

Groton Daily Independent

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Tuesday, Sept. 12

Dress up day: Nursing Home at MS/HS, Inside Out Day at elementary

Senior Menu: Goulash, 7 layer salad, garlic toast, mixed fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 6 p.m.

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

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

Boys Golf at Redfield, 10 a.m.

Junior High Football at Redfield, 4:30 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 13

Dress up Day: Camo vs. Pink at MS/HS, Sports/Jersey Day at elementary

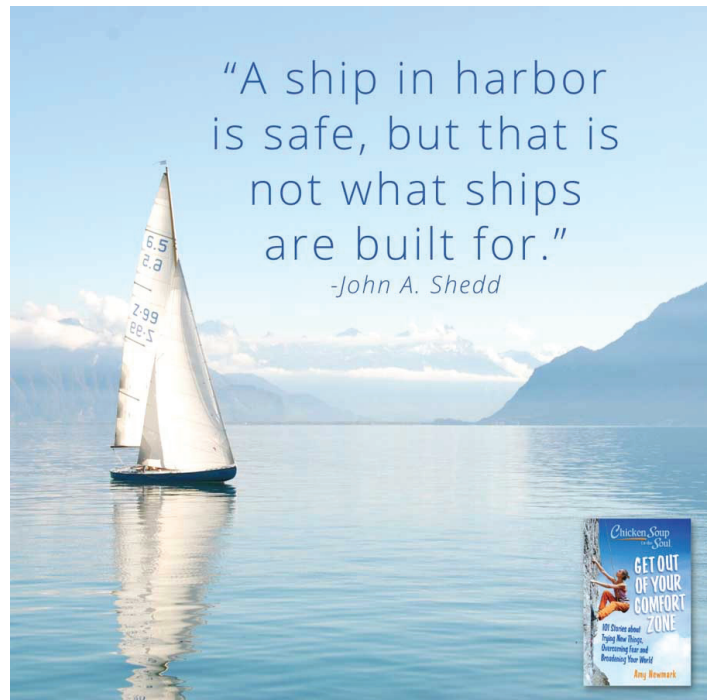
Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, green beans, Jell-O with fruit, whole wheat bread, am-

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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



brosia.

St. John's Lutheran Bible Study, 2:45 pm.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

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

Thursday, Sept. 14

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

Boys Golf at Dakota Magic Golf Course, 10 a.m.

Cross Country at Lee Park Golf Course, Aberdeen, 4 p.m.

Volleyball at Clark/Willow Lake (Clark): (7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow)

Friday, Sept. 15

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

Homecoming Parade: 1 p.m.

Football hosts Deuel, 7 p.m.

TigerPalloza

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

cans.
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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

prisoners. In exchange, Washington will allow \$6 billion in frozen Iranian funds to be transferred to banks in Qatar without fears of any U.S. sanctions.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is under pressure from hardline Republicans over his perceived stalling on the launching of impeachment hearings against President Joe Biden, in an escalation of tensions that could see him ousted.

Quarterback Aaron Rodgers suffered a left Achilles tendon injury just four minutes into his New York Jets debut during a Monday night game that saw the Jets defeat the Buffalo Bills in a 22-16 overtime victory.

American Mark Dickey has been rescued after becoming ill and becoming trapped more than 1,000 meters underground Turkey's third deepest cave over a week ago.

Police are warning that convicted murderer Danelo Cavalcante is armed with a weapon after he reportedly broke into a home and stole a rifle. Up to \$25,000 in reward money is being offered for information leading to his capture.

Hurricane Lee has restrengthened into a Category 3 storm after weakening to a Category 2. Weather experts say the storm could intensify again, with East Coast states expected to face large swells and rip currents throughout the week.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Kyiv said it has reclaimed control of the so-called Boyko Towers, vital gas and oil drilling platforms in the Black Sea, that had been seized by Russia. Maritime expert Yörük Işık told Newsweek that the move was a "major event" that could end the Russian Navy's ability to operate in that region of the Black Sea.

TALKING POINTS

"What many forget is, I have enough violence here in Bernalillo County. I do not want to have political violence towards my deputies or here in Bernalillo County. My job is to keep the peace and to make sure that the citizens of Bernalillo County are safe. And I do not believe that this order will help me do so," Bernalillo County Sheriff John Allen said after announcing his department will not enforce New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's 30-day ban on carrying guns in public.

"Those in Albany who created this farce of a commission may not care about—or know—the law, but whether it was five district attorneys rejecting the Attorney General's sham report's findings or the courts, every time someone charged with upholding the law looks at the facts we prevail. Truth and reason won, mob rule lost today," said Rich Azzopardi, a spokesperson for former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, after a New York judge ruled the creation of the state's ethics commission was unconstitutional.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices meets to discuss who they should encourage to get an updated COVID-19 vaccine.

Apple is expected to introduce the iPhone 15 during a product launch event scheduled to stream on the company's website and on the Apple TV app starting at 10 a.m. PT.

The MTV Video Music Awards will take place at 8 p.m. ET at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. The ceremony will air on several channels, including BET, Comedy Central, MTV 2, Nickelodeon and VH1. It will also stream live on MTV.com and on Paramount+.

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BECOME A MEMBER!

OVER 85 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES



**Aberdeen
Community
Concert
Association**



**Vox Fortura:
International Pop-op Quartet**
Friday, September 15, 2023 at 7:00 pm



**Ireland's Greatest Showman feat.
David Shannon: Irish Tenor**
Monday, October 23, 2023 at 7:00 pm



The Starlets: Pop Female Trio
Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 7:00 pm



SD Jazz Festival Concert
Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 7:30 pm



**Shaun Johnson & The Big Band
Experience**
Thursday, April 25, 2024 - 7:00 pm

\$75 Adults | \$25 Students | \$155 Family/Grandparents

Concerts will be held in the Johnson Fine Arts Center Harvey & Cynthia Jewett Theater at Northern State University 1200 S. Jay Street.

ACCA Memberships can be purchased at Interior Design Concepts located at 21 N. Main Street or online at the ACCA website. All dates are subject to change. Check tickets for concert time.

WWW.ABERDEENCOMMUNITYCONCERTS.ORG

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SDFBCA Coaches Poll - Week 3

11AAA

1. Sioux Falls Lincoln 94 (17) 3-0
 2. Bishop O'Gorman 73 3-0
 3. Harrisburg 50 (2) 2-1
 4. Sioux Falls Jefferson 48 2-1
 5. Brandon Valley 30 1-2
- RV: SF Washington 4, SF Roosevelt 2

11AA

1. Pierre 97 (19) 3-0
 2. Tea Area 70 (1) 2-1
 3. Yankton 65 3-0
 4. Watertown 39 2-1
 5. Spearfish 10 2-1
- RV: Huron 9, Sturgis 6

11A

1. Dell Rapids 98 (18) 3-0
 2. Canton 74 (1) 3-0
 3. West Central 64 (1) 3-0
 4. Sioux Falls Christian 22 1-2
 5. Lennox 21 2-1
- RV: Dakota Valley 19

11B

1. Winner 81 (13) 4-0
 2. Sioux Valley 61 (3) 4-0
 3. Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 30 4-0
 4. Hot Springs 27 3-1
 5. Tie: Deuel 19 4-0, Elk Point-Jefferson 19 2-1
- RV: WWSSC 11, Tri Valley 5

9AA

1. Parkston (21) 105 4-0
 2. Hamlin 72 4-0
 3. Howard 53 3-1
 4. Elkton-Lake Benton 39 4-0
 5. Hanson 19 2-2
- RV: Wall, Platte-Geddes, Stanley Co, Freeman/
Marion/Freeman Academy

9A

1. Canistota (11) 83 4-0
 2. Warner (7) 75 3-0
 3. Philip 34 3-0
 4. Wolsley-Wessington 30 2-1
 5. Alcester-Hudson 19 4-0
- RV: Gregory, Harding Co/Bison, Deubrook Area

9B

1. Faulkton Area (18) 96 4-0
 2. De Smet (2) 82 3-1
 3. Hitchcock-Tulare (2) 45 3-1
 4. Herreid/Selby Area 29 3-1
 5. Avon 28 3-1
- RV: Corsica-Stickney, Dell Rapids St. Mary



**GHS 50th
Class
Reunion**

The GHS Class of 1973 will be celebrating 50 years. Anyone can come down to the Legion the evening of Saturday, Sept. 16 to visit the members of the class.



Full time shift supervisor opening at Ken's Food Fair, Groton SD.

Looking for a hard working self motivated individual with leadership skills and willing to take on responsibilities.

Pay will depend on experience. Benefits available will discuss at interview.

Apply at Ken's in Groton SD.



GHS Royalty

Layne Hanson, son of Jeff and Shawn Hanson, Bath; and Anna Fjeldheim, daughter of Sue and Ryan Fjeldheim, Groton, were chosen as the 2023 GHS Royalty. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Webster Invitational Cross Country Results

The Webster Invitational Cross Country meet was held Monday with Groton Area participating in four divisions. The results are as follows:

Varsity Boys 5K Race: 32, Gavin Kroll, 21:58.20; 37, Jayden Schwan, 22:35.94; 48, Nathan Unzen, 24:23.28.

Boys JV 3K Race: 32, Kason Oswald, 19:17.75; 33, Logan Clocksene, 22:35.33.

Girls Varsity 5K Race: 9, Rylle Gilbert, 22:31.14; 42, Rylie Rose, 27:31.48.

Girls JV 3K Race: 13, Sydney Holmes, 16:10.81; 41, Emily Clark, 21:10.37.

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The GHS Royalty Court are pictured above. Candidates in back, left to right, are Dillon Abeln, Holden Sippel, Logan Ringgenberg, Sydney Leicht, Emma Schinkel, Hannah Monson and Carly Guthmiller. In front flanking the royalty are the scroll carriers Briggs Sperry and Paisley Johnson. Royalty are Layne Hanson and Anna Fjeldheim. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The GHS Pep band is under the direction of Desiree Yeigh. One of their favorite songs to play is "Yeigh, (eye) of the Tiger." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Coach Shaun Wanner introduced the senior football players: Lane Tietz, Holden Sippel, Colby Dunker and Logan Ringgenberg. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Coach Ryan Olson introduced the senior soccer players: Braxton Imrie, Jayden Zak and Logan Ringgenberg. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Coach Chris Kucker talked about the girls soccer program. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE video)



Coach Joel Guthmiller talked about the boys soccer program. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



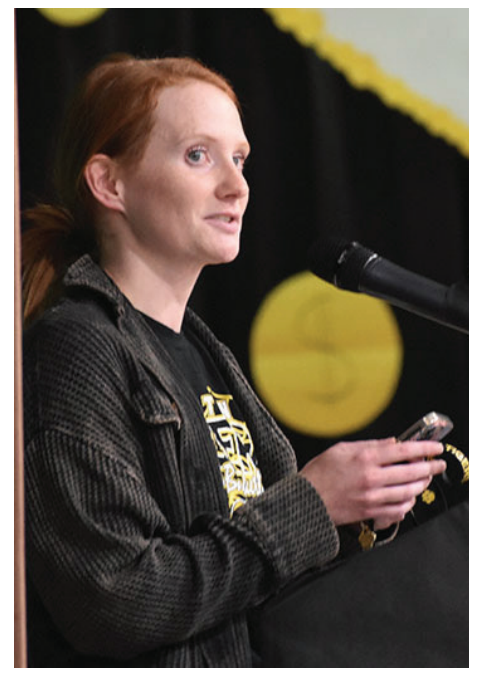
Desiree Yeigh talked about the band program. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Coach Chelsea Hanson talked about the volleyball program. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Coach Brooke Malsom talked about the cross country program. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Coach Aubray Miller talked about the cheerleaders. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The GHS Cheerleaders performed at the homecoming coronation. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE video)

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Jordan Carson was the Master of Ceremonies.

(Photo lifted from GDILIVE video)



The junior class put on a "Barbie" skit at the homecoming coronation. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Last year's reigning homecoming royalty, Queen Aspen Johnson and King Cole Simon, gave their greetings. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Joyce and Dale Grenz were introduced as the Parade Marshals this year. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Groton Area
Tigers



BECOME A SPONSOR



Is anyone interested in being a sponsor of any of these volleyball matches to be livestreamed on GDILIVE.COM? They are \$25 per match. Text Paul at 605-397-7460 or email paperpaul@grotonsd.net.

C at Clark
JV at Clark
C at Warner
C at Tiospa Zina
JV at Tiospa Zina
C at Florence
JV at Florence
C vs. Great Plains Lutheran
JV vs. Great Plains Lutheran

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Groton Community Transit

P.O. Box 693
205 E. 2nd Ave.
Groton, SD 57445

Dear Groton family,

Thank you, Thank you, for your loyalty and support through all of these years! We appreciate everyone of you!!

Although we have tried our best to keep the expenses low, our operating costs have increased significantly due to global factors in recent times. After carefully reviewing the finances, we have made a tough decision of increasing our transportation prices.

The change will take effect on Oct. 1, 2023 our rides within the town of Groton will be \$2 per ride, \$4 roundtrip. And, medical rides to Aberdeen from Groton will be \$20 roundtrip. Until then, you can take benefit of the old prices. We will honor old prices till Sept. 30, 2023!

We also offer a discounted pass for \$30 which includes 22 one way rides within Groton area!

We are a non-profit transportation service for the needs of all age groups of people!

As always, thank you for your loyalty and we thank you for your understanding and continued support!

Sincerely,

Dam Hansen & Eugenia Strom

Groton Transit

Steve Smith, Sherry Koehler, Topper Tostad, Dick Kolker

Tax limitations, Langford football cooperative discussed during Monday's school board meeting

by Elizabeth Varin

For the next few months, the Groton Area School District board will analyze whether it should opt out of the tax limitations, which could lead to higher property tax rates to support the district.

On Monday, the board went over a timeline to look into the current state of the district's finances and options for the future. The district is scheduled to discuss the following at its upcoming meetings:

- Discussion about financial history and a current review of the general fund is scheduled for the Oct. 10 meeting.
- Discussion about the financial forecast for the district is scheduled for the Nov. 13 meeting.
- Discussion about the capital outlay plan and alternatives to an opt-out vote is scheduled to be discussed at the Dec. 11 meeting.
- A mid-year financial update and possible opt-out decision is scheduled for the Jan. 8, 2024 meeting.

An excess tax levy, or "opt-out," can be voted on by the school board if the district cannot operate on the revenues generated by the maximum levy for general fund and monies from state aid. At that point, the district would "opt-out" of the levy limitations.

"We don't have to have that decision in January, but the earlier we have it, the better," said Superintendent Joe Schwan.

The long lead time on a vote will allow for thorough discussion of the options available and ample time for the public to comment on the issue as well, he said.

"I don't want to catch anybody off guard, that they didn't know this was coming," he said.

The district is facing budget issues after significant drop in state aid and local revenue sources. The district has already transferred an estimated \$700,000 from capital outlay funds to make up for the deficit in the general fund, but options presented at the July school board meeting included opting out of the general fund tax freeze or making cuts.

The district is also looking at ways to make jobs at the school competitive as there continues to be a teacher shortage throughout the state.

"The intention is to be able to work through this methodically through the next few months," Schwan said. "That way we're not rushing through this."

An opt out needs to be done between Jan. 1 through July 15 prior to the year the taxes are payable.

No vote to continue toward an opt out was taken as the agenda item was for information only. However, board members didn't show enthusiasm for the upcoming discussion.

"I'd like to say I'm looking forward to it (the conversation), but ..." said Board President Deb Gengerke before shaking her head no.

Lions and Tigers?

Discussion continued Monday about creating a cooperative with the Langford Area School District for athletics.

The district received a letter in early August requesting a meeting to discuss the possibility of a co-op for high school varsity football.

"For the last few years, we have tried to maintain a stand-alone football program," read the letter from Langford Area School District Superintendent Shad Storley. "The number of participants, however, has made fielding a varsity team difficult, and the projected numbers of the next few years warrants us reaching out to area schools to see if there is interest in forming a football co-op."

Groton district officials met with Langford representatives at the end of August to discuss the options, and Langford has also approached the Britton-Hecla school district, Superintendent Schwan said. Langford has also sent a letter to the South Dakota High School Activities Association to look into the possibility of a 6-man team.

Not much has changed for the Groton school district since the issue was discussed a couple of years

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ago, Schwan said. For now, the district is waiting to see if Langford officials feel it is worthwhile to continue discussions. At that point, Schwan said, more meetings will be scheduled.

- Board Vice President Marty Weismantel asked for a breakdown of a specific fund that includes uniform and horn fees paid by students. It doesn't seem fair that there is an extracurricular group that has to pay uniform fees while others don't.

- The middle and high school are looking to rebrand a service for those that need some homework help from ICU to the Homework Academy. District staff have worked through ways to improve the service and make it more effective for students. "Hopefully there's not tons of kids on it, but for the ones that are, hopefully we can get them what they need," said 6-12 Principal Shelby Edwards.

- Updates are coming to the Groton High School Arena scoreboard. A community donor requested to install statistic panels to the current scoreboard inside the gymnasium. The district has also secured sponsors to fund the upgrade. The project is scheduled to be completed before the basketball season begins.

- A non-profit is forming to support the educational mission of the district. The Groton Area School Foundation has held a couple of meetings and will look into adopting by-laws and further defining its focus at an October meeting.

- District officials are working to improve attendance for Hispanic/Latino and English learners at the elementary school. The K-5 school is expected to be identified for "targeted support and improvement" based on data from the 2022-2023 school year. That data isn't expected to be released to the public until October or November.

- The district updated its Learn On plan, which is the document that spells out the district's plan for a safe return to instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan is updated twice a year, and September's updates include some small updates, as well as cutting pages dealing with district- and state-sponsored COVID testing as those funds are no longer available.

- Enrollment numbers are shifting as the school year begins. The elementary school enrollment totals 298 students with 19 junior kindergarteners, 50 kindergarteners, 39 first graders, 45 second graders, 43 third graders, 49 fourth graders and 53 sixth graders. The middle school has 124 students as of Monday, including 40 sixth graders, 41 seventh graders and 43 eighth graders. The high school has 172 students, including 41 ninth graders, 45 10th graders, 46 11th graders and 40 12th graders.

- The board approved hiring Robin Bitz as a middle school/high school special education paraprofessional at \$14.74 per hour.

- Second grade teachers Anne Zoellner and Emily Dinger discussed classroom projects and reading intervention training during a program overview presentation. Both Zoellner and Dinger are taking part in the AIM Pathways professional training program offered through the South Dakota Department of Education. The program includes opportunities for classroom teachers, paraprofessionals and school administrators to train on new literacy methods and tools. "I'm excited to be able to implement this in our intervention time," Dinger said. "I think we'll be able to target those middling links."

- Third grade teachers Heather Rowen and Missi Smith presented changes made to help students in developing math skills. Rowen and Smith, along with other district staff, have worked to implement Response to Intervention, which is a framework used to ensure the learning needs of all students are met. Specifically, the team took testing data and broke down what skills each student needs to work on. They were then able to target those specific issue in small groups. "The growth we say in the spring was really exciting," Rowen said. "We're happy we gave it a try."



