pushed for more policies that encourage adoption and better child care.

CHRIS CHRISTIE

The former two-term New Jersey governor has argued that the issue of abortion should be carried out in the states, not at the federal level.

In a CNN town hall, Christie said that "the federal government should not be involved unless and until there's a consensus around the country from the 50 states making their own decisions about what it should be."

Seeking local office in the 1990s, Christie identified himself as "pro-choice," saying he changed his position after hearing his daughter's heartbeat at 13 weeks.

As governor, he vetoed millions in state funding for Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics. Before the Supreme Court's decision that overturned Roe, Christie joined Dannerfeller in meetings with other GOP governors to discuss the issue and how it might play out at the state level.

ASA HUTCHINSON

The former two-term Arkansas governor has said the issue of abortion should stay in the states without a Republican supermajority in Congress.

As governor in 2021, Hutchinson signed a near-total ban on abortions that did not include rape and incest exceptions.

DOUG BURGUM

In April, the two-term North Dakota governor signed one of the strictest anti-abortion laws in the country. The measure would allow abortions up to six weeks' gestation in cases of rape or incest, or medical emergencies. After that marker, no exceptions aside from some medical emergencies, such as ectopic pregnancies, are allowed at any stage of pregnancy.

Burgum has mostly said the issue of abortion should be left to the states and has indicated he would not support a federal ban.

LARRY ELDER

The conservative talk radio host opposes abortion but has said he would not support a federal ban.

PERRY JOHNSON

The businessman describes himself as "pro-life." When he ran for Michigan governor in 2022, Johnson told reporters "two wrongs don't make a right" when asked if he would rule out banning abortion in cases of sexual assault.

FRANCIS SUAREZ

The Miami mayor has said that he would support a national ban on abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, with some exceptions, including rape, incest and the mother's health.

WILL HURD

The former Texas congressman has said he would sign a 15-week federal abortion ban, although he has said that he doesn't see it as realistic that Congress would pass such a measure.

While in the House, Hurd twice voted in favor of a 20-week ban.

DEMOCRATS

JOE BIDEN

The president supports abortion access and has said he would veto a national ban on the practice. As a senator, Biden supported abortion restrictions like the 1976 Hyde Amendment — which states that Medicaid won't pay for abortions unless the woman's life is in danger or the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest — but said during the 2020 campaign he had shifted course.

The aftermath of last year's Supreme Court ruling has framed much of Biden's presidency on abortion.

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He signed an executive order designed to strengthen and promote access to contraception.

Mounting a rallying cry to 2022 midterms voters to seat more Democratic lawmakers who could possibly codify abortion access nationally, Biden has also directed his administration to take steps to protect access to abortion care. This includes making mifepristone — one of two pills used in medication abortions — easier to obtain, and ensuring members of the military can access reproductive health care.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.

The author and environmental lawyer has spoken in favor of “bodily autonomy” and describes himself as “pro-choice.”

A nephew of President John F. Kennedy and son of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, he has also said “it’s a woman’s choice, and it’s solely up to the woman” in terms of how a pregnancy should be handled in its first trimester.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

The self-help author’s campaign website describes her as “one hundred percent pro-choice.” Williamson has also noted that she believes the decision to have an abortion or not “lies solely with a pregnant woman, according to the dictates of her conscience and in communion with the God of her understanding.”

Patriots’ Isaiah Bolden evaluated, released from hospital after being carted off late vs. Packers

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Patriots’ rookie cornerback Isaiah Bolden has been released from a Green Bay area hospital following a series of evaluations after being carted off the field in the fourth quarter of New England’s exhibition game with the Packers on Saturday night.

The Patriots said in a statement Sunday that Bolden, who appeared to collide with teammate Calvin Munson while attempting to make a hit on a pass completion to Green Bay’s Malik Heath, will travel with the team Sunday when it returns Massachusetts.

Bolden posted a message Sunday morning to the platform as X, formerly known as Twitter, thanking people for their concern.

“Appreciate the prayers more excited to be back with the guys,” the message said.

The Patriots and Packers mutually agreed to call off the remainder of the game after Bolden’s injury, with the Patriots leading 21-17 with 10:29 left in the fourth quarter. The team said after the injury that Bolden had movement in all his extremities and was transported to Aurora Bay Medical Center for testing.

The Patriots say they’ve canceled their scheduled joint practices with the Tennessee Titans on Tuesday and Wednesday in Nashville. The Patriots will train in Foxborough this week and fly to Tennessee on Thursday for Friday’s exhibition game.