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Biden administration 'making it happen' on infrastructure, Buttigieg says in SD

Visit comes three days after Trump rally in the state

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 4:05 PM

CHAMBERLAIN — After the previous presidential administration talked about addressing the country's infrastructure, "We're actually making it happen," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg on Monday in South Dakota.

Buttigieg is on a two-day tour of the state to spotlight federal investments in infrastructure. His first stop was the Chamberlain Municipal Airport, which recently received \$855,000 from the bipartisan infrastructure bill, leading to plans for a new terminal. The airport is also receiving about \$700,000 from the bill to repave and extend the runway.

President Joe Biden, a Democrat, signed the infrastructure bill into law in 2021 after it passed through Congress without any yes votes from South Dakota's all-Republican congressional delegation.

Although Buttigieg didn't refer to former President Donald Trump by name, some of the secretary's comments sounded like a rebuttal of a campaign rally Trump attended Friday in Rapid City. In that speech, Trump said the nation's "once revered airports are a dirty, crowded mess." He also said other political leaders "don't care about South Dakota."

Buttigieg on Monday stressed the importance of federal aid for rural places.

"A project doesn't have to be in the billions of dollars, and a population doesn't have to be in the millions to matter," he said.

His mention of the previous administration's infrastructure "talk" was a reference to Trump's largely unsuccessful 2016 campaign pledge to rebuild the nation's infrastructure. Trump has been criticized for failing to deliver on that pledge, despite several iterations of an "Infrastructure Week" during his administration.

Under the Biden Administration, according to information from Buttigieg's press office, about \$1.3 billion in federal funding has been announced for 137 infrastructure projects across South Dakota.

Chamberlain City Administrator Clint Soulek explained the need for his city's airport project while leading Buttigieg on a tour. Soulek said medical transport planes are getting bigger, so a bigger terminal and longer runway is vital.

"And then during hunting season, a lot of guys fly into here," Soulek said, referring to pheasant hunting, which is a major economic boon to Chamberlain and small towns across central and eastern South Dakota.

Buttigieg, referencing the Los Angeles International Airport, replied, "We're trying to help people understand it's not just the LAXs of the world we're trying to help."

The transportation secretary's South Dakota visit also included a meeting with tribal leaders near Chamberlain and first responders in Sioux Falls on Monday, neither of which was open to the media. On Tuesday, Buttigieg will be in Salem discussing a truck-parking investment along a rest stop on Interstate 90.

The South Dakota tour is part of a broader campaign by the Biden administration to highlight the accomplishments of the bipartisan infrastructure law and its impact across the country.

Nobody from the governor's office or the state's congressional delegation attended Buttigieg's visit to Chamberlain, although several local leaders and state Rep. Rebecca Reimer, R-Chamberlain, were in attendance.

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

State officials: Specialty parole unit helps trim fugitive parolee numbers in half

BY: JOHN HULT - SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 5:36 PM

An effort by state and local agencies to capture fugitives from parole has nearly halved the number of such "absconders" tracked by the South Dakota Department of Corrections.

The Absconder Apprehension Unit was formed last December and began its work in January, around six months after the launch of a collaborative group called Safe South Dakota. That group, formed in the summer of 2022 and comprised of the mayors and local law enforcement officials in Sioux Falls and Rapid City and state officials, has monthly phone calls to discuss public safety issues.

The specialty parole unit was formed in response to the high number of parole absconders, who are parolees who've lost touch with their parole officer.

Most parolees in South Dakota are not absconders. Parolees typically number 3,000 or more, with a few hundred absconding at any given time.

The unit's parole agents serve as the primary points of contact for local law enforcement officers who find absconders during their day-to-day duties. The number of absconders fell by 100 from a high of 470 after the unit's first month of operations.

Officials in Sioux Falls and Rapid City repeatedly pointed to absconders as responsible for a jump in violent crime in each city in the runup to the 2023 legislative session. During that session, lawmakers passed and Gov. Kristi Noem signed a bill requiring those convicted of most violent felony crimes to serve all or nearly all of their prison terms without the option of early release on parole. That law, which took effect July 1, was dubbed "truth in sentencing" and passed with broad support in both chambers.

A joint press release from Rapid City and Sioux Falls, Minnehaha and Pennington counties and the state DOC sent Monday morning said the Safe South Dakota group "jumpstarted the creation and ultimate passing of Senate Bill 146."

The same release said that the number of absconders fell to 256 at the end of July – just over half of what the release called an "all-time high" of 486 from 2022.

As of Monday, the DOC website listed 258 absconders.

The release also notes that parole agents now use a "knock and talk" approach to communicating with non-absconding parolees, described as a "proactive" approach that involves getting out into the community and meeting parolees in person, sometimes on weekends or evenings.

"The parole division has worked very hard to ensure that there are multiple interventions to decrease criminal activity involving parolees, and we continue to work on initiatives to decrease crime in South Dakota," DOC Secretary Kellie Wasko said in the press release.

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

State denies Summit permit; both carbon pipelines proposed in SD now rejected

Companies can address regulatory concerns and reapply later

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 11:36 AM

FORT PIERRE — Some landowners who've been fighting against a proposed carbon dioxide pipeline shed tears of joy Monday as South Dakota utility regulators denied a permit application from Summit Carbon Solutions.

The decision means both carbon pipelines currently proposed in eastern South Dakota have been rejected in their first attempts to gain permits in the state.

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"I've felt like there was a tractor on my chest, and that weight has finally been removed," said Jared Bossly, of rural Warner, whose land is along the Summit route.

The Public Utilities Commission made its latest decision following a motion by its own staff to reject Summit's application. The staff motion said Summit's proposed route is in direct violation of "setback" ordinances adopted in Brown, McPherson, Minnehaha and Spink counties. Those ordinances establish minimum distances between pipelines, homes and other places.

If commissioners approved the permit, the motion said, they would be sanctioning a project that violates county laws.

"There is simply not a path forward," Staff Attorney Kristen Edwards told the commissioners Monday morning.

The decision occurred at the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center on the first day of what was intended to be a three-week hearing on the permit application.

Brett Koenecke, a lawyer for Summit, told the commission, "We sit here ready to prove the technical aspects of this application." He argued unsuccessfully that because of the time and effort Summit put into preparing for the hearing, the hearing should move forward.

Commissioner Chris Nelson made a motion to postpone the hearing rather than deny the permit. That motion failed 2-1 with Commissioner Gary Hanson and State Treasurer Josh Haeder — filling in for Commissioner Kristie Fiegen, who recused herself because of a conflict of interest — voting against it. After that, Haeder's motion to deny the permit application passed unanimously. Fiegen recused herself because a relative of hers owns land that would be affected by the Summit project.

The decision came after Summit withdrew its request to have the commission overrule the county setback ordinances. Another company trying to build a carbon pipeline — Navigator CO2 — failed last week to convince the commission to use its power to preempt such ordinances. The commission also denied Navigator's permit application, following a hearing that ran from July 25 to Aug. 8.

In the motion to deny Summit's permit filed by Edwards, she pointed out that despite Summit's assurance of complying with local regulations, there hasn't been any tangible evidence to show that the company has obtained the necessary waivers or county permits.

The door isn't entirely closed for Summit or Navigator. The companies can reapply in the future and obtain permits, provided they can adequately address the commission's concerns about the projects.

"I suspect that this project is ultimately going to be built," Koenecke said. "Carbon capture is the future of agriculture."

Summit also suffered a rejection by regulators recently in North Dakota. A weeks-long hearing on its route in Iowa is underway.

Summit and Navigator seek to capture carbon dioxide emitted from ethanol plants in multiple states and transport it in liquid form to underground sequestration sites — North Dakota for Summit, and Illinois for Navigator. The multi-billion-dollar projects are eligible for billions in tax credits from the federal government, as incentives for removing heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Summit has initiated dozens of eminent domain court cases in an attempt to gain access to land from South Dakota landowners unwilling to grant it. Navigator has not yet pursued eminent domain in South Dakota. Both companies have some voluntary access agreements — called easements — with a portion of affected landowners.

Some landowners oppose the projects not only because of concerns about private property rights, but also because of safety concerns. Leaks from carbon dioxide pipelines can release toxic plumes of gas. A leak in 2020 in Mississippi caused an evacuation of 200 people and sent 45 to the hospital.

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

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You might need an ambulance, but your state might not see it as 'essential'

South Dakota one of 37 states without such a designation

BY: NADA HASSANEIN - SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 6:09 PM

When someone with a medical emergency calls 911, they expect an ambulance to show up.

But sometimes, there simply isn't one available.

Most states don't declare emergency medical services (EMS) to be an "essential service," meaning the state government isn't required to provide or fund them.

Now, though, a growing number of states are taking interest in recognizing ambulance services as essential — a long-awaited move for EMS agencies and professionals in the field, who say they hope to see more states follow through. Experts say the momentum might be driven by the pandemic, a decline in volunteerism and the rural health care shortage.

EMS professionals have been advocating for essential designation and more sustainable funding "for longer than I've been around — longer than I've been a paramedic," said Mark McCulloch, 42, who is deputy chief of emergency medical services for West Des Moines, Iowa, and who has been a paramedic for more than two decades.

Currently, 13 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws designating or allowing local governments to deem EMS as an essential service, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, a think tank that has been tracking legislation around the issue.

Those include Connecticut, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

And at least two states — Massachusetts and New York — have pending legislation.

Idaho passed a resolution in March requiring the state's health department to draft legislation for next year's legislative session.

Meanwhile, lawmakers in Wyoming this summer rejected a bill that would have deemed EMS essential, according to local media.

"States have the authority to determine which services are essential, required to be provided to all citizens," said Kelsie George, a policy specialist with the National Conference of State Legislatures' health program.

Among those states deeming EMS as essential services, laws vary widely in how they provide funding. They might provide money to EMS services, establish minimum requirements for the agencies or offer guidance on organizing and paying for EMS services at the local level, George said.

The lack of EMS services is acute in rural America, where EMS agencies and rural hospitals continue to shutter at record rates, meaning longer distances to life-saving care.

"The fact that people expect it, but yet it's not listed as an essential service in many states, and it's not supported as such really, is where that dissonance occurs," said longtime paramedic Brenden Hayden, chairperson of the National EMS Advisory Council, a governmental advisory group within the U.S. Department of Transportation.

More financial support

There isn't a sole federal agency dedicated to overseeing or funding EMS, with multiple agencies handling different regulations, and some federal dollars in the form of grants and highway safety funds from the Department of Transportation. Medicaid and Medicare offer some reimbursements, but EMS advocates argue it isn't nearly enough.

"It forces it as a state question, because the federal government has not taken on the authority to require it," said Dia Gainor, executive director for the National Association of State EMS Officials and a former Idaho state EMS director. "It's the prerogative of the state to make the choice" to mandate and fund EMS.

In states that don't provide funding, EMS agencies often must rely on Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements and money they get from local governments.

Many of the latter don't have the budgets to pay EMS workers, forcing poorer communities to turn to volunteers. But the firefighter and EMS volunteer pool is shrinking nationally as the volunteer force ages and fewer young people sign up.

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Overhead for EMS agencies is expensive: A basic new ambulance can cost \$200,000 to \$300,000. Then there are the medicine and equipment costs, as well as staff wages and farther driving distances to medical centers in rural areas.

By contrast, police departments are supported and receive funds from the U.S. Department of Justice along with local tax dollars, and fire departments are supported by the U.S. Fire Administration, although many underserved areas also rely on volunteer firefighters to fill gaps.

"We need more if we're going to save this industry and [if] we're going to be available to treat patients," Hayden said. "EMS in general represents a rounding error in the federal budget."

What's more, reimbursements only occur if a patient is taken to an emergency room. Agencies may not receive compensation if they stabilize a patient without transporting them to a hospital.

Gary Wingrove, president of the Paramedic Foundation, an advocacy group, has co-authored studies on the lack of ambulance service and on ambulance costs in rural areas. The former Minnesota EMS state director argues that reimbursements should be adjusted on a cost-based basis, like critical-access medical centers that serve high rates of uninsured patients and underresourced communities.

A rural crisis

About 4.5 million people across the United States live in an "ambulance desert," and more than half of those are residents of rural counties, according to a recent national study by the Maine Rural Health Research Center and the Rural Health Research & Policy Centers. The researchers define an ambulance desert as a community 25 minutes or more from an ambulance station.

Some regions are more underserved than others: States in the South and the West have the most rural residents living in ambulance deserts, according to the researchers, who studied 41 states using data from 2021 and last year.

In South Dakota, the Rosebud Sioux Reservation covers a 1,900-square-mile area in the south-central part of the state.

State Rep. Eric Emery, a Democrat, is a paramedic and EMS director of the tribe's sole ambulance station, providing services to 11,400 residents.

Emery and his colleagues respond to a variety of critical calls, from heart attacks to overdoses. They also provide care that people living on the reservation would otherwise get in the doctor's office — if it didn't take the whole day to travel to one. Those services might include taking blood pressure measurements, checking vital signs or making sure that a diabetic patient is taking their medicine properly.

Nevertheless, South Dakota is one of 37 states that doesn't designate emergency medical services as essential, so the state isn't required to provide or fund them.

While he and his staff are paid, remote parts of the reservation are often served by their respective county volunteer EMS agencies. It would simply take Emery's crew too long — up to an hour — to arrive to a call.

"Something I wanted to tackle this year is to really look into making EMS an essential service here in South Dakota," Emery said. "Being from such a conservative state that's very conservative when it comes to their pocketbook, I know that's probably going to be a really hard hill to climb."

Ultimately, Wingrove said, officials need to value a profession that relies on volunteers to fill funding and staffing gaps.

"We're looking for volunteers to make decisions about whether you live or die," he said.

"Somehow, we have placed ourselves in a situation where the people that actually make those decisions are just not valued in the way they should be valued," he said. "They're not valued in the city budget, the county budget, the state budget, the federal budget system. They're just not valued at all."

Like South Dakota Searchlight, Stateline is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Stateline maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Scott S. Greenberger for questions: info@stateline.org. Follow Stateline on Facebook and Twitter.

Nada Hassanein is a health care reporter for Stateline with a focus on inequities.

Food and Drug Administration approves COVID boosters for upcoming season

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 2:35 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday approved the latest round of COVID-19 boosters, as public health officials brace for another cold and flu season.

An advisory panel at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is scheduled to vote on recommendations Tuesday, the final step in the process before people will be able to get the shots.

"Vaccination remains critical to public health and continued protection against serious consequences of COVID-19, including hospitalization and death," said Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

"The public can be assured that these updated vaccines have met the agency's rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality," Marks added. "We very much encourage those who are eligible to consider getting vaccinated."

The updated COVID-19 booster shots are made by Moderna and Pfizer.

The FDA said in a statement that people 5 and older can get one dose of the updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as long as it's been at least two months since their last dose of the vaccine.

Vaccinated children between six months and 4 years old can get one or two doses of the updated vaccine. Unvaccinated children in the same age range are eligible for three doses of the updated Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or two doses of the updated Moderna shot.

"The updated vaccines are expected to provide good protection against COVID-19 from the currently circulating variants," the FDA said in a statement. "Barring the emergence of a markedly more virulent variant, the FDA anticipates that the composition of COVID-19 vaccines may need to be updated annually, as is done for the seasonal influenza vaccine."

Hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 have been trending upward in recent weeks, though officials aren't expressing alarm at the rise in severe illness.

The number of hospitalizations has risen by nearly 16% while deaths increased by almost 11%, according to data from the CDC.

The percentage of Americans getting COVID-19 shots has steadily decreased since the first round of vaccinations rolled out in the last weeks of 2020.

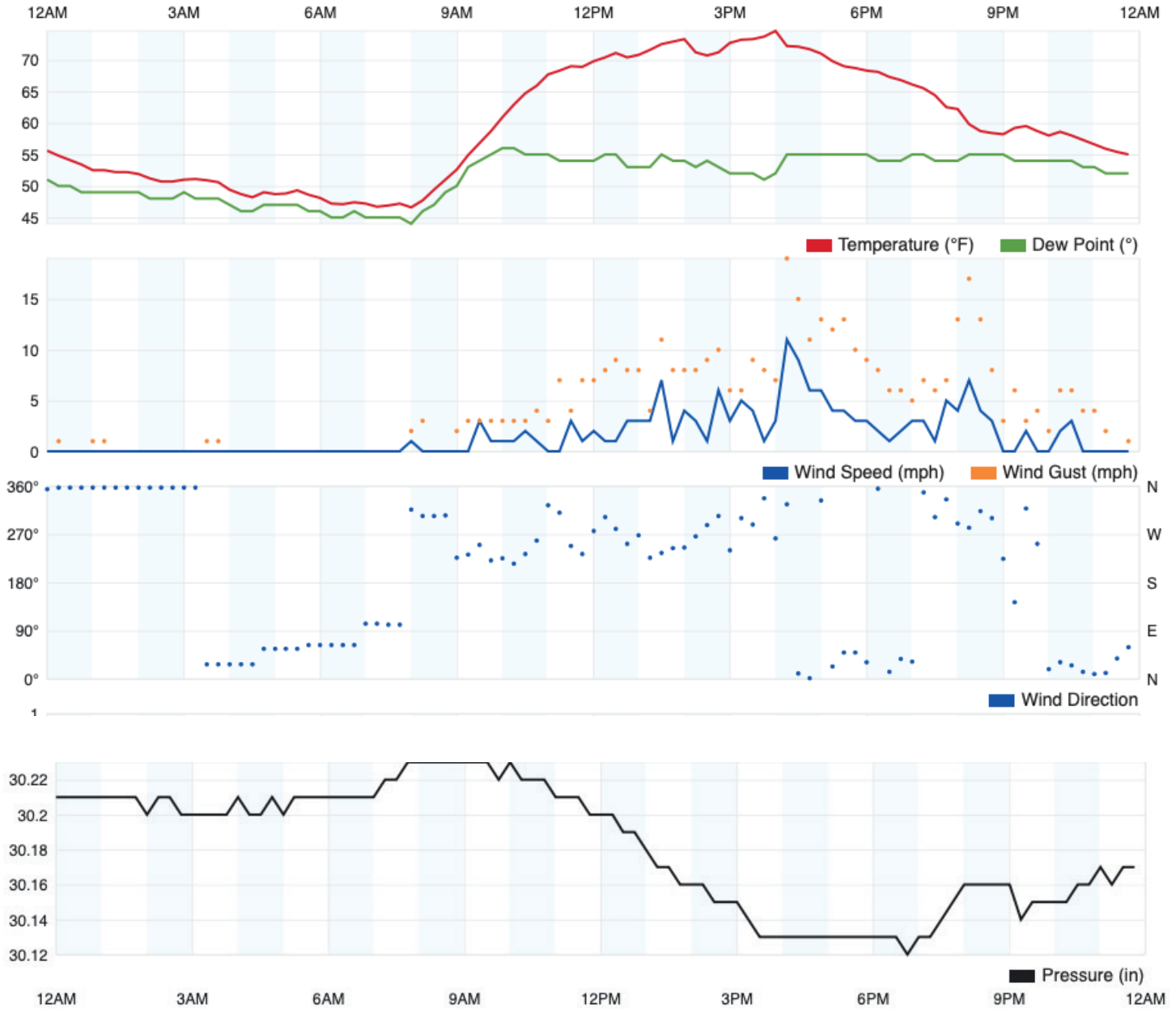
More than 81% of the country got at least one dose of the original vaccine, but 70% completed the primary two-dose series. Just 17% of the U.S. population decided to get the bivalent vaccine that was approved last year, according to CDC data.

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

Groton Daily Independent





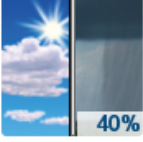


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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

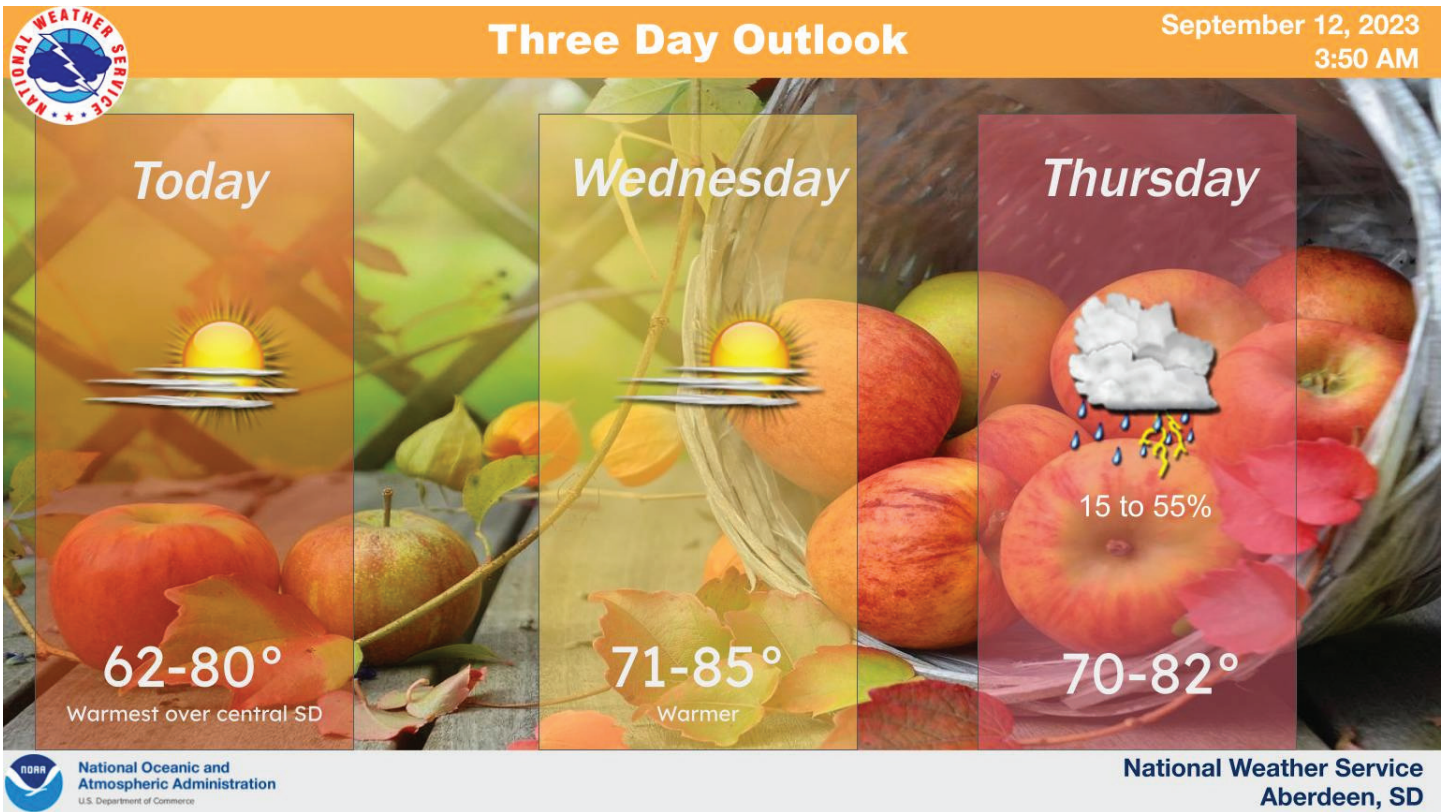


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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Patchy Fog then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Chance Showers	Chance T-storms then Chance Showers	Mostly Sunny
High: 69 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 80 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 79 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 75 °F

Three Day Outlook September 12, 2023
3:50 AM



Today
62-80°
Warmest over central SD

Wednesday
71-85°
Warmer

Thursday
15 to 55%
70-82°

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce **National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD**

Dry conditions expected today through Wednesday with highs ranging from the mid 60s to around 80 today and a little warmer for Wednesday. A cold front will push across our forecast area, bringing a 15 to 55% chance of showers and thunderstorms Wednesday night through Friday morning.

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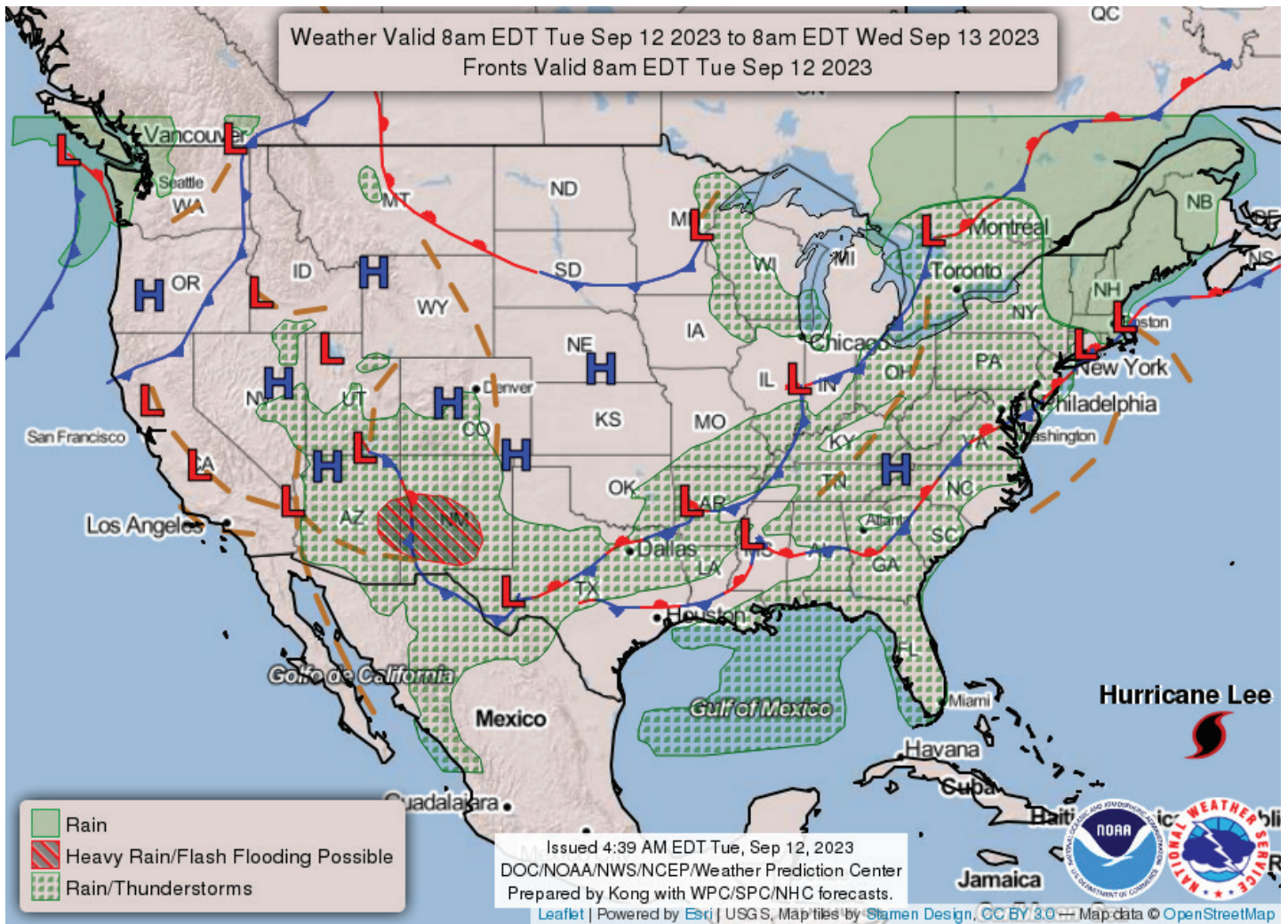
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 75 °F at 3:52 PM
Low Temp: 46 °F at 8:00 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 4:12 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 21 hours, 45 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1931
Record Low: 24 in 1902
Average High: 77
Average Low: 48
Average Precip in Sept.: .82
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.57
Average Precip to date: 17.16
Precip Year to Date: 19.16
Sunset Tonight: 7:51:29 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:07:02 AM



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Today in Weather History

September 12, 1931: On this day in 1931, near-record or record heat came to an end across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west-central Minnesota. From September 9th through the 12th, many record highs were set at Aberdeen, Kennebec, Mobridge, Timber Lake, Watertown, and Wheaton. High temperatures during these four days ranged from 95 degrees to 109 degrees. Aberdeen rose to 107 degrees on the 10th, Kennebec rose to 109 on the 9th, Mobridge rose to 105 on the 9th, Timber Lake's high was 106 on the 9th, Watertown rose to 104 on the 10th, and Wheaton rose to 108 degrees on the 10th.

1857: The SS Central America sinks during a hurricane, killing 425 lives. Fourteen tons of gold was aboard the ship as well.

1882 - Hot and dry winds caused tree foliage in eastern Kansas to wither and crumble. (David Ludlum)

1950: A hailstorm struck southern parts of Oklahoma City on this day. The storm damaged about 4,000 homes, 300 businesses, and 750 cars, resulting in a loss estimated at \$987,000.

1961: Super Typhoon Nancy was an incredibly powerful tropical cyclone of the 1961 Pacific typhoon season. The system had possibly the strongest winds ever measured in a tropical cyclone and caused extensive damage and at least 173 deaths and thousands of injuries in Japan and elsewhere. A reconnaissance aircraft flying into the typhoon near its peak intensity on September 12 determined Nancy's one-minute sustained winds to be 215 mph. If these values are reliable, they would be the highest wind speeds ever measured in a tropical cyclone. However, it was later discovered that measurements and estimations of wind speeds from the 1940s to 1960s were excessive. Thus, Nancy's winds may be lower than its official best-track value.

1963: President Kennedy gave his, "We choose to go to the moon" speech at Rice University.

1977 - Thunderstorms deluged the Kansas City area with torrential rains in the early morning hours, and then again that evening. Some places were deluged with more than six inches of rain twice that day, with up to 18 inches of rain reported at Independence MO. Flooding claimed the lives of 25 persons. The Country Club Plaza area was hardest hit. 2000 vehicles had to be towed following the storm, 150 of which had to be pulled out of Brush Creek, which runs through the Plaza area. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1979 - Hurricane Frederick smashed into the Mobile Bay area of Alabama packing 132 mph winds. Winds gusts to 145 mph were reported as the eye of the hurricane moved over Dauphin Island AL, just west of Mobile. Frederick produced a fifteen foot storm surge near the mouth of Mobile Bay. The hurricane was the costliest in U.S. history causing 2.3 billion dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain which caused flooding in North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Parts of Virginia received 3 to 4 inches of rain in just two hours early in the day. Later in the day, three to five inch rains deluged Cumberland County of south central Pennsylvania. Evening thunderstorms produced seven inches of rain at Marysville PA, most of which fell in three hours time. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - An afternoon tornado spawned a tornado which skipped across northern sections of Indianapolis IN damaging roofs and automobiles. It was the first tornado in central Indiana in September in nearly forty years of records. Hurricane Gilbert plowed across the island of Jamaica, and by the end of the day was headed for the Cayman Islands, packing winds of 125 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Snow whitened the mountains and foothills of northeastern Colorado, with eight inches reported at Buckhorn Mountain, west of Fort Collins. Two to three inches fell around Denver, causing great havoc during the evening rush hour. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region between mid afternoon and early the next morning. Thunderstorms produced hail three inches in diameter at Roswell NM, and wind gusts greater than 98 mph at Henryetta OK. Thunderstorms also produced torrential rains, with more than seven inches at Scotland TX, and more than six inches at Yukon OK. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2006: Major flash flooding occurred in a matter of minutes after torrential rain starting pounding the city of Evansville, Indiana. A total of about 250 occupied structures sustained some degree of damage. Over 30 water rescues were conducted from cars stalled in floodwaters.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE VALUE OF HARD TIMES

My mother was a most wonderful Christian, always teaching her children by example. She taught Sunday school, child evangelism classes, ladies Bible study groups, and weekly prayer services for missionaries. Each Thursday was set aside as a day of fasting and prayer.

I remember overhearing her prayer on one occasion. She was praying for her children: "Oh God," she cried, "don't ever let my children have an easy life. Let them experience sorrow and suffering, pain and problems, otherwise, they will not need to depend on you."

That prayer shaped all of us children. It has given us a heart for the broken-in-heart. As a result of her prayers, when we see the tears of others we want to dry their eyes because we can understand their pain. When others go through a time of grief, we can identify with them because we've been there. When others are in need, it motivates us to help them because we have been without. When we see the unsaved, we are encouraged to pray: Lord what can I do to win them to Christ.

We must also remember that Jesus went through these very same experiences. He was beaten and spit upon, abandoned and betrayed, went through hours of excruciating pain - even death itself. Now, in heaven, He remembers these feelings and through His ever sufficient grace will give us hope, help, and healing. He's been where we are and therefore understands our needs.

Prayer: We are grateful, Father, that You know, through experience, what we go through in our hours of pain and suffering. Thank You for knowing and understanding us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields." Matthew 9:36-38



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
- 09/08/2023 Family Fun Fest 3:30-5:30pm
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/09-10/2023 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/10/2023 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Sunday School Rally 9:00am
- 09/10/2023 7th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 4-6pm
- 09/15/2023 Homecoming Parade
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes, Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close
- 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:
09.08.23

3 12 17 51 62 1

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$141,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 26 Mins
DRAW: 40 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.11.23

13 34 35 36 49 1

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,050,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 41
DRAW: Mins 40 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.11.23

7 16 22 34 45 11

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 56 Mins 41
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.09.23

4 14 31 34 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$39,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 56
DRAW: Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.11.23

18 22 25 30 35 22

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 25
DRAW: Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.11.23

9 25 27 53 66 5

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$550,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 25
DRAW: Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

James Valley Christian def. Howard, 25-22, 25-21, 25-17

Kimball/White Lake def. Gregory, 26-24, 14-25, 25-11, 25-22

Langford def. Britton-Hecla, 25-18, 30-28, 22-25, 19-25, 15-13

Marty Indian def. Colome, 25-22, 25-18

Mott-Regent, N.D. def. Bison, 25-16, 25-15, 25-18

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Winner, 25-14, 25-18, 25-17

Platte-Geddes def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-12, 25-20, 25-15

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-22, 25-20, 25-17

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

South Dakota panel denies application for CO2 pipeline; Summit to refile for permit

By JACK DURA Associated Press

South Dakota regulators on Monday rejected a permit application for a proposed carbon dioxide pipeline through the state, dealing a fresh setback to the company behind the multistate project after North Dakota refused a siting permit for another leg there.

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission voted unanimously to turn down Summit Carbon Solutions' application to build a 469-mile (755-kilometer) in-state route — part of an intended \$5.5 billion, 2,000-mile (3,220-kilometer) pipeline network through five states.

The decision complicates an already complex process for Summit Carbon Solutions as it seeks similar authorization in other states amid opposition from landowners and environmental groups. The proposed network would carry planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions from more than 30 ethanol plants in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota for permanent underground storage in central North Dakota.

After the South Dakota vote, Summit announced it intends "to refine its proposal and reapply for a permit in a timely manner."

The project would use carbon capture technology, what supporters see as a combatant of climate change, though opponents criticize its effectiveness at scale and the need for potentially huge investments over cheaper renewable energy sources. New federal tax incentives and billions of dollars from Congress toward carbon capture efforts have made such projects lucrative.

The South Dakota panel's vote came on a motion made Friday by commission staff. They said Summit's proposed route would violate county ordinances involving setback distances. The panel on Monday was to have begun a weeklong hearing for Summit's proposal, but the hearing was adjourned and will not continue.

"It makes little sense to go through the motions of a three-week evidentiary hearing and all that would follow without a compliant route that can be permitted," Commission Staff Attorney Kristen Edwards said.

Summit on Thursday had dropped a motion for preempting county ordinances, regulations which attorney Brett Koenecke wrote "have the intended or unintended effect of hampering projects like this one." He cited the panel's unanimous decision Wednesday to deny a similar request by Navigator CO2 Ventures for its proposed pipeline, to which the commission also denied a construction permit.

Commission Vice Chair Gary Hanson said a permit could not be legally issued if the evidenced showed

the applicant is currently unable to comply with existing statutes and regulations, adding "that's the challenge that we're having here."

"I believe that the applicant will be able to come back with, eventually, a clean application, and when they do, that is when it is proper to examine it," Hanson said.

Summit CEO Lee Blank said in a statement, "We respect this initial ruling and remain committed to South Dakota and deeply appreciative of the overwhelming support we have received from landowners and community members. We are hopeful that through collaborative engagement with these counties we can forge a path forward to benefit South Dakota and its citizens."

Much of Monday's hearing focused on how the panel would proceed depending on the panel's action on the motion to deny. The commission also defeated a substitute motion that would have essentially deferred the hearing indefinitely.

Koenecke had asked the commission to delay the proceedings for him to propose a new scheduling order in the near future.

Omaha-based attorney Brian Jorde, who represents hundreds of people Summit has sued in South Dakota to take their land for its pipeline, said Summit's proposed route in the state presented an "impossibility" to the panel, with a route that "cannot be constructed."

The decision Monday comes as other states continue to weigh Summit's project.

The Iowa Utilities Board began its Summit hearing last month, expected to last weeks. The hearing is scheduled to resume Tuesday with Summit witnesses.

North Dakota regulators last month denied Summit a siting permit for its 320-mile (515-kilometer) proposed route through the state. Summit subsequently asked that state's Public Service Commission to reconsider. The panel held a work session Friday on the request, with a decision yet to come.

Minnesota regulators voted last month to proceed with an environmental review for a small part of the overall project, a 28-mile (45-kilometer) segment in Minnesota that would connect an ethanol plant in Fergus Falls to the North Dakota line, where it would connect with Summit's broader network.

Rescue teams retrieve hundreds of bodies in Derna, one of the Libyan cities devastated by floods

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Rescue teams struggled amid devastation in eastern Libya, retrieving hundreds of bodies from the rubble in a coastal city that has been inundated by devastating floods, a humanitarian agency said Tuesday. Authorities estimated that as many as 2,000 people are believed dead in the city of Derna alone.

Mediterranean storm Daniel caused havoc and flash flooding in many towns in eastern Libya but the worst destruction was in Derna, where heavy rainfall and floods broke dams and washed away entire neighborhoods, authorities said.

Ossama Hamad, prime minister of the government in eastern Libya, said that several thousand people were missing in the city and many were believed to have been carried away after two upstream dams burst. He said the devastation in Derna is far beyond the capabilities of his country.

After more than a decade of chaos, Libya remains divided between two rival administrations: one in the east and one in the west, each backed by different militias and foreign governments. The conflict has left the oil rich North African country with crumbling and inadequate infrastructure.