Today in History: August 21, Nat Turner launches rebellion

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Aug. 21, the 233rd day of 2023. There are 132 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Aug. 21, 1831, Nat Turner launched a violent slave rebellion in Virginia, resulting in the deaths of at least 55 white people; scores of Black people were killed in retribution in the aftermath of the rebellion, and Turner was later executed.

On this date:

In 1858, the first of seven debates took place between Illinois senatorial contenders Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas.

In 1911, Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa” was stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris. (It was recovered two years later in Italy.)

In 1944, the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union and China opened talks at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington that helped pave the way for establishment of the United Nations.

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In 1959, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed an executive order making Hawaii the 50th state.

In 1991, the hardline coup against Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev collapsed in the face of a popular uprising led by Russian Federation President Boris N. Yeltsin.

In 1992, an 11-day siege began at the cabin of white separatist Randy Weaver in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, as government agents tried to arrest Weaver for failing to appear in court on charges of selling two illegal sawed-off shotguns; on the first day of the siege, Weaver's teenage son, Samuel, and Deputy U.S. Marshal William Degan were killed.

In 1993, in a serious setback for NASA, engineers lost contact with the Mars Observer spacecraft as it was about to reach the red planet on a \$980 million mission.

In 2000, rescue efforts to reach the sunken Russian nuclear submarine Kursk ended with divers announcing none of the 118 sailors had survived.

In 2010, Iranian and Russian engineers began loading fuel into Iran's first nuclear power plant, which Moscow promised to safeguard to prevent material at the site from being used in any potential weapons production.

In 2015, a trio of Americans, U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Spencer Stone, National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos and college student Anthony Sadler, and a British businessman, Chris Norman, tackled and disarmed a Moroccan gunman on a high-speed train between Amsterdam and Paris.

In 2020, a former police officer who became known as the Golden State Killer, Joseph James DeAngelo, told victims and family members in a Sacramento courtroom that he was "truly sorry" before he was sentenced to multiple life prison sentences for a decade-long string of rapes and murders.

Ten years ago: Army Pfc. Chelsea Manning was sentenced at Fort Meade, Maryland, to up to 35 years in prison for spilling an unprecedented trove of government secrets. (The former intelligence analyst was later sentenced to up to 35 years in prison, but the term was commuted by President Barack Obama.) The National Security Agency declassified three secret court opinions showing how in one of its surveillance programs, it scooped up as many as 56,000 emails and other communications by Americans not connected to terrorism annually over three years.

Five years ago: Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer and fixer, pleaded guilty to campaign-finance violations and other charges; Cohen said Trump directed him to arrange the payment of hush money to porn star Stormy Daniels and a former Playboy model to fend off damage to his White House bid. Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort was found guilty of eight financial crimes in the first trial victory of the special counsel investigation into Trump's associates. The body of college student Mollie Tibbetts was found in an Iowa cornfield; authorities say they were led to the body by a farmworker from Mexico who was suspected of being in the country illegally and that he confessed to kidnapping and killing her while she was out running.

One year ago: The daughter of an influential Russian political theorist often referred to as "Putin's brain" was killed in a car bombing on the outskirts of Moscow. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the killing of 29-year-old TV commentator Daria Dugina, but the bloodshed gave rise to suspicions that the intended target was her father, Alexander Dugin, a nationalist philosopher and writer. Leon Vitali, the "Barry Lyndon" actor who became one of Stanley Kubrick's closest associates, died at age 74. "Dragon Ball Super: Super Hero" topped the box office in its first weekend in theaters, bringing in \$20.1 million.

Today's Birthdays: Rock-and-roll musician James Burton is 84. Singer Jackie DeShannon is 82. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Willie Lanier is 78. Actor Patty McCormack is 78. Pop singer-musician Carl Giammarese (jee-ah mah-REE'-see) is 76. Actor Loretta Devine is 74. NBC newsman Harry Smith is 72. Singer Glenn Hughes is 71. Actor Kim Cattrall is 67. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL quarterback Jim McMahon is 64. Actor Cleo King is 61. Rock singer Serj Tankian (System of a Down) is 56. Actor Carrie-Anne Moss is 53. Milwaukee Brewers manager Craig Counsell is 53. Rock musician Liam Howlett (Prodigy) is 52. Actor Alicia Witt is 48. Singer Kelis (kuh-LEES') is 44. TV personality Brody Jenner is 40. Singer Melissa Schuman is 39. Retired Olympic gold medal sprinter Usain (yoo-SAYN') Bolt is 37. Actor Carlos Pratts is 37. Actor-comedian Brooks Wheelan is 37. Actor Cody Kasch is 36. Country singer Kacey Musgraves is 35. Actor Hayden Panettiere (pan'-uh-tee-EHR') is 34. Actor RJ Mitte is 31. Actor Maxim Knight is 24.