The Libyan Red Crescent said early Tuesday that its teams counted more than 300 people dead in Derna, which authorities have declared a disaster zone.

More bodies were still under the rubble in the city's neighborhoods, or washed away to the sea, according to eastern Libya's health minister, Othman Abduljaleel.

Derna residents posted videos online showing major devastation. Entire residential blocks were erased along Wadi Derna, a river that runs down from the mountains through the city center. Multi-story apartment buildings that once stood well back from the river were partially collapsed into mud.

Abduljaleel said the city was inaccessible and bodies were scattered all over, according to Libya's state-

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run news agency. He said there wasn't an exact death toll as of Monday night in Derna, but that the tally is expected to exceed 2,000 as search teams combed through the rubble.

"The situation was more significant and worse than we expected. ... An international intervention is needed," he was quoted as saying.

Emergency responders, including troops, government workers, volunteers and residents were digging through rubble to recover the dead. They also used inflatable boats to retrieve bodies from the water. Excavators and other equipment have yet to arrive in Derna.

Many residents described scenes of chaos when floods hit the center. They heard loud explosions at night and realized that dams outside the city collapsed, sending a wall of water that "erased everything in its way," said Ahmed Abdalla, a Derna resident.

Workers said they buried more than 200 bodies in one cemetery on Monday. Footage overnight showed dozens more bodies on the ground, covered by blankets or sheets, in a hospital yard in Derna.

The storm hit other areas in eastern Libya, including the town of Bayda, where about 50 people were reported dead. The Medical Center of Bayda, the main hospital, was flooded and patients had to be evacuated, according to footage shared by the center on Facebook.

Other towns that suffered, included Susa, Marj and Shahatt, according to the government. Hundreds of families were displaced and took shelter in schools and other government buildings in the city of Benghazi and elsewhere in eastern Libya.

Northeast Libya is one of the country's most fertile and green regions. The Jabal al-Akhdar area — where Bayda, Marj and Shahatt are located — has one of the country's highest average annual rainfalls, according to the World Bank.

Authorities in eastern and western Libya rushed to help Derna residents. The Health Ministry in Tripoli said a plane carrying 14 tons of medical equipment, drugs and body bags, along with health care workers headed Tuesday to Benghazi. Other agencies across the country said they would send humanitarian aid to Derna.

Foreign governments also sent messages of support to Libya.

Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates were among those that said they would send humanitarian assistance and teams to help with search and rescue efforts. The U.S. Embassy said Monday it was contacting the United Nations and Libyan authorities on how to deliver aid to the most affected areas.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi convened his military commanders on Tuesday to arrange urgent assistance to Libya. He said in televised comments that the military would deploy equipment and personnel in coordination with eastern Libyan forces to help affected communities.

Known for its white-painted houses and palm gardens, Derna is about 900 kilometers (560 miles) east of the capital of Tripoli. It is controlled by the forces of powerful military commander Khalifa Hifter, who is allied with the east Libya government. The rival government in west Libya, based in Tripoli, is allied with other armed groups.

Much of Derna was built by Italy when Libya was under Italian occupation in the first half of the 20th century. The city was once a hub for extremist groups in the yearslong chaos that followed the NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

Israeli Supreme Court hears first challenge to Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's Supreme Court on Tuesday opened the first case to look at the legality of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul — deepening a showdown with the far-right government that has bitterly divided the nation and put the country on the brink of a constitutional crisis.

In a sign of the case's significance, all 15 of Israel's Supreme Court justices are hearing appeals to the law together for the first time in Israel's history. A regular panel is made up of three justices, though they

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sometimes sit on expanded panels. The proceedings were also being livestreamed.

"It's a historic day," said Susie Navot, vice president of the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank that has been critical of the overhaul. "This is the first time we've had this kind of hearing."

Netanyahu's coalition, a collection of ultranationalist and ultrareligious lawmakers, launched the overhaul early this year after taking office. Proponents of the plan say the country's unelected judiciary, led by the Supreme Court, wields too much power.

Critics say the plan to weaken the Supreme Court removes a key safeguard and will concentrate power in the hands of Netanyahu and his allies.

"We stand here today with millions of citizens to stop the government coup," said Eliad Shraga, chairman of the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, which filed the petition along with a handful of other civil society groups. "Together we will preserve Israeli democracy."

Tuesday's hearing puts senior justices in the unprecedented position of deciding whether to accept limits on their own powers. It focuses on the first law passed by parliament in July — a measure that cancels the court's ability to strike down government moves it deems to be "unreasonable." Judges have used the legal standard in the past to prevent government decisions or appointments viewed as unsound or corrupt.

The judicial overhaul — which opponents characterize as a profound threat to Israeli democracy — has infuriated Israelis across many segments of society, bringing hundreds of thousands into the streets to march at one protest after another for the past 36 weeks.

The protesters have come largely from the country's secular middle class. Leading high-tech business figures have threatened to relocate. Perhaps most dramatic, thousands of military reservists have broken with the government and declared their refusal to report for duty over the plan.

Netanyahu's supporters tend to be poorer, more religious and live in West Bank settlements or outlying rural areas. Many of his supporters are working-class Mizrahi Jews, with roots in Middle Eastern countries, and have expressed hostility toward what they say is an elitist, secular class of Ashkenazi, or European, Jews.

As the hearing got underway Tuesday, a couple dozen right-wing activists came out to protest at the entrance to the Supreme Court. "The people are the sovereign!" they shouted through megaphones, blowing horns and holding signs declaring that they had voted for Netanyahu, not Supreme Court Chief Justice Esther Hayut.

The night before, tens of thousands of anti-government protesters rallying against the judicial overhaul had flooded the streets near the court, waving national flags and chanting for democracy.

The law passed as an amendment to what in Israel is known as a "Basic Law," a special piece of legislation that serves as a sort of constitution, which Israel does not have. The court has never struck down a "Basic Law" before but says it has the right to do so. The government says it does not.

Israeli Justice Minister Yariv Levin on Tuesday said the court "lacks all authority" to review the law.

"It is a fatal blow to democracy and the status of the Knesset," he said, insisting lawmakers elected by the people should have the final say over such legislation.

While the attorney general would typically represent the government in such a hearing, Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara — a main target of the coalition's attacks — has refused to defend the judicial overhaul in court. The sponsors of the law then turned to outside counsel.

A ruling is not expected on Tuesday, but the hearing could hint at the court's direction.

The case is at the heart of a wider contest in Israel between fundamentally different interpretations of democracy.

Netanyahu and his coalition say that as elected representatives, they have a democratic mandate to govern without being hobbled by the court, which they portray as a bastion of the left-leaning elite.

"Now (the Supreme Court) is likely to decide not only what the constitution means, but what can be in it," said Eugene Kontorovich of the conservative Jerusalem-based Kohelet Policy Forum. "This eliminates any possible check on the already powerful Court."

Opponents contend that the court is a key check on majority rule in a country with such a weak system

of checks and balances — just one house of parliament, a figurehead president and no firm, written constitution. They say that without the power to review and overturn some government decisions, Netanyahu's government could appoint convicted cronies to Cabinet posts, roll back rights for women and minorities, and annex the occupied West Bank.

"We must remember that democracies don't die in one day anymore," Navot from the Israel Democracy Institute said. "Democracies die slowly, step by step, law by law. And therefore we should be very careful with this kind of judicial overhaul."

The political survival of Netanyahu, who returned to power late last year while standing trial on bribery, fraud and breach of trust charges, depends on his hard-line, religiously conservative coalition partners who have threatened to rebel if he forestalls the legislation.

Netanyahu has refused to say clearly whether he would respect a decision by the court to strike down the new law. Some members of his coalition, including Levin, have hinted that the government could ignore the court's decision.

Legal experts warn that could spark constitutional crisis, where citizens and the country's security forces are left to decide whose orders to follow — the parliament's or the court's — thrusting the country into uncharted territory.

North Korea's Kim is in Russia ahead of a meeting with Putin as their nations draw closer

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea's Kim Jong Un arrived in Russia on Tuesday for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin where they are expected to offer each other increased support in their escalating standoffs with the West.

Kim is expected to seek Russian economic aid and military technology in exchange for munitions to be used in Russia's war in Ukraine.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim boarded his personal train bound for Russia on Sunday afternoon, accompanied by members of the ruling party, government and military.

After decades of complicated, hot-and-cold relations, Russia and North Korea have drawn closer since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The bond has been driven by Putin's need for war supplies and Kim's efforts to boost his partnerships with traditional allies Moscow and Beijing as he tries to break out of diplomatic isolation.

South Korea's military assessed the train crossed into Russia early Tuesday, Jeon Ha Gyu, spokesperson of South Korea's Defense Ministry, said without elaborating on how the military obtained the information. Later Tuesday, Russian news agencies quoted Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov as confirming Kim had entered Russia, and reported that his train had crossed the Razdolnaya River, north of Vladivostok.

Officials identified in North Korean state media photos may hint at what Kim might seek from Putin and what he would be willing to give.

Kim is apparently accompanied by Jo Chun Ryong, a ruling party official in charge of munitions policies who joined the leader on recent tours of factories producing artillery shells and missiles, said South Korea's Unification Ministry.

North Korea may have tens of millions of artillery shells and rockets based on Soviet designs that could give a huge boost to the Russian army in Ukraine, analysts say.

Also identified in photos were Pak Thae Song, chairman of North Korea's space science and technology committee, and Navy Adm. Kim Myong Sik, who are linked with North Korean efforts to acquire spy satellites and nuclear-capable ballistic missile submarines. Experts say North Korea would struggle to acquire such capabilities without external help, although it's not clear if Russia would share such sensitive technologies.

Kim Jong Un may also seek badly needed energy and food supplies, analysts say. Deputy foreign minister Andrei Rudenko said Russia may discuss humanitarian aid with the North Korean delegation, according to

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Russian news agencies.

Kim's delegation also likely includes his foreign minister, Choe Sun Hui, and his top two military officials, Korean People's Army Marshals Ri Pyong Chol and Pak Jong Chon.

Putin arrived in the eastern city of Vladivostok on Monday to attend an international forum that runs through Wednesday, according to Russia's TASS news agency. Putin's first meeting with Kim was held in 2019 in the city, which is about 425 miles (680 kilometers) north of Pyongyang.

Peskov said Putin and Kim will meet after the Vladivostok forum, but the reports didn't specify when or where. He added that the meeting would include a lunch in Kim's honor.

Data from FlightRadar24.com, which tracks flights worldwide, showed an Air Koryo Antonov An-148 took off from Pyongyang on Tuesday and flew for about an hour to reach Vladivostok. North Korea's national airline has only just resumed flying internationally after being grounded during the COVID-19 pandemic. There had been speculation that North Korea could use a plane to fly in support staff.

Kim is making his first foreign trip since the pandemic, during which North Korea imposed tight border controls for more than three years.

Lim Soo-suk, South Korea's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said Seoul was maintaining communication with Moscow while closely monitoring Kim's visit.

"No U.N. member state should violate Security Council sanctions against North Korea by engaging in an illegal trade of arms, and must certainly not engage in military cooperation with North Korea that undermines the peace and stability of the international community," Lim said during a briefing.

U.S. officials released intelligence last week that North Korea and Russia were arranging a meeting between their leaders.

According to U.S. officials, Putin could focus on securing more supplies of North Korean artillery and other ammunition to refill declining reserves as he seeks to rebuff a Ukrainian counteroffensive and show that he's capable of grinding out a long war of attrition. That could potentially put more pressure on the U.S. and its partners to pursue negotiations as concerns over a protracted conflict grow despite their huge shipments of advanced weaponry to Ukraine in the past 17 months.

"Arms discussions between Russia and the DPRK are expected to continue during Kim Jong Un's trip to Russia," said White House National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson, using the abbreviation for North Korea's official name of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "We urge the DPRK to abide by the public commitments that Pyongyang has made to not provide or sell arms to Russia."

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Washington will monitor the meeting closely, reminding both countries that "any transfer of arms from North Korea to Russia would be a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions," and that the U.S. "will not hesitate to impose new sanctions."

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters that Tokyo will be watching the outcome of the Kim-Putin meeting with concern, including the "impact it could have on Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

The United States has accused North Korea of providing Russia with arms, including selling artillery shells to the Russian mercenary group Wagner. Both Russian and North Korean officials denied such claims.

But speculation about the countries' military cooperation grew after Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu made a rare visit to North Korea in July, when Kim invited him to an arms exhibition and a massive military parade in the capital where he showcased ICBMs designed to target the U.S. mainland.

Following that visit, Kim toured North Korea's weapons factories, including a facility producing artillery systems where he urged workers to speed up the development and large-scale production of new kinds of ammunition. Experts say Kim's visits to the factories likely had a dual goal of encouraging the modernization of North Korean weaponry and examining artillery and other supplies that could be exported to Russia.

Over 100 VIPs attend UN screening of documentary on Russia's siege of Ukrainian city of Mariupol

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — More than a hundred ambassadors, journalists and representatives of a broad spectrum of society watched a U.N. screening Monday evening of the award-winning documentary "20 Days in Mariupol," which follows a trio of Associated Press journalists during Russia's relentless siege of the Ukrainian port city in the early days of the war.

U.K. Ambassador Barbara Woodward, who co-hosted the screening, said the film is important because "Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens what the U.N. stands for: an international order where the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries is fundamental."

"We want to reaffirm our commitment to U.N. values, and that's why we've chosen to show this very important documentary," she said in welcoming the the audience at U.N. headquarters in New York.

The screening comes at the start of the 78th session of the U.N. General Assembly and a week before world leaders arrive for their annual meeting, where the more than 18-month war in Ukraine is expected to be in the spotlight — especially with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy scheduled to speak in person for the first time.

The harrowing documentary, which was produced by the AP and the PBS series "Frontline," is culled from 30 hours of footage AP journalist Mstyslav Chernov and his colleagues shot in Mariupol following Russia's Feb. 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine and its siege of the city.

It documents fighting in the streets, the crushing strain on Mariupol's residents and medical teams, and attacks that killed pregnant women, children and others. The siege, which ended on May 20, 2022, with the surrender of a small group of outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian fighters at the Azovstal steel plant, left the city in ruins and an estimated 25,000 people dead, though the toll is likely higher.

The U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the other co-host, said "20 Days in Mariupol" documents "the horrors of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's war of aggression."

"We're here tonight to bear witness, to bear witness to these horrors and to reaffirm our commitment to justice and peace," she said. "We must continue to hold Russia to account for its atrocities. We must continue to support the Ukrainian people in their time of need."

The AP's reporting from Mariupol drew the Kremlin's ire, with its U.N. ambassador, Vasily Nebenzia, falsely claiming during a Security Council meeting in the siege's early days that photos showing the aftermath of a missile strike on a maternity hospital were staged.

"I wish the entire Russian mission were here to watch this film," said Ukraine's U.N. Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya, who attended Monday's screening.

Kyslytsya said he believes the documentary is so powerful and important that it will still be shown 50 years from now.

AP Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Julie Pace called the documentary "a testament to the power and impact of eyewitness journalism," stressing that without it, "the world would not have known the atrocities that took place."

"To have the film screened at the United Nations as the U.N. General Assembly gets underway underscores the importance of fact-based journalism on a global scale," she said. "It's crucial that we safeguard both the ability of a free press to cover the world's most important stories and the public's ability to view this type of fact-based reporting."

"20 Days in Mariupol" won the Sundance Global Audience Award for Best Documentary and several other prizes. Chernov was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service along with photographer Evgeniy Maloletka, producer Vasilisa Stepanenko and Paris-based correspondent Lori Hinnant for their "courageous reporting" on Mariupol.

Chernov delivered a video welcome from the field in Ukraine, wearing a helmet and telling the audience that he sometimes feels powerless as a journalist because he can't change things.

"I can only make sure that as many people as possible will see what I saw ... know about what happened

in Mariupol and will never forget about it," he said. "What was happening in Mariupol is happening right now to other Ukrainian cities, in this moment, and it unfortunately will be happening tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, until the war is stopped."

Raney Aronson-Rath, editor-in-chief and executive producer of "Frontline," called it "deeply meaningful" to have the opportunity to screen the documentary at the United Nations. She said the producers continue to share the film around the world to give audiences the opportunity to "bear witness to the atrocities that Ukrainians have endured."

In Iran, snap checkpoints and university purges mark the first anniversary of Mahsa Amini protests

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Snap checkpoints. Internet disruptions. University purges.

Iran's theocracy is trying hard to both ignore the upcoming anniversary of nationwide protests over the country's mandatory headscarf law and tamp down on any possibility of more unrest.

Yet the Sept. 16 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini still reverberates across Iran. Some women are choosing to go without the headscarf, or hijab, despite an increasing crackdown by authorities.

Graffiti, likely against Iran's government, is rapidly painted over in black by Tehran's municipal workers. University professors have been fired over their apparent support for demonstrators.

International pressure remains high on Iran, even as the administration tries to deescalate tensions with other nations in the region and the West after years of confrontation.

"The weaponization of 'public morals' to deny women and girls their freedom of expression is deeply disempowering and will entrench and expand gender discrimination and marginalization," independent United Nations experts warned earlier this month.

The demonstrations over Amini's death that erupted after her arrest a year ago by the country's morality police, allegedly over the hijab, represented one of the largest challenges to Iran's theocracy since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. A security force crackdown that followed saw over 500 people killed and more than 22,000 people detained.

Iran's government, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have blamed the West for fomenting the unrest, without offering evidence to support the allegation. However, the protests found fuel in the widespread economic pain that Iran's 80 million people have faced since the collapse of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers after then-President Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally pulled America from the accord.

As Western sanctions came back, Iran currency — the rial — cratered, decimating people's lifesavings. Prices of food and other essentials skyrocketed as inflation gripped the nation, in part due to worldwide pressures following the coronavirus pandemic and the launch of Russia's war on Ukraine. Unemployment officially stands at 8% overall, though one out of every five young Iranians is out of work.

Videos of the demonstrations last year showed many young people taking part in the protests, leading authorities to apparently focus more closely on Iran's universities in recent weeks. There's historic precedence for the concerns: In 1999, student-led protests swept Tehran and at least three people were killed while 1,200 were detained as demonstrations rapidly spread to other cities.

Though university campuses have largely remained one of the few safe places for students to demonstrate, even campuses have felt the latest crackdown. Over the past year, the Union Council of Iranian Students has said that hundreds of students faced disciplinary panels at their universities over the protests.

During the same period, at least 110 university professors and lecturers have been fired or temporarily suspended, according to a report by the reformist newspaper Etemad. The firings have been primarily focused at schools in Tehran, including Tehran Azad University, Tehran University and Tehran Medical University.

Etemad said those who were dismissed fell into two groups: teachers concerned by the election of hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi and those who supported the protests that followed Amini's death.

But there were firings at other schools as well.

At Tehran's Sharif University of Technology, outspoken artificial intelligence and bioinformatics professor Ali Sharifi Zarchi, who backed his students taking part in the protests and later faced interrogation by Iranian security forces, was among those laid off.

A petition urging the university to overturn his firing was signed by 15,000 people.

"Putting pressure on professors and students is a black stain on the proud history of #Tehran_University and it must be stopped," Zarchi wrote online before his dismissal.

University teachers who were dismissed also included Hossein Alaei, a former commander in the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and vice defense minister, and Reza Salehi Amiri, a former culture minister. Alaei had once, a decade ago, compared Khamenei to Iran's former shah, while Amiri was a former official in the administration of the relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani.

Rouhani, whose government reached the nuclear deal with world powers in 2015, has criticized the university firings.

"Destroying the prestige of the universities and their professors ... is a loss for the students, science and the country," Rouhani said, according to a report by the online news site Jamaran.

The head of Tehran University, Mohammad Moghimi, had tried to defend the dismissals, describing professors as facing "ethics problems." Some hard-liners also have tried to insist the firings weren't political, though the hard-line newspaper Kayhan directly linked the dismissals to the demonstrations.

"It is not logical to allow someone to propagate against the system under the direction of foreigners," the newspaper wrote.

Those on the streets of Tehran say the governments' move will likely make the situation worse.

"They want to insert their own people in the university in hope of stopping the protest, but we students will show our objections in a way that they cannot imagine," said Shima, a 21-year-old university student. "They failed to prevent last year's protests since nobody can predict earthquakes."

Authorities "are fighting against windmills using wooden swords," added Farnaz, a 27-year-old university student. Both women gave just their first name for fear of reprisals.

The government has been trying to stay publicly quiet about the anniversary. Raisi never said Amini's name during a recent news conference with journalists — who also only tangentially referred to the demonstrations. State-run and semiofficial media in Iran as well have avoided mentioning the anniversary, which typically signals pressure from the government.

But privately, activists report a rise in the number of people being questioned and detained by security forces, including an uncle of Amini.

Saleh Nikbakht, a lawyer for Amini's family, faces a court case accusing him of spreading "propaganda" over his interviews with foreign media.

More police officers have been noticed on Tehran's streets in recent days, including snap checkpoints for those riding on motorcycles in the country's capital. Internet access has been noticeably disrupted over recent days, according to the advocacy group NetBlocks.

And abroad, Iranian state media reported that someone set tires ablaze in front of the Iranian Embassy in Paris over the weekend. Demonstrations marking the anniversary on Saturday are planned in multiple cities abroad.

How an extramarital affair factors into Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's impeachment trial

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — How much does an extramarital affair matter to whether Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton keeps his job? An answer may arrive soon.

The question hangs over the Republican's impeachment trial that resumes Tuesday and is approaching the final stretch of testimony before a jury of state senators decides whether Paxton should be removed from office on charges of corruption and bribery. Most of the senators are Republicans and one is his wife,

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state Sen. Angela Paxton, although she will not have a vote in the verdict.

But she has attended the entire trial so far, including Monday, when she sat in the Senate chamber as one of her husband's former employees gave an account of the affair in the most public detail to date: How the relationship took a toll on staffers, how she urged Paxton to consider the risks and how she asked him to tell his wife about the woman.

"Just because somebody has an affair doesn't mean they're a — quote — 'criminal' does it?" Tony Buzbee, Paxton's attorney, asked when it was the defense's turn to respond.

"I would not associate that directly," said Katherine Cary, a former chief of staff in Paxton's office, who is now one of six ex-employees to testify against their former boss since the trial began last week.

The exchange capped one of the most distinctive moments of witness testimony so far after five days of former Paxton aides giving various — but at times overlapping — accounts of how one of Texas' most powerful figures allegedly abused his power to help a local real estate developer named Nate Paul, who was under FBI investigation at the time. Paul was indicted this summer on charges of making false statements to banks. He has pleaded not guilty.

Paul, who once gave Paxton a \$25,000 campaign contribution, also employed the woman with whom Paxton had the affair.

A verdict in the trial could come as early as this week.

The affair is one of 20 articles of impeachment, alleging that Paul received favorable access as Paxton benefited from Paul employing the woman. Jeff Mateer, Paxton's former second-in-command, testified last week that the relationship connected the dots as to why Texas' top lawyer appeared so determined to help Paul look into claims that he had been wronged by FBI agents and a judge.

Lawmakers leading the impeachment have also previously alleged that Paxton, who was elected to a third term in November despite years of criminal charges and alleged scandal, had a political motivation to hide the affair.

"The affair is important because it goes to Ken Paxton's political strength. He knows that with his folks he is family values," Democratic state Rep. Ann Johnson said in May, moments before the House overwhelmingly voted 121-23 to impeach Paxton.

Cary, the former chief of staff, said on the witness stand Monday that she told Paxton the affair carried political and ethical risks. She alleged that Paxton at first lied about who the woman was and that the affair took a toll on staff who were forced to work long and odd hours as the relationship unfolded.

She said Angela Paxton sometimes called the office with questions about her husband's schedule and that the conversations made staff uncomfortable.

"I told General Paxton quite bluntly it wasn't my business who he was sleeping with, but when things bleed over into the office and into the state work, it becomes my business," she said.

When it came to Angela Paxton, Cary said, "My heart broke for her."

Ken Paxton, who has pleaded not guilty, is not required to be present for testimony and was again not in the Senate on Monday.

Angela Paxton took notes at her desk as Cary testified about the affair that began in 2018, the year Angela was won her senate seat. She cruised to reelection last year and said on the eve of the impeachment trial that she would seek third term, making the announcement alongside Ken Paxton at a Labor Day picnic near their home in suburban Dallas.

Before becoming a senator, Angela Paxton would entertain crowds at her husband's political events with a guitar and song, singing, "I'm a pistol-packin' mama and my husband sues Obama." She and all senators are under a gag order to not speak about the impeachment trial while the proceedings are ongoing.

A two-thirds majority — or 21 senators — is required for conviction. That means that if all 12 Democrats vote against Paxton, at least nine Republicans would have to join them.

"Imagine if we impeached everyone in Austin who had an affair," Buzbee said. "We'd be impeaching people for the next 100 years."

7 people have died in storms in southern China and 70 crocodiles are reported to be on the loose

BEIJING (AP) — Rainstorms battering southern China have killed at least seven people and allowed dozens of crocodiles to escape from a farm.

Nearby residents were advised to stay at home after more than 70 crocodiles escaped in Maoming, a city near the coast in western Guangdong province, according to Chinese media reports.

An emergency official was quoted as saying that 69 adult crocodiles and six juveniles had escaped. Some have been captured, but the operation was difficult because of the depth of a lake they are in, the media reports said.

No injuries have been reported.

Further west, seven people died and three are missing after multiple landslides in the city of Yulin in the Guangxi region, the official Xinhua News Agency reported late Monday. Heavy rain on Sunday and Monday triggered the landslides.

The rain caused flash floods in Hong Kong last week, killing two people. Parts of the city were flooded again following a heavy downpour Monday. Puddles of water and debris could still be seen.

Hong Kong leader John Lee said the government would set up an emergency assistance fund to help those affected by the floods.

Cash bail disproportionately impacts communities of color. Illinois is the first state to abolish it

By CLAIRE SAVAGE and COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — It took four and a half months for Shannon Ross' life to unravel.

Ross, who describes himself as Indigenous and a person of color, was arrested in Chicago in October 2019 on weapons charges and ultimately found not guilty. But that came only after he spent months in jail awaiting trial, lost his home, car, job and countless moments with his children.

Ross couldn't afford the \$75,000 bond set during a hearing that he recalls lasted only a few minutes.

"I had to lose everything to prove that I wasn't guilty," he told The Associated Press. "It messes with you mentally, psychologically. It messes up relationships; it messes up the time you put in to build your life up."

But Illinois is about to overhaul the system that upended Ross' life. Illinois' Pretrial Fairness Act, which abolishes cash bail as a condition of pretrial release, will take effect Sept. 18, making Illinois the first state to end cash bail and a testing ground for whether — and how — it works on a large scale.

Judges can still keep people accused of serious crimes behind bars pretrial, but first would have to go through a more rigorous review of each case.

Critics say cash bail policies are especially unfair to Black people and other people of color. A 2022 federal civil rights report on cash bail systems found that courts tend to impose higher pretrial detention penalties on Black and Latino people, citing a study that showed Black men received bail amounts 35% higher than white men, and Latino men received bail amounts 19% higher than white men.

Cook County Public Defender Sharone Mitchell Jr. described Illinois' previous cash bail system as "a cousin to slavery."

"The vast majority of people in the system are poor, and they're Black and brown, and they have no power. It is an incredibly unfair system," he said. "You go to a bond hearing, it sounds like a slave auction. People are talking very fast. They're putting price tags on people's freedom."

Between 1970 and 2015, there was a fivefold increase in the number of people jailed before trials, according to the 2022 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report. Data shows more than 60% of defendants were detained prior to trial because they couldn't afford to post bail, and that nearly 74% of the 631,000 people jailed daily in the United States are awaiting trial.

Typically in state courts, a judge decides if a defendant poses too much of a threat to the community to

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be released, or if they can be freed with conditions, according to the nonprofit Bail Project.

Some states have tried to ease cash bail rules.

In 2017, New Jersey essentially replaced its cash bail system with a risk assessment process that gauged the potential danger a released defendant could pose to the community. But cash bail is still allowed in some instances in that state and others that have curtailed the practice, such as New York and Alaska.

California has made several efforts to reform its cash bail system, but lawmakers balked at sweeping reform.

Proponents of cash bail argue that it ensures released defendants show up for court proceedings, and say that without it, violent criminals who are released pending trial could have the opportunity to commit more crimes. But New Jersey data showed that after the state moved away from cash bail, the number of defendants who were charged with a new crime or who failed to appear in court remained steady.

Illinois state Senate minority leader John Curran, a Republican representing suburbs southwest of Chicago, said he's not opposed to changing the system but wants judges to retain more power than Illinois' new law grants.

"I've always said that New Jersey has done this mostly right," Curran said. "All felonies are put before a judge and a judge can consider if a person is a danger to the community or a willful flight risk or whether there is a history of intimidating witnesses, and they can detain on those standards and it gives judges full discretion."

The loudest opposition to the change in Illinois has come from law enforcement. Jim Kaitschuk, executive director of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association, said members' focus is now on trying to "work through it the best we can."

"I think we'll be searching for a lot of people" because defendants who don't post bond have no incentive to return to court, Kaitschuk said.

Although setting people free before trial will become the default in Illinois, there will still be cases that warrant detention, including for those accused of violent or sexual offenses or facing charges involving a gun, according to the public defender Mitchell.

In such cases, the judge must weigh several factors in deciding whether to keep someone jailed, including evidence, previous convictions, and whether that person is a flight risk.

"It won't make the system perfect for everybody. But what it will do, we think, is puts us in a better position to make a more thoughtful decision," Mitchell said.

Race certainly seemed to play a role when Nikuya Brooks' bond was set at \$150,000 after her first-time arrest on drug charges in 2017, according to the Chicago mother of three. No one in her family could pull together 10% of the bond for her to walk free. Brooks, who is Black, said a white woman she was jailed with had prior convictions and the same charges as Brooks, but received a lower bond.

According to Brooks, she didn't know her ex was transporting ecstasy while she was in the car. Police stopped the vehicle and arrested both. She said she spent a year in DuPage County Jail before her trial, unable even to hug her children.

"I really wanted to fight my case because I'm not a criminal," she said. "I'm not a drug dealer. I'm a mom. You know, I bake cookies for the PTA. I ran a Girl Scout troop."

Brooks said other women in jail told her if she pleaded guilty, prison visits offered more freedom and that she might be able to hug or kiss her children. She told her public defender she wanted to make a deal, and ended up serving about two more years in prison.

Years later, she still struggles to find employment because of her criminal record.

"You're already being punished because you're being detained," she said. "But you're also being punished twice because you're poor."

Ross, who was cleared of the weapons charges that put him in jail, said he also struggles to find secure housing and income four years later. He lost his job as a forklift operator while jailed. Once he made bail with the help of the Chicago Community Bond Fund, Ross started a business online during pretrial house arrest. But he said his credit score tanked after he couldn't make payments from jail.

"I feel like it was a Catch-22," Ross said. "And the worst part about it is I knew I was not guilty."

Reflecting on their experiences, Brooks and Ross said being locked up pretrial harmed their chances in court. "You're automatically stigmatized if you're incarcerated and you're fighting your case, especially Black women," Brooks said. They hope the new law will change that for others in Illinois.

"It's more equal for everyone," said Ross. "I feel like it's more justice in the criminal justice system."

Hillary Clinton is stepping over the White House threshold in yet another role

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — During her husband's 1992 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton observed that "our lives are a mixture of different roles" and said most people are trying to find the right balance.

"For me, that balance is family, work and service," she said.

Clinton juggled those roles — and more — during eight years as first lady in the White House. She's returning Tuesday for her first public appearance in the building since the Obama years to indulge her love for the arts.

In her White House years, she was a wife, a mother and the nation's hostess, but also a wronged spouse, the head of a national health care task force and on the cover of *Vogue*. In later years, she stepped over the White House threshold as a visiting senator and Cabinet member, but never in the long-sought role of Madam President.

Early on as first lady, she held a rare news conference where she was grilled about the Clintons' past real estate dealings, declaring that she had been "rezoned" out of her sphere of privacy.

The former first lady and current first lady Jill Biden will appear together to announce the recipients of the Praemium Imperiale, an annual global arts prize for lifetime achievement by the Japan Art Association. Both women will deliver remarks.

Her return visit is likely to be a sentimental one.

"I have to imagine she's really looking forward to being back and being back with the Bidens, who she's been close to for a long time," said Lisa Caputo, who was Clinton's White House press secretary.

Clinton's ties to the White House bracket her time as first lady.

Early visits came when she accompanied Bill Clinton to the executive mansion, when he was Arkansas governor from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, for annual receptions for the nation's governors.

She was a regular at the White House in her post-first lady roles as a U.S. senator and as secretary of state, a position that came with a permanent seat next to the president at Cabinet meetings.

Twice she sought the ultimate White House perch, campaigning in 2008 and again in 2016 to become the first woman elected president. She fell short each time, and kept her distance from the White House during the Trump years.

Ellen Fitzpatrick, emeritus professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, said going back to the White House evokes memories for any former first lady.

She recalled Jacqueline Kennedy's trip back with her children years after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The former first lady later told President Richard Nixon in a thank you note that a day she had dreaded turned out to be one of the most precious she spent with her kids.

"I think for Hillary herself, I'm sure it will be quite a moment going back in," said Fitzpatrick, author of "The Highest Glass Ceiling," a book about women who run for president.

Clinton made some good and not-so-good White House memories.

"My eight years in the White House tested my faith and political beliefs, my marriage and our nation's Constitution," she wrote in "Living History," her memoir. "I became a lightning rod for political and ideological battles waged over America's future and a magnet for feelings, good or bad, about women's choices and roles."

In his first year in office, President Clinton stood with his wife in the East Room and made her head of a national health care task force to bring health insurance to every American. No first lady had ever been

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responsible for shaping such major public policy. The work, largely done in secret, inevitably attracted criticism. The plan ultimately died without a vote in Congress.

In 1994, Clinton donned a pink sweater and fielded questions for more than an hour in the East Room about her financial dealings as part of the Whitewater affair, an Arkansas real estate project the couple had lost money in and that federal authorities were investigating.

At one point during the news conference, she said, "I've always believed in a zone of privacy, and I told a friend the other day that I feel after resisting for a long time that I've been rezoned."

Another notable White House image of the Clintons came in 1998 after the president's sexual relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky was exposed. As the family kept plans for a two-week vacation on the Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard, the Clintons walked across the South Lawn to the waiting helicopter with a teenaged Chelsea as a buffer between her parents.

Hillary Clinton also was among those in the Roosevelt Room at the White House when the president declared to the nation that "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky." She went on national television and blamed their political problems on a "vast, right-wing conspiracy."

Her public approval ratings ticked upward as her marital woes played out in public. She also became the first first lady to grace the cover of Vogue magazine, clad in a long-sleeved black velvet gown and seated on a red couch in the White House Red Room.

After her husband was acquitted during a Senate impeachment trial in January 1999, she ran for and won a U.S. Senate seat from New York in 2000, their final year in the White House. For a short period, she went about her duties as a freshman lawmaker while closing out her chapter as first lady.

After Clinton lost the Democratic presidential nomination to then-fellow Sen. Barack Obama in 2008, he persuaded her to become his secretary of state. She again was a regular presence at the White House, with a seat next to Obama at the Cabinet table. She's prominent in the famous photo of officials crowded into the Situation Room when Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011.

Tuesday will be a full-circle moment of sorts for Hillary Clinton. She and President Clinton first celebrated the Praemium Imperiale prizes at the White House in 1994. She is the U.S. international adviser for the awards.

Melanne Verveer, who was Hillary Clinton's chief of staff at the White House, said Clinton's love for the arts is a lesser-known piece of her biography as a globe-trotting policy wonk and diplomat.

The White House was "a place of enormous artistic welcoming" under Hillary Clinton, Verveer said, adding that she was keenly interested in the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, federal agencies whose funding conservatives wanted to cut. She also showcased American sculpture in the first lady's garden at the White House.

"It was just a huge engagement on the arts, so I'm not surprised in some ways that the Praemium Imperiale is going to take place at the White House with her being there," Verveer said.

Whether she visits or not, Clinton will have an enduring presence at the White House: her portrait as first lady hangs in a hallway on the ground floor.

It's Google versus the US in the biggest antitrust trial in decades

By PAUL WISEMAN and MICHAEL LIEDTKE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Google will confront a threat to its dominant search engine beginning Tuesday when federal regulators launch an attempt to dismantle its internet empire in the biggest U.S. antitrust trial in a quarter century.

Over the next 10 weeks, federal lawyers and state attorneys general will try to prove Google rigged the market in its favor by locking its search engine in as the default choice in a plethora of places and devices. U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta likely won't issue a ruling until early next year. If he decides Google broke the law, another trial will decide what steps should be taken to rein in the Mountain View, California-based company.

Top executives at Google and its corporate parent Alphabet Inc., as well as those from other powerful

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technology companies are expected to testify. Among them is likely to be Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, who succeeded Google co-founder Larry Page four years ago. Court documents also suggest that Eddy Cue, a high ranking Apple executive, might be called to the stand.

The Justice Department filed its antitrust lawsuit against Google nearly three years ago during the Trump administration, charging that the company has used its internet search dominance to gain an unfair advantage against competitors. Government lawyers allege that Google protects its franchise through a form of payola, shelling out billions of dollars annually to be the default search engine on the iPhone and on web browsers such as Apple's Safari and Mozilla's Firefox.

Regulators also charge that Google has illegally rigged the market in its favor by requiring its search engine to be bundled with its Android software for smartphones if the device manufacturers want full access to the Android app store.

Google counters that it faces a wide range of competition despite commanding about 90% of the internet search market. Its rivals, Google argues, range from search engines such as Microsoft's Bing to websites like Amazon and Yelp, where consumers can post questions about what to buy or where to go.

From Google's perspective, perpetual improvements to its search engine explain why people almost reflexively keep coming back to it, a habit that long ago made "Googling" synonymous with looking things up on the internet.

The trial begins just a couple weeks after the 25th anniversary of the first investment in the company — a \$100,000 check written by Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim that enabled Page and Sergey Brin to set up shop in a Silicon Valley garage.

Today, Google's corporate parent, Alphabet, is worth \$1.7 trillion and employs 182,000 people, with most of the money coming from \$224 billion in annual ad sales flowing through a network of digital services anchored by a search engine that fields billions of queries a day.

The Justice Department's antitrust case echoes the one it filed against Microsoft in 1998. Regulators then accused Microsoft of forcing computer makers that relied on its dominant Windows operating system to also feature Microsoft's Internet Explorer — just as the internet was starting to go mainstream. That bundling practice crushed competition from the once-popular browser Netscape.

Several members of the Justice Department's team in the Google case — including lead Justice Department litigator Kenneth Dintzer — also worked on the Microsoft investigation.

Google could be hobbled if the trial ends in concessions that undercut its power. One possibility is that the company could be forced to stop paying Apple and other companies to make Google the default search engine on smartphones and computers.

Or the legal battle could cause Google to lose focus. That's what happened to Microsoft after its antitrust showdown with the Justice Department. Distracted, the software giant struggled to adapt to the impact of internet search and smartphones. Google capitalized on that distraction to leap from its startup roots into an imposing powerhouse.

Hurricane Lee generates big swells along northern Caribbean while it churns through open waters

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hurricane Lee whipped up waves of more than 15 feet (5 meters) on Monday as the Category 3 storm cranked through open waters just north of the Caribbean region.

The storm is not expected to make landfall this week, although forecasters said residents of New England and nearby areas should keep a close eye on Lee, which was predicted to slowly turn northward later in the coming days.

The storm was located about 410 miles (655 kilometers) north-northwest of the northern Leeward Islands, according to the National Hurricane Center. It had maximum sustained winds of 115 mph (185 kph) and was moving northwest at 7 mph (11 kph).

The center said Lee is likely to pass just west of Bermuda late Thursday and Friday and be located offshore of the mid-Atlantic states and New England by the end of the week.

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"Although Lee is expected to weaken later in the week, it is expected to significantly increase in size and hazards will extend well away from the storm center," the agency said.

Bermuda could experience wind, rain and high surf, but "it is too soon to determine the specific timing and level of those impacts," the center said.

A high surf advisory was in effect for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with the National Weather Service warning of breaking waves of up to 15 feet (5 meters) for north and east-facing beaches.

The National Hurricane Center also warned of dangerous surf and rip currents for most of the U.S. East Coast this week, but what the hurricane might do beyond that is unclear.

"It remains too soon to know what level of additional impacts Lee might have along the northeast U.S. coast and Atlantic Canada late this week and this weekend, however, wind and rainfall hazards will likely extend well away from the center as Lee grows in size," the center said.

Lee strengthened from a Category 1 storm to a Category 5 storm last week in the span of 24 hours before weakening slightly.

Lee is the 12th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30 and peaked on Sunday.

In August, the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration updated its forecast and doubled the chance to 60% for an above-normal hurricane system. Between 14 and 21 named storms are forecast, with six to 11 predicted to strengthen into hurricanes. Of those, two to five are forecast to become major hurricanes — storms that are in Categories 3, 4 or 5.

Also swirling in the open Atlantic was Hurricane Margot, which became a Category 1 storm Monday afternoon. The fifth hurricane of the season was located nearly 1,300 miles (nearly 2,100 kilometers) northwest of the Cabo Verde islands. It had maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph) and was moving north at 12mph (19 kph). It was forecast to remain over open waters.

US moves to advance prisoner swap deal with Iran and release \$6 billion in frozen Iranian funds

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration has cleared the way for the release of five American citizens detained in Iran by issuing a blanket waiver for international banks to transfer \$6 billion in frozen Iranian money from South Korea to Qatar without fear of U.S. sanctions. In addition, as part of the deal, the administration has agreed to release five Iranian citizens held in the United States.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken signed off on the sanctions waivers late last week, a month after U.S. and Iranian officials said an agreement in principle was in place. Congress was not informed of the waiver decision until Monday, according to the notification, which was obtained by The Associated Press.

The outlines of the deal had been previously announced and the waiver was expected. But the notification marked the first time the administration said it was releasing five Iranian prisoners as part of the deal. The prisoners have not been named.

The waiver drew criticism of President Joe Biden from Republicans and others who say the deal will boost the Iranian economy at a time when Iran poses a growing threat to U.S. troops and Mideast allies.

On X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa said "it's ridiculous for US to be blackmailed into paying \$6B for hostages which will help indirectly finance the number 1 foreign policy of Iran: terrorism." Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas accused Biden of "paying ransom to the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism."

Another Iran hawk, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said the waivers were a sign the administration was secretly pursuing a broader deal with Iran to include more than the release of the detainees.

"Today's news confirms there has already been a side deal including a \$6 billion ransom and the release of Iranian operatives," Cruz said in a statement.

The White House pushed back on all criticism of the waiver decision, saying it was only a "procedural step" aimed at fulfilling the tentative agreement reached with Iran in August.

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"What is being pursued here is an arrangement wherein we secure the release of 5 wrongfully held Americans," said Adrienne Watson, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council. "This remains a sensitive and ongoing process. While this is a step in the process, no individuals have been or will be released into U.S. custody this week."

The waiver means that European, Middle Eastern and Asian banks will not run afoul of U.S. sanctions in converting the money frozen in South Korea and transferring it to Qatar's central bank, where it will be held for Iran to use for the purchase of humanitarian goods.

The transfer of the \$6 billion was the critical element in the prisoner release deal, which saw four of the five American detainees transferred from Iranian jails into house arrest last month. The fifth detainee had already been under house arrest.

Due to numerous U.S. sanctions on foreign banks that engage in transactions aimed at benefitting Iran, several European countries had balked at participating in the transfer. Blinken's waiver is aimed at easing their concerns about any risk of U.S. sanctions.

People familiar with negotiations said they expect the detainees will be released as early as next week.

The American prisoners include Siamak Namazi, who was detained in 2015 and was later sentenced to 10 years in prison on internationally criticized spying charges; Emad Sharghi, a venture capitalist sentenced to 10 years; and Morad Tahbaz, a British-American conservationist of Iranian descent who was arrested in 2018 and also received a 10-year sentence. The fourth and fifth prisoners were not identified.

"To facilitate their release, the United States has committed to release five Iranian nationals currently held in the United States and to permit the transfer of approximately \$6 billion in restricted Iranian funds held in (South Korea) to restricted accounts in Qatar, where the funds will be available only for humanitarian trade," Blinken wrote.

The sanctions waiver applies to banks and other financial institutions in South Korea, Germany, Ireland, Qatar and Switzerland.

"I determine that it is in the national security interest of the United States to waive the imposition of sanctions ... with respect to foreign financial institutions under the primary jurisdiction of Germany, Ireland, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, and Switzerland that are notified directly in writing by the U.S. government, to the extent necessary for such institutions to engage in transactions occurring on or after August 9, 2023," Blinken wrote.

Sanctions waivers apply to transactions involving previously penalized entities such as the National Iranian Oil Company and Central Bank of Iran "to transfer funds from accounts in the Republic of Korea to accounts in Switzerland and Germany and from accounts in Switzerland and Germany to accounts in Qatar, and to use the transferred funds for further humanitarian transactions in accordance with written guidance from the U.S. Government," he wrote.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrives in Russia before an expected meeting with Putin

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Joined by his top military officials handling his nuclear-capable weapons and munitions factories, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Russia on Tuesday, where he is expected to hold a rare meeting with President Vladimir Putin that has sparked Western concerns about a potential arms deal for Moscow's war in Ukraine.

North Korea's official news agency said Kim boarded his personal train from the capital, Pyongyang, on Sunday afternoon, and that he was accompanied by unspecified members of the country's ruling party, government and military.

Jeon Ha Gyu, spokesperson of South Korea's Defense Ministry, said in a briefing that the South's military assesses that Kim's train crossed into Russia sometime early Tuesday. He didn't elaborate how the military obtained the information.

North Korean state media showed photographs of Kim walking past honor guards and crowds of civilians

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holding the national flag and flowers, and also of him waving from his green-and-yellow armored train before it left the station. Kim's delegation likely includes his foreign minister, Choe Sun Hui, and his top military officials, including Korean People's Army Marshals Ri Pyong Chol and Pak Jong Chon.

A group of senior officials were at the station to give the leader a "hearty send-off," according to the Korean Central News Agency, which did not specify whether the train had crossed the border. Citing unidentified Russian regional officials, Japanese broadcaster TBS reported that Kim's train crossed the border and arrived in the border town of Khasan.

A brief statement on the Kremlin's website on Monday said the visit is at Putin's invitation and would take place "in the coming days." KCNA said the leaders would meet — without specifying when and where.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that Putin and Kim will lead their delegations in talks and could also meet "one-on-one if necessary." He added that Putin will host an official dinner for Kim.

The talks will focus on bilateral ties, Peskov said. "As with any of our neighbors, we feel obliged to develop good, mutually beneficial relations," he added.

A possible venue is the eastern Russian city of Vladivostok, where Putin arrived Monday to attend an international forum that runs through Wednesday, according to Russia's TASS news agency. The city, located about 425 miles (680 kilometers) north of Pyongyang, was also the site of Putin's first meeting with Kim in 2019.

The visit would be Kim's first foreign trip since the COVID-19 pandemic, which had forced North Korea to enforce tight border controls for more than three years to shield its poor health care system. While Kim has shown to be more comfortable using planes than his famously flight-adverse father, he has also used his personal train for previous meetings with Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and former U.S. President Donald Trump, reviving a symbol of his family's dynastic rule.

Associated Press journalists near the North Korea-Russia frontier saw a green train with yellow trim — similar to one used by the reclusive Kim during previous foreign trips — at a station on the North Korean side of a border river.

The train was seen moving back and forth between the station and the approach to the bridge that connects the countries, but it had not crossed the bridge as of 7 p.m. local time (1000 GMT).

Citing unidentified South Korean government sources, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper reported that a Kim-Putin meeting is possible as early as Tuesday.

The Yonhap news agency and some other media published similar reports. South Korea's Presidential Office, Defense Ministry and National Intelligence Service didn't immediately confirm those details.

U.S. officials released intelligence last week that North Korea and Russia were arranging a meeting between their leaders as they expand their cooperation in the face of deepening confrontations with the United States.

According to U.S. officials, Putin could focus on securing more supplies of North Korean artillery and other ammunition to refill declining reserves as he seeks to defuse a Ukrainian counteroffensive and show that he's capable of grinding out a long war of attrition. That could potentially put more pressure on the U.S. and its partners to pursue negotiations as concerns over a protracted conflict grow despite their huge shipments of advanced weaponry to Ukraine in the past 17 months.

"Arms discussions between Russia and the DPRK are expected to continue during Kim Jong Un's trip to Russia," said White House National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson, using the abbreviation for North Korea's official name of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "We urge the DPRK to abide by the public commitments that Pyongyang has made to not provide or sell arms to Russia."

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Washington will monitor the meeting closely, reminding both countries that "any transfer of arms from North Korea to Russia would be a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions," and that the U.S. "will not hesitate to impose new sanctions."

North Korea has possibly tens of millions of artillery shells and rockets based on Soviet designs that could potentially give a huge boost to the Russian army, analysts say.

In exchange, Kim could seek badly needed energy and food aid and advanced weapons technologies, including those related to intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear-capable ballistic missile submarines

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and military reconnaissance satellites, analysts say.

There are concerns that potential Russian technology transfers would increase the threat posed by Kim's growing arsenal of nuclear weapons and missiles that are designed to target the U.S., South Korea, and Japan. Based on North Korean state media photos, Kim's delegation possibly includes Pak Thae Song, chairman of North Korea's space science and technology committee, and Navy Admiral Kim Myong Sik, who are linked with North Korean efforts to acquire spy satellites and nuclear-capable submarines.

Kim Jong Un also seems to be bringing Jo Chun Ryong, a ruling party official in charge of munitions policies who had accompanied the leader on his recent tours to factories producing artillery and missiles.

After decades of a complicated, hot-and-cold relationship, Russia and North Korea have been drawing closer since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The bond has been driven by Putin's need for war help and Kim's efforts to boost the visibility of his partnerships with traditional allies Moscow and Beijing as he tries to break out of diplomatic isolation and have North Korea be part of a united front against Washington.

While using the distraction caused by the Ukraine conflict to ramp up its weapons development, North Korea has repeatedly blamed Washington for the crisis in Ukraine, claiming the West's "hegemonic policy" justified a Russian offensive in Ukraine to protect itself.

North Korea is the only nation besides Russia and Syria to recognize the independence of two Russian-backed separatist regions in eastern Ukraine — Donetsk and Luhansk — and it has also hinted at an interest in sending construction workers to those areas to help with rebuilding efforts.

Russia — along with China — have blocked U.S.-led efforts at the U.N. Security Council to strengthen sanctions on North Korea over its intensifying missile tests while accusing Washington of worsening tensions with Pyongyang by expanding military exercises with South Korea and Japan.

The United States has been accusing North Korea since last year of providing Russia with arms, including artillery shells sold to the Russian mercenary group Wagner. Both Russian and North Korean officials denied such claims. But speculation about the countries' military cooperation grew after Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu made a rare visit to North Korea in July, when Kim invited him to an arms exhibition and a massive military parade in the capital where he showcased ICBMs designed to target the U.S. mainland.

Following that visit, Kim toured North Korea's weapons factories, including a facility producing artillery systems where he urged workers to speed up the development and large-scale production of new kinds of ammunition. Experts say Kim's visits to the factories likely had a dual goal of encouraging the modernization of North Korean weaponry and examining artillery and other supplies that could possibly be exported to Russia.

Some analysts say a potential meeting between Kim and Putin would be more about symbolic gains than substantial military cooperation.

Russia, which has always closely guarded its most important weapons technologies, even from key allies such as China, could be unwilling to make major technology transfers with North Korea for what is likely to be limited war supplies transported over a small rail link between the countries, they say. ____

Associated Press journalists Jim Heintz in Tallinn, Estonia, Amer Madhani and Matthew Lee in Washington and Dake Kang and Ng Han Guan in Fangchuan, China, contributed.

Trump lawyers seek recusal of judge in DC presiding over federal election subversion case

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Donald Trump on Monday asked the federal judge presiding over his election subversion case in Washington to recuse herself, saying her past public statements about the former president and his connection to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol call into question whether she can be fair.

The recusal motion from Trump's lawyers takes aim at U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, a former assistant public defender who was nominated to the bench by President Barack Obama and has stood out as one of the toughest punishers of Jan. 6 defendants. The request is a long shot given the high threshold

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for recusal and because the decision on whether to recuse belongs to Chutkan, who is unlikely to see cause to step aside from the case.

Even so, the request that she give up the high-stakes trial marks the latest flashpoint in already delicate relations between the defense team and the judge, who has repeatedly cautioned against inflammatory public comments from Trump but has nonetheless been lambasted on social media by him. Special counsel Jack Smith's team signaled its own concern about his comments, writing last week that Trump's daily statements — he has derided her as "highly partisan" — could taint a potential jury pool.

Chutkan ordered Smith's team to file any opposition to Trump's recusal bid by Thursday.

Chutkan last month scheduled the trial for March 4, 2024, over the vigorous objections of defense lawyers who said that would not give them enough time to prepare. The case in Washington, charging Trump in a four-count indictment with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election, is one of four criminal cases confronting the former president as he seeks reelection to the White House.

In asking Chutkan to step aside, the Trump legal team is relying on a familiar playbook. He tried unsuccessfully to get the judge removed from the hush-money case against him in New York state court, with his lawyers claiming that Judge Juan Manuel Merchan is biased because he's given cash to Democrats and his daughter is a party consultant.

But the judge last month rejected Trump's demand that he step aside, saying he is certain of his "ability to be fair and impartial."

Federal judges are supposed to step aside in cases where their "impartiality might reasonably be questioned." Other bases for recusal include a personal bias against one of the parties. Trump's lawyers say Chutkan's comments in cases against Jan. 6 rioters show she has "already formed an opinion about President Trump's guilt" and many of the allegations that underpin the indictment against him.

"Although Judge Chutkan may genuinely intend to give President Trump a fair trial — and may believe that she can do so — her public statements unavoidably taint these proceedings, regardless of outcome," the defense team wrote. "The public will reasonably and understandably question whether Judge Chutkan arrived at all of her decisions in this matter impartially, or in fulfillment of her prior negative statements regarding President Trump."

Chutkan has often handed down prison sentences in Jan. 6 cases that are harsher than Justice Department prosecutors recommended. The judge also previously ruled against Trump in a separate Jan. 6 case, refusing his request to block the release of documents to the U.S. House's Jan. 6 committee by asserting executive privilege.

Trump's lawyers quoted from remarks Chutkan made in a 2022 sentencing hearing for Christine Priola, a Jan. 6 defendant from Ohio who pleaded guilty to obstructing Congress' certification of Joe Biden's electoral victory — one of the same charges Trump is facing.

"The people who mobbed that Capitol were there in fealty, in loyalty, to one man — not to the Constitution, of which most of the people who come before me seem woefully ignorant; not to the ideals of this country, and not to the principles of democracy," Chutkan said. "It's a blind loyalty to one person who, by the way, remains free to this day."

The defense also cited Chutkan's comments from the sentencing of a rioter from Florida who attacked police officers working to hold back the crowd. During the December 2021 hearing for Robert Palmer, who was sentenced to more than five years in prison, Chutkan said the defendant "made a very good point" that the "people who exhorted" and encouraged him "to go and take action and to fight" had not been charged. Chutkan added that she doesn't "make charging decisions" and has no "influence on that."

"I have my opinions, but they are not relevant," Chutkan said.

Trump's attorneys said that comment suggests she believed at the time that Trump should be charged.

"Public statements of this sort create a perception of prejudgment incompatible with our justice system. In a case this widely watched, of such monumental significance, the public must have the utmost confidence that the Court will administer justice neutrally and dispassionately," Trump's attorneys wrote.

Besides the Washington and New York cases, Trump faces a separate federal prosecution in Florida on

charges that he illegally hoarded classified documents, and state charges in Atlanta arising from efforts to overturn the Georgia state election in 2020.

Flooding in Libya leaves 2,000 people feared dead and more missing after storm collapsed dams

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Mediterranean storm Daniel caused devastating floods in Libya that broke dams and swept away entire neighborhoods in multiple coastal towns in the east of the North African nation. As many as 2,000 people were feared dead, one of the country's leaders said Monday.

The destruction appeared greatest in Derna, a city formerly held by Islamic extremists in the chaos that has gripped Libya for more than a decade and left it with crumbling and inadequate infrastructure. Libya remains divided between two rival administrations, one in the east and one in the west, each backed by militias and foreign governments.

The confirmed death toll from the weekend flooding stood at 61 as of late Monday, according to health authorities. But the tally did not include Derna, which had become inaccessible, and many of the thousands missing there were believed carried away by waters after two upstream dams burst.

Video by residents of the city posted online showed major devastation. Entire residential areas were erased along a river that runs down from the mountains through the city center. Multistory apartment buildings that once stood well back from the river were partially collapsed into the mud.

In a phone interview with station Monday, Prime Minister Ossama Hamad of the east Libyan government said 2,000 were feared dead in Derna and thousands were believed missing. He said Derna has been declared a disaster zone.

Ahmed al-Mosmari, a spokesman for the country's armed forces based in the east, told a news conference that the death toll in Derna had surpassed 2,000. He said there were between 5,000 and 6,000 reported missing. Al-Mosmari attributed the catastrophe to the collapse of two nearby dams, causing a lethal flash flood.

Since a 2011 uprising that toppled and later killed long-time ruler Moammar Gadhafi, Libya has lacked a central government and the resulting lawlessness has meant dwindling investment in the country's roads and public services and also minimal regulation of private building. The country is now split between rival governments in the east and west, each backed by an array of militias.

Derna itself, along with the city of Sirte, was controlled by extremist groups for years, at one point by those who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, until forces loyal to the east-based government expelled them in 2018.

At least 46 people were reported dead in the eastern town of Bayda, Abdel-Rahim Mazek, head of the town's main medical center said. Another seven people were reported dead in the coastal town of Susa in northeastern Libya, according to the Ambulance and Emergency Authority. Seven others were reported dead in the towns of Shahatt and Omar al-Mokhtar, said Ossama Abduljaleel, health minister. One person was reported dead Sunday in the town of Marj.

The Libyan Red Crescent said three of its workers had died while helping families in Derna. Earlier, the group said it lost contact with one of its workers as he attempted to help a stuck family in Bayda. Dozens of others were reported missing, and authorities fear they could have died in the floods that destroyed homes and other properties in several towns in eastern Libya, according to local media.

In Derna, local media said the situation was catastrophic with no electricity or communications.

Essam Abu Zeriba, the interior minister of the east Libya government, said more than 5,000 people were expected to be missing in Derna. He said many of the victims were swept away towards the Mediterranean.

"The situation is tragic," he declared in a telephone interview on the Saudi-owned satellite news channel Al-Arabiya. He urged local and international agencies to rush to help the city.

Georgette Gagnon, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Libya, said early reports showed that dozens of villages and towns were "severely affected ... with widespread flooding, damage to infrastructure, and

loss of life.”

“I am deeply saddened by the severe impact of (storm) Daniel on the country ... I call on all local, national, and international partners to join hands to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the people in eastern Libya,” she wrote on X platform, formerly known as Twitter.

In a post on X, the U.S. Embassy in Libya said it was in contact with both the U.N. and Libyan authorities and was determining how to deliver aid to the most affected areas.

Over the weekend, Libyans shared footage on social media showing flooded houses and roads in many areas across eastern Libya. They pleaded for help as floods besieged people inside their homes and in their vehicles.

Ossama Hamad, the prime minister of the east Libya government, declared Derna a disaster zone after heavy rainfall and floods destroyed much of the city which is located in the delta of the small Wadi Derna on Libya’s east coast. The prime minister also announced three days of mourning and ordered flags across the country to be lowered to half-staff.

Controlling eastern and western Libya, Cmdr. Khalifa Hifter deployed troops to help residents in Benghazi and other eastern towns. Ahmed al-Mosmari, a spokesperson for Hifter’s forces, said they lost contact with five troops who were helping besieged families in Bayda.

Foreign governments sent messages of support on Monday evening. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president of the United Arab Emirates, said his country would send humanitarian assistance and search-and-rescue teams to eastern Libya, according to the UAE’s state-run WAM news agency.

Turkey, which supports the country’s Tripoli-based government in the west, also expressed condolences, along with neighboring Algeria and Egypt, and also Iraq.

Storm Daniel is expected to arrive in parts of west Egypt on Monday, and the country’s meteorological authorities warned about possible rain and bad weather.

What to know about the successful rescue of a US researcher who was trapped in a deep Turkish cave

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A major rescue operation in Turkey’s Taurus Mountains succeeded in bringing out an American researcher who fell seriously ill nine days ago at a depth of some 1,000 meters (3,000 feet) from the entrance of one of the world’s deepest caves. An experienced cave rescuer himself, Mark Dickey was assisted by teams of international rescuers who by Monday had gotten him to 100 meters (some 330 feet) from the surface. They brought him out early Tuesday.

Here’s what to know about the caver and the rescue operation:

WHAT HAPPENED?

Dickey, a 40-year-old accomplished cave explorer from Croton-on-Hudson, New York, was 1,040 meters (3,412 feet) from the entrance of the Morca Cave on an expedition, when he became stricken with severe stomach bleeding Sept. 2. There were several people with him, including three other Americans, on the mission to map the 1,276-meter (4,186-foot) deep cave system for the Anatolian Speleology Group Association.

With his condition perilous, doctors, paramedics and experienced cavers from Turkey and across Europe rushed to his rescue. One Hungarian doctor went down to treat Dickey at his location as early as Sept. 3. Doctors administered IV fluids and 4 liters (1 gallon) of blood while he was still inside the cave to stabilize his condition and pave the way for his rescue. Teams comprised of a doctor and three to four other rescuers took turns staying by his side at all times.

The European Association of Cave Rescuers described Dickey as “a highly trained caver and a cave rescuer himself” and well-known cave researcher, or speleologist. He is the secretary of the association’s medical committee.

“Mark is the guy that should be on that rescue mission that’s leading and consulting, and for him to be the one that needs to be rescued is kind of a tragedy in and of itself,” said Justin Hanley, a 28-year-old

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firefighter from near Dallas, Texas, who had met Dickey during a cave rescue course the researcher taught in Hungary and Croatia.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES OF THE RESCUE?

The Morca Cave in southern Turkey's Taurus Mountains is the country's third deepest, a very complex system with many vertical shafts and a few horizontal sections.

The biggest challenges the rescuers faced were the steep vertical sections and navigating through mud and water at low temperatures in the horizontal sections. There was also the psychological strain of being inside a dark, damp cave for extended periods, experts said.

Temporary medical camps were set up along the tunnel to provide assistance and resting spots as Dickey was gradually extracted. The tunnel also needed to be re-equipped with new ropes and a communication line had to be drawn. Some narrow cave passages had to be widened as Dickey was being moved up on a stretcher.

Gretchen Baker, the national coordinator for the U.S.-based National Cave Rescue Commission, who has known Dickey for more than 10 years, said before the mission was completed that his experience as a rescuer was a benefit.

"Because of his experience teaching and doing these rescues, he understands exactly what is ahead of him," Baker said, adding that while it isn't easy to be tied to the stretcher, Dickey personally knew some of the rescuers from Europe.

WHAT WAS THE PROGRESS?

After the initial treatment deep underground, doctors gave the go-ahead for the operation to begin to bring Dickey to surface Saturday, after they assessed he was well enough to be moved. The American was first lifted from his location to a camp 700 meters from the surface and then to the 500 meters level.

The operation involved stops so that Dickey could recuperate at several medical camps that had been set up along the way.

The Italian National Alpine and Speleological Rescue said Monday that Dickey recognized some sections of the cave and reacted positively, understanding that he was getting closer to the exit.

The Speleological Federation of Turkey said Dickey reached the 100-meter mark Monday evening after taking a rest at a temporary camp at 180 meters.

Then it announced that Dickey had been removed from the last exit of the cave at 12:37 a.m. Tuesday

WHO WERE THE RESCUERS?

Some 190 personnel from Turkey and eight other countries — Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Poland, Albania and the United States — assisted in the rescue. More than 150 of them are experts in the field of search and rescue.

Last week, Dickey thanked the caving community and the Turkish government for their efforts in a video message from inside the cave.

"The caving world is a really tight-knit group and it's amazing to see how many people have responded on the surface," Dickey said. "I do know that the quick response of the Turkish government to get the medical supplies that I need, in my opinion, saved my life. I was very close to the edge."

Earthquake robbed Moroccan villagers of almost everything — loved ones, homes and possessions

By SAM METZ and MOSA'AB ELSHAMY Associated Press

TAFEGHAGHTE, Morocco (AP) — His dead relatives have been dug out and buried, but the remnants of Musa Bouissirfane's former life are still trapped under rubble and dust in the ruins of the mud-brick Moroccan village of Tafeghaghte.

"It's incredibly challenging to lose your entire family and all your possessions," Bouissirfane said as tears welled in his eyes in the community less than a two-hour drive from Marrakech. "We have lost everything — our homes, our livestock and all our possessions."

Less than a week ago, he was excited about his daughter starting second grade. Now he's mourning

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her death. Far from ambulances and authorities, villagers could not retrieve her body for more than 14 hours, until Saturday afternoon. The earthquake also killed Bouissirfane's mother and father and a niece. His wife is hospitalized in an intensive care unit.

The toll of the massive earthquake that killed more than 2,800 people was on stark display Monday in remote villages such as Tafeghaghte, where more than half of the 160 inhabitants are thought to have died, including the four in Bouissirfane's family.

Bouissirfane joined with other survivors as they worked to clear debris and recover the dead. They toiled in a scene of horror: Bulldozers dug through dust and rubble hoping to find a body. The air in parts of the village was filled with the stench of dead cattle. People warned each other not to walk near the few buildings that remained standing because they looked like they could topple at any moment.

"God save us," said Khadija Babamou, a resident of nearby Amizmiz who came to Tafeghaghte to check on relatives. As her eyes panned around the remnants of the village, she covered her mouth and began to cry while gripping her sister.

Also Monday, Moroccan Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch met with King Mohammed VI and gave his first public remarks since the earthquake. The prime minister said the North African country was committed to funding rebuilding.

Although Tafeghaghte has received food and water, it needs much more.

"Residents lack the means to purchase even a single brick," said Bouissirfane, who is living in a tent and has only the change in his pocket.

The efforts in Tafeghaghte mirrored those happening across the disaster zone as Moroccan soldiers, non-governmental organizations and teams sent by Spain, Qatar, Britain and the United Arab Emirates arrived to assist with rescue efforts and immediate needs.

So far, Moroccan officials have accepted government aid from approved non-governmental organizations and just four countries — Spain, Qatar, Britain and the United Arab Emirates. Officials say they want to avoid a lack of coordination that "would be counterproductive."

That approach differs from the one taken by the government in Turkey, which made an international appeal for help in the hours following a massive quake earlier this year.

The leader of one of several rescue teams waiting across Europe said Moroccan authorities may remember the chaos that unfolded after a smaller quake in 2004, when international teams overwhelmed the airport and the damaged roads into the hardest hit areas.

Rescuers Without Borders' founder Arnaud Fraisse told The Associated Press he is withdrawing the organization's offer to send nine people to Morocco because "our role is not to find bodies."

Homes crumbled into dust and debris, choking out the air pockets that might allow some people to survive for days under rubble.

"People are generally suffocated by the dust," Fraisse said.

The United Nations estimates that 300,000 people were affected by the magnitude 6.8 quake, which was made more dangerous by its relatively shallow depth.

Most of the destruction and deaths were in Al Haouz province in the High Atlas Mountains, where steep and winding roads became clogged with rubble leaving villagers to fend for themselves.

Ibrahim Wahdouch lost two young daughters and two other family members. He said Tafeghaghte resembled a war zone.

"There's not shooting but look around," he said.

Those left homeless — or fearing more aftershocks — have slept outside in the streets of the ancient city of Marrakech or under makeshift canopies in devastated towns like Moulay Brahim.

State news agency MAP reported that bulldozers and other equipment are being used to clear routes. Tourists and residents lined up to give blood. In some villages, people wept as boys and helmet-clad police carried the dead through streets.

More help could have quickly poured into Morocco with the government's permission. Fraisse said about 100 rescue teams — with roughly 3,000 rescuers in total — are registered with the U.N. to help.

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"It's their responsibility. They can do what they want," Fraise said, referring to Moroccan authorities. "They didn't call. So today we think it's no longer necessary for us to go there, because we won't do effective work."

A Spanish search-and-rescue team arrived in Marrakech and headed to the rural town of Talat N'Yaaqoub, according to Spain's emergency military unit. Britain sent a 60-person search team with four dogs, medical staff, listening devices and concrete-cutting gear.

France, which has many ties to Morocco and at least four of its citizens among the dead, said Moroccan authorities are evaluating proposals on a case-by-case basis.

French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna said Morocco is "the master of its choices, which must be respected." She announced 5 million euros (\$5.4 million) in emergency funds for Moroccan and international non-governmental groups rushing to help survivors.

French towns and cities have offered more than 2 million euros (\$2.1 million) in aid, and popular performers are collecting donations.

The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.8, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. A total of 2,681 people were confirmed dead, with nearly 1,600 of them from the hardest-hit Al Haouz province, the Moroccan Interior Ministry reported.

Nearly all the dead have already been buried, the government reported. More than 2,500 people were injured.

Morocco's deadliest quake was a magnitude 5.8 temblor in 1960 that struck near the city of Agadir, killing at least 12,000. It prompted Morocco to change construction rules, but many buildings, especially rural homes, are not built to withstand such shaking.

The US marks 22 years since 9/11 with tributes and tears, from ground zero to Alaska

By JENNIFER PELTZ and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans looked back Monday on 9/11 with moments of silence, tearful words and appeals to teach younger generations about the terror attacks 22 years ago.

"For those of us who lost people on that day, that day is still happening. Everybody else moves on. And you find a way to go forward, but that day is always happening for you," Edward Edelman said as he arrived at New York's World Trade Center to honor his slain brother-in-law, Daniel McGinley.

President Joe Biden, speaking at a military base in Anchorage, Alaska, urged Americans to rally around protecting democracy. His visit, en route to Washington from a trip to India and Vietnam, is a reminder that the impact of 9/11 was felt in every corner of the nation, however remote.

"We know that on this day, every American's heart was wounded," Biden said. "Yet every big city, small town, suburb, rural town, tribal community — American hands went up, ready to help where they could."

Nearly 3,000 people were killed when hijacked planes crashed into the trade center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field, in an attack that reshaped American foreign policy and domestic fears.

On that day, "we were one country, one nation, one people, just like it should be," Eddie Ferguson, the fire-rescue chief in Virginia's Goochland County, said by phone before the anniversary.

The predominantly rural county of 25,000 people has a Sept. 11 memorial and holds two anniversary commemorations, one focused on first responders and another honoring all the victims.

At ground zero, Vice President Kamala Harris joined other dignitaries at the ceremony on the National Sept. 11 Memorial plaza. Instead of remarks from political figures, the event features victims reading the names of the dead and delivering brief personal messages.

Some included patriotic declarations about American values and thanked first responders and the military. One lauded the Navy SEALs who killed al-Qaida leader and 9/11 plotter Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011. Another appealed for peace and justice. One acknowledged the many lives lost in the post-9/11 "War on Terror." And many shared reflections on missing loved ones.

"Though we never met, I am honored to carry your name and legacy with me," said Manuel João DaMota

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Jr., who was born after his father and namesake died.

To Gabrielle Gabrielli, reading names "is the biggest honor of my life." She lost her uncle and godfather, Richard Gabrielle.

"We have to keep the memory of everybody who died alive. This is their legacy," Gabrielli said, heading into the ceremony.

Biden, a Democrat, became the first president to commemorate Sept. 11 in the western U.S. He and his predecessors have gone to one or another of the attack sites in most years, though Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Barack Obama each marked the anniversary on the White House lawn at times, and Obama also visited Fort Meade in Maryland.

Warning of a rise in extremism and political violence, Biden told service members and their families that that "every generation has to fight" to preserve U.S. democracy.

"That's why the terrorists targeted us in the first place – our freedom, our openness, our institutions. They failed. But we must remain vigilant," he said.

First lady Jill Biden laid a wreath at the 9/11 memorial at the Pentagon, where a giant American flag hung over the side of the building. Earlier, bells tolled, and musicians played taps at 9:37 a.m., the time when one of the hijacked jets hit the military headquarters.

"As the years go by, it may feel that the world is moving on or even forgetting what happened here on Sept. 11, 2001," but the Defense Department will always remember, Secretary Lloyd Austin said. He deployed to Iraq in the war that followed the attack.

Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, laid a wreath at the Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where another plane crashed after passengers tried to storm the cockpit. Earlier Monday at the memorial, a rabbi from Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue, where a gunman killed 11 worshippers in 2018, called for ensuring that younger people know about 9/11.

"With memory comes responsibility, the determination to share our stories with this next generation, so that through them, our loved ones continue to live," Rabbi Jeffrey Myers said. The memorial is offering a new educational video, virtual tour and other materials for classroom use.

Many Americans did volunteer work on what Congress has designated both Patriot Day and a National Day of Service and Remembrance. Others gathered for anniversary events at memorials, firehouses, city halls, campuses and elsewhere.

In Iowa, a march set off at 9:11 a.m. Monday from suburban Waukee to the state Capitol in Des Moines. In Columbus, Indiana, observances include a remembrance message sent to police, fire and EMS radios. New Jersey's Monmouth County, which was home to some 9/11 victims, this year made Sept. 11 a holiday for county employees so they could attend commemorations.

Pepperdine University's campus in Malibu, California, displayed one American flag for each victim, plus the flags of every other country that lost a citizen on 9/11. Reflecting the tragedy's scope, U.N. General Assembly President Dennis Francis exhorted world nations Monday to counter extremism, build tolerance, "join hands and say never again."

Fenton, Missouri, is more than 650 miles (1,050 kilometers) from the attack sites. But the St. Louis suburb, population 4,000, holds an anniversary ceremony at a memorial that includes steel from the World Trade Center's fallen twin towers and a plaque honoring Jessica Leigh Sachs, a 9/11 victim with relatives in town.

"We're just a little bitty community," Mayor Joe Maurath said ahead of the anniversary, but "it's important for us to continue to remember these events. Not just 9/11, but all of the events that make us free."

Chile president defends democracy 50 years after coup ushered in brutal military dictatorship

By EVA VERGARA and DANIEL POLITI Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — The president of Chile issued a fervent defense of democracy on Monday, the 50th anniversary of the coup led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet that ushered in a brutal military dictatorship for almost two decades.

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The anniversary of the U.S.-backed coup was a vivid reminder of the continuing divisions over the legacy of Pinochet, who died without ever being convicted for the crimes against humanity committed during his 17-year reign.

The problems of democracy must be addressed through more democracy, President Gabriel Boric said at the La Moneda presidential palace, which was bombed by warplanes at the start of the coup half a century ago.

"A coup d'état or the violation of the human rights of those who think differently is never justifiable," Boric said in his address to a nation where a significant number of people, according to numerous polls, believe the 1973 coup was justified, and that Pinochet, who died in 2006, was a good leader who helped to modernize the country.

The military regime led by Pinochet violated human rights and brutally persecuted opponents, imprisoning and torturing thousands who were opposed to the regime. It left a toll of 3,200 killed, including 1,469 disappeared. A half-century later, 297 have been convicted of crimes against humanity and 1,300 cases are ongoing.

Special Presidential Advisor for the Americas Christopher J. Dodd was leading the U.S. government delegation to Chile, according to the State Department. The U.S. government backed the 1973 coup and the Chilean government is pushing Washington to declassify documents that could shed light on the era.

Matthew Miller, a State Department spokesperson, said that "the Biden administration has sought to be transparent about the U.S. role in this chapter of Chilean history," noting that it has recently declassified documents from 1973.

"We pay our deepest respects to the victims of the repression that followed," Miller said.

The date in Chile is marked by political polarization between the ruling party and the right-wing opposition, due to their disagreements about the roles they played in the coup. Boric described the atmosphere as "charged," and former President Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010 and 2014-2018) called it "toxic." In Congress, lawmakers shouted at each other over the issue.

Those divisions spilled into the streets over the weekend, when a peaceful protest by thousands of Chileans to remember those disappeared and killed by the dictatorship was marred by violence. A small group of masked individuals threw rocks at windows.

In his speech Monday, Boric emphasized the need to stand up with the victims of the dictatorship and not seek a false equivalence in order to appease those who defend Pinochet's government.

"Reconciliation is not achieved through neutrality or distance but by unequivocally standing with those who were victims of the horror," Boric said.

Late last month, Boric unveiled what will effectively be the first state-sponsored plan to try to locate the approximately 1,162 victims of the dictatorship who remain missing, which on Monday he said would be his government's "legacy."

"It is time to remedy those absences, correct the shortcomings, and repair the damage in order to project ourselves beyond our pains," he said.

In the runup to the anniversary, Boric promoted an agreement for the protection of democracy and human rights, which was signed by his four predecessors, but none of the three leaders of the opposition adhered to it.

In a statement Monday, the right-wing Independent Democratic Union (UDI) party did not mention the word coup, but talked about an "institutional breakdown" caused by an "extreme situation that Chile was living through."

It described the events of Sept. 11, 1973 as "inevitable" given the "social, political and institutional breakdown" ushered in by the socialist government of President Salvador Allende (1970-1973).

Earlier, the opposition coalition Let's Go Chile issued a statement in which it did not mention the words coup or dictatorship, or human-rights violations. It referred to a "breakdown of democracy."

UDI President Javier Macaya said the coalition would not participate in the Monday commemoration out of fear that it would include honoring "figures who we do not believe deserve tribute, such as former

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President Salvador Allende." Allende died by suicide the day of the coup.

Allende's daughter, Sen. Isabel Allende, also took part in Monday's commemoration and accused some of trying to change history.

"There has been an attempt to reverse the responsibilities for the tragedy we experienced during the darkest 17 years of our history," she said. "The true culprits are those who broke the institutional order, bombed this palace, and killed thousands of Chileans."

Cadem, a local polling group, found recently that 51% of Chileans believe the 1973 coup was "inevitable." Local groups Pulso Ciudadano and Mori Chile also found that around one-third of Chileans say the coup was justified.

A tribute to former Presidente Allende by the Chamber of Deputies, Chile's lower house of Congress, was cut short after a UDI lawmaker used his time to criticize the former president. One lawmaker carried a sign that showed photos of both Allende and Pinochet crossed out.

"Neither Allende nor Pinochet," read the sign.

More than 1,000 local and international guests took part in Monday's commemoration, including a few presidents from the region.

The guests included Presidents Luis Arce of Bolivia, Gustavo Petro of Colombia, Luis Lacalle Pou of Uruguay and Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico.

With Rubiales finally out, Spanish soccer ready to leave embarrassing chapter behind

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

Spanish soccer is ready to move forward, three weeks after its women's team won the Women's World Cup but had its celebrations marred by a kiss that ignited a crisis.

Luis Rubiales, the Spanish soccer federation president who kissed a player on the lips without her consent during the trophy ceremony in Australia last month, resigned late Sunday following weeks of relentless pressure from inside the sport and Spanish society in general.

The decision, which many in the country had been hoping to see much earlier, was expected to help Spanish soccer start overcoming one of its most embarrassing chapters. It should also clear the way for Spain to get back on track with its bid to host the men's World Cup in 2030 along with Portugal, Morocco and possibly Ukraine.

"It's over," Irene Montero, the acting minister of equality in Spain, wrote on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

Rubiales had been widely criticized after he kissed Jenni Hermoso on the lips during the awards ceremony following Spain's 1-0 win over England in the Women's World Cup final on Aug. 20 in Sydney. Hermoso said the kiss was without her consent.

Rubiales had been expected to resign at an emergency general meeting of the federation shortly after the World Cup final, but instead said he was victim of a "witch hunt" by "false feminists."

His defiant stand did not make the problem go away.

"The feminist country is advancing faster and faster," Yolanda Díaz, Spain's acting Deputy Prime Minister, wrote on X after Rubiales made his resignation public. "The transformation and improvement of our lives is inevitable. We are with you, Jenni, and with all women."

Spain's National Court announced Monday it has agreed to a request from prosecutors to look into whether Rubiales should face charges of sexual assault and coercion. That means the court will gather evidence in the case, likely including asking Rubiales to testify before deciding whether it can go ahead.

According to a sexual consent law passed last year, Rubiales could face a fine or a prison sentence of one to four years if found guilty of sexual assault. The new law eliminated the difference between "sexual harassment" and "sexual assault," sanctioning any unconsented sexual act.

Rubiales had been without public supporters other than his mother, who held a short-lived hunger strike in a church in southern Spain. His own federation also publicly asked him to step down and one of his

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biggest supporters, women's team coach Jorge Vilda, was fired last week.

Pedro Rocha has been in charge of the federation since Rubiales was provisionally suspended by FIFA, the governing body of world soccer. The Spanish federation said in a statement early Monday that it would start proceedings to call for a new presidential election.

"The reputational damage that this has caused to Spanish soccer is tremendous," said Spanish soccer league president Javier Tebas, who often clashed with Rubiales in the past. "Now we have to work to recover from it, and it's not going to be easy."

Asked about Rubiales, men's national team coach Luis de la Fuente noted Monday that he has been at the federation since before the former president took over.

"It was a totally personal decision by Rubiales and I respect it," he said. "I can only worry about the things that I can control. My responsibility is with the squad. I can only think about soccer."

Rubiales also said he has resigned as a vice president of European soccer body UEFA because of the reputational danger the scandal could inflict on Spain's joint bid to host the men's World Cup.

"I don't want Spanish soccer to be hurt by this exaggerated campaign against me, and above all, I take this decision after being assured that my exit would help contribute to the stability that will allow both Europe and Africa to stay united for their dream of 2030, which will permit the greatest sporting event in the world to go to our country," Rubiales said.

"Insisting in waiting and hanging on would not contribute anything positive (for) either the federation or Spanish soccer, among other reasons, because the powers that be would stop me from returning (to my job)."

The next men's World Cup will be played in the United States, Mexico and Canada in 2026.

The statement from Rubiales late Sunday came at about the same time as the release of clips of an interview he did with TV host Piers Morgan on Britain's TalkTV.

"What I hope is that he goes away through a conviction, a sentencing, not because of his voluntary decision," Victoria Rosell, a government official dealing with gender violence, was quoted as saying by Spain's EFE news agency.

Spain, which has moved up to No. 2 in the FIFA rankings, is scheduled to start the Women's Nations League on Sept. 22 with a visit to top-ranked Sweden. Spain beat Sweden in the Women's World Cup semifinals.

In domestic soccer, Spain's women's league players are on strike and pushing for what they call a dignified minimum wage.

US approves updated COVID vaccines to rev up protection this fall

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. approved updated COVID-19 vaccines Monday, hoping to rev up protection against the latest coronavirus strains and blunt any surge this fall and winter.

The Food and Drug Administration decision opens the newest shots from Moderna and Pfizer and its partner BioNTech to most Americans even if they've never had a coronavirus vaccination. It's part of a shift to treat fall updates of the COVID-19 vaccine much like getting a yearly flu shot.

There's still another step: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must sign off. A CDC advisory panel is set to issue recommendations Tuesday on who most needs the updated shots. Vaccinations could begin later this week, and both the COVID-19 and flu shot can be given at the same visit.

A third vaccine maker, Novavax, said its updated shot is still being reviewed by the FDA.

COVID-19 hospitalizations have been rising since late summer although — thanks to lasting immunity from prior vaccinations and infections — not nearly as much as this time last year.

But protection wanes over time and the coronavirus continually churns out new variants that can dodge prior immunity. It's been a year since the last time the vaccines were tweaked, and only about 20% of adults ever received that earlier update.

"Vaccination remains critical to public health and continued protection against serious consequences

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of COVID-19, including hospitalization and death," FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks said in a statement. "We very much encourage those who are eligible to consider getting vaccinated."

Just like earlier vaccinations, the fall round is cleared for adults and children as young as age 6 months. FDA said starting at age 5, most people can get a single dose even if they've never had a prior COVID-19 shot. Younger children might need additional doses depending on their history of COVID-19 infections and vaccinations.

The FDA pointedly isn't calling this latest round a "booster" but instead a vaccine updated to better match the currently circulating virus. The new recipe targets an omicron variant named XBB.1.5 — replacing outdated combination vaccines that mixed protection against the original coronavirus strain and an older version of omicron.

And while even the XBB.1.5 variant is no longer dominant, FDA determined that it's close enough to coronavirus strains causing most COVID-19 illnesses today to offer good cross-protection. Like earlier versions, they're expected to be most protective against COVID-19's worst consequences rather than mild infection.

But while the FDA's decision allows for wide use of the updated shots, the CDC will decide how strongly different groups are urged to get them.

Federal officials have said the shots still will be free to most Americans through private insurance or Medicare. But for the uninsured or underinsured, the CDC is working with health departments, clinics and certain pharmacies to temporarily provide free shots.

Google's search engine dominance is at the center of the biggest US antitrust trial in decades

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

The U.S. government is taking aim at what has been an indomitable empire: Google's ubiquitous search engine that has become the internet's main gateway.

The legal attack will swing into full force Tuesday in a Washington D.C. federal courtroom that will serve as the battleground for the biggest U.S. antitrust trial since regulators went after Microsoft and its dominance of personal computer software a quarter century ago.

The 10-week trial before U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta is expected to include potentially revelatory testimony from top executives at Google and its corporate parent Alphabet, as well as other powerful technology companies. Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, who succeeded Google co-founder Larry Page in 2019, will be among the most prominent witnesses likely to testify. Court documents also indicate one of Apple's highest-ranking executives, Eddy Cue, might be called to the stand.

The case against Google mirrors the one brought against Microsoft in many ways, including the existential threat it poses to a renowned tech giant whose products are relied on by billions of people.

The trial is scheduled to continue into late November before its first phase wraps, after which another round of court filings and arguments are expected. Mehta isn't expected to issue a ruling until early next year. If he decides Google has been breaking the law, it will trigger another trial to determine what measures should be taken to rein in the Mountain View, California, company.

Although Google products such as the Chrome web browser, Gmail, YouTube and online maps all are hugely popular, none have become as indispensable — or as valuable — as the internet search engine invented by Page and a fellow Stanford University graduate student, Sergey Brin, during the late 1990s.

The trial is beginning just a couple weeks after the 25th anniversary of the first investment in the company — a \$100,000 check written by Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim that enabled Page and Brin to set up shop in a Silicon Valley garage.

Today, Google's corporate parent, Alphabet Inc., is worth \$1.7 trillion and employs 182,000 people, with most of the money coming from \$224 billion in annual ad sales flowing through a network of digital services anchored by a search engine that fields billions of queries a day.

Google could be hobbled if the antitrust trial culminates in concessions that undercut its power. One possibility is that the company could be forced to stop paying Apple and other companies to make Google

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the default search engine on smartphones and computers.

Or the legal battle could cause Google to lose focus. That's what happened to Microsoft after its antitrust showdown with the Justice Department: Distracted, the software giant struggled to adapt to the impact of internet search and smartphones. Google capitalized on that distraction to leap from its startup roots into an imposing powerhouse.

Nearly three years after filing its antitrust lawsuit during the Trump administration, lawyers from the U.S. Justice Department will try to prove Google has been abusing the power of its search engine to stifle competition in ways that discouraged innovation. Critics say the quality of search results has deteriorated, too, as Google used its engine to sell ads and promote its own products, like Google restaurant reviews instead of those offered by Yelp.

Dozens of state attorneys general, led by Colorado, have waded into the battle and will have a chance to prove Google turned into an illegal monopoly that's harming consumers.

The crux of the Justice Department's argument will boil down to its contention that Google's search engine has become like digital air almost everyone breathes, and that it needs to be cleaned up because the company's tactics have polluted the atmosphere.

Google's vast legal team is expected to counter that the company has never stopped improving its search engine, executing its original mission to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible to anyone with an internet connection. From Google's perspective, the perpetual improvements explain why most people almost reflexively gravitate to its search engine, a habit that long ago made "Googling" synonymous with looking things up.

Despite commanding about 90% of the internet search market, Google argues it faces a wide range of competition ranging from other search engines such as Microsoft's Bing and DuckDuckGo to websites such as Amazon and Yelp, where people research questions about what product to buy or where to eat.

The Justice Department contends Google's claim that it dominates the market by supplying the best search engine is a canard. They allege Google protects its franchise through a form of payola, shelling out billions of dollars annually to be the default search engine on the iPhone and web browser such as Apple's Safari and Mozilla's Firefox.

Regulators also allege Google has illegally rigged the market in its favor by requiring its search engine to be bundled with its Android software for smartphones if the device manufacturers want full access to the Android app store.

By locking in Google's search engine as the default choice in so many places, the Justice Department contends the company has made it more difficult for people to find the best results as quickly as possible.

Regulators allege the company's deals ensure Google's automatic access to billions of queries that provide data for its search engine, while boxing out Bing and DuckDuckGo from getting information that could help them improve their results.

The tactics have created a toxic situation allowing Google to cram more ads at the top of its search results, increasing its profits and Alphabet's stock price, according to the Justice Department. That practice requires consumers to dig ever deeper to answer their questions, something that regulators believe could be avoided if rival services were able to collect as much information as Google does through its lock-in agreements.

Google insists that consumers could easily switch their default settings to another search engine.

The company also argues that it does face competition from evolving technology: Microsoft, for example, is baking artificial intelligence from its business partner Open AI into its Bing search engine. That move in early February prodded Google to start equipping its search engine with AI-fueled results too — a sign that the company says shows competition continues to thrive.

Ian Wilmut, a British scientist who led the team that cloned Dolly the Sheep, dies at age 79

LONDON (AP) — Ian Wilmut, the cloning pioneer whose work was critical to the creation of Dolly the Sheep in 1996, has died at age 79.

The University of Edinburgh in Scotland said Wilmut died Sunday after a long illness with Parkinson's disease.

Wilmut set off a global discussion about the ethics of cloning when he announced that his team at the university's Roslin Institute for animal biosciences had cloned a lamb using the nucleus of a cell from an adult sheep.

Initially referred to as "6LL3" in the academic paper describing the work, the lamb was later named Dolly, after the singer Dolly Parton. The lamb's cloning was the first time scientists were able to coax a mature adult cell into behaving like a cell from a newly fertilized embryo in order to create a genetically identical animal.

While Dolly's creation was heralded as a revolution by some scientists, it unnerved many, with critics calling such experiments unethical.

The year after Dolly's creation, U.S. President Bill Clinton imposed a ban on the use of federal funds for human cloning but stopped short of banning all cloning research.

Dolly's creation prompted other scientists to clone animals including dogs, cats, horses and bulls. Dolly also spurred questions about the potential cloning of humans and extinct species. In recent years, scientists have proposed bringing back the woolly mammoth by using a mix of gene editing and cloning.

Dolly's creation was part of a broader project by scientists to create genetically modified sheep that could produce therapeutic proteins in their milk. About six years after Dolly's birth, it was euthanized by scientists after she developed an incurable lung tumor.

Wilmut, a trained embryologist, later focused on using cloning techniques to make stem cells that could be used in regenerative medicine. His work was critical to research that aims to treat genetic and degenerative diseases by helping the body repair damaged tissue.

The Roslin Institute said Wilmut was knighted in 2008 and retired from the university in 2012. He later researched Parkinson's disease after he was diagnosed with the condition, it said.

"We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Sir Ian Wilmut," Bruce Whitelaw, the institute's director, said in a statement Monday. Whitelaw described Wilmut as a "titan" of science and said his work in Dolly's creation transformed scientific thinking at the time.

He said the legacy of Wilmut's work in cloning Dolly continues to be seen.

"This breakthrough continues to fuel many of the advances that have been made in the field of regenerative medicine that we see today," he said.

Wilmut is survived by his wife, three children and five grandchildren, the University of Edinburgh said. Funeral arrangements have not yet been announced.

Today in History:

September 12, Voyager 1 becomes first man-made object to leave the solar system

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 12, the 255th day of 2023. There are 110 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 12, 1977, Voyager 1, launched 36 years earlier, became the first man-made spacecraft ever to leave the solar system.

On this date:

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In 1913, Olympic legend Jesse Owens was born in Oakville, Alabama.

In 1914, during World War I, the First Battle of the Marne ended in an Allied victory against Germany.

In 1958, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Cooper v. Aaron, unanimously ruled that Arkansas officials who were resisting public school desegregation orders could not disregard the high court's rulings.

In 1959, the Soviet Union launched its Luna 2 space probe, which made a crash landing on the moon. The TV Western series "Bonanza" premiered on NBC.

In 1962, in a speech at Rice University in Houston, President John F. Kennedy reaffirmed his support for the manned space program, declaring: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

In 1977, South African Black student leader and anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko, 30, died while in police custody, triggering an international outcry.

In 1987, reports surfaced that Democratic presidential candidate Joseph Biden had borrowed, without attribution, passages of a speech by British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock (KIHN'-ik) for one of his own campaign speeches. (The Kinnock report, along with other damaging revelations, prompted Biden to drop his White House bid.)

In 1995, the Belarusian military shot down a hydrogen balloon during an international race, killing its two American pilots, John Stuart-Jervis and Alan Fraenckel.

In 2001, stunned rescue workers continued to search for bodies in the World Trade Center's smoking rubble a day after a terrorist attack that shut down the financial capital, badly damaged the Pentagon and left thousands dead. President George W. Bush, branding the attacks in New York and Washington "acts of war," spoke of "a monumental struggle of good versus evil" and said that "good will prevail."

In 2003, in the Iraqi city of Fallujah, U.S. forces mistakenly opened fire on vehicles carrying police, killing eight of them.

In 2005, Federal Emergency Management Agency director Mike Brown resigned, three days after losing his onsite command of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.

In 2008, a Metrolink commuter train struck a freight train head-on in Los Angeles, killing 25 people.

In 2011, Novak Djokovic beat Rafael Nadal to win his first U.S. Open championship.

In 2021, Max Scherzer of the Los Angeles Dodgers became the 19th pitcher in major league history with 3,000 career strikeouts.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Linda Gray is 83. Singer Maria Muldaur is 81. Actor Joe Pantoliano is 72. Singer-musician Gerry Beckley (America) is 71. Original MTV VJ Nina Blackwood is 71. Former Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback is 67. Actor Rachel Ward is 66. Actor Amy Yasbeck is 61. Actor Darren E. Burrows is 57. Rock singer-musician Ben Folds (Ben Folds Five) is 57. Actor-comedian Louis (loo-ee) C.K. is 56. Rock musician Larry LaLonde (Primus) is 55. Golfer Angel Cabrera is 54. Actor-singer Will Chase is 53. Actor Josh Hopkins is 53. Country singer Jennifer Nettles is 49. Actor Lauren Stamile (stuh-MEE'-lay) is 47. Rapper 2 Chainz is 46. Actor Kelly Jenrette is 45. Actor Ben McKenzie is 45. Singer Ruben Studdard is 45. Basketball Hall of Fame player Yao Ming is 43. Singer-actor Jennifer Hudson is 42. Actor Alfie Allen is 37. Actor Emmy Rossum is 37. Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman is 34. Country singer Kelsea Ballerini is 30. Actor Colin Ford is 27.