

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Service Notice: Bruce Sippel

Services for Bruce Sippel, 66, of Groton will be 2:00 p.m., Thursday, October 26th at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Jeremy Yeadon will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton under the direction of Paetznick-Garress Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the church on Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Bruce passed away October 21, 2023 while helping at a neighbor's farm.

## Wednesday, Oct. 25

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, broccoli normandy blend, Fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Tacos.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

## 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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## Monday, Oct. 23

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, sweet potato fries.

United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at Noon.

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

5th Grade Band Introduction, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Faulkton (JV at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow)

## Tuesday, Oct. 24

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, oriental blend vegetables, baked apples, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Scalloped potatoes and ham.

Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

ASVAB Test, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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

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## The Bulletin by Newsweek

### World in Brief

global threats to the U.S. and its NATO allies from Russia, China, and Iran.

Australian billionaire Anthony Pratt, who reportedly received classified nuclear submarine secrets from Donald Trump, claimed that the former president gave him details about private calls with the leaders of Ukraine and Iraq.

Bill Belichick hit his 300th regular season victory with an upset over the Buffalo Bills yesterday. It has been a season with few wins (2-5) and lots of talk about his career being nearly over as the head coach of the New England Patriots. Only coaching legends Don Shula (328) and George Halas (318) have won more.

Economy Minister Sergio Massa held the lead over far-right libertarian Javier Milei in the presidential election in Argentina, which has been grappling with the worst economic crisis in years. A run-off is scheduled for Nov. 19 as no candidate received 45% of the vote, or 40% with a 10-point lead over the runner-up.

Taiwan-based iPhone maker Foxconn said it will cooperate with Chinese authorities after the state media Global Times reported that several offices of the Apple supplier were subject to tax audits and land use investigations.

Venezuelans voted in a primary election organized by the opposition to choose a candidate to challenge President Nicolás Maduro in the 2024 election. Former lawyer Maria Corina Machado has been a clear frontrunner. However, she has been barred from holding public office for 15 years.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia's recent strategically flawed offensive on the Donetsk town of Avdiivka has had a devastating effect on the number of casualties among its armed forces in Ukraine, according to the U.K.'s Defense Ministry.

### What to Watch in the Day Ahead

The first group of 450 prospective jurors will arrive at the courthouse to answer a lengthy questionnaire to serve a trial of Sidney Powell and Kenneth Chesebro, two of Donald Trump's 18 co-defendants indicted in Fulton County for allegedly trying to overturn the 2020 election in Georgia.

American Express and Schlumberger are among major companies set to report their third-quarter earnings report.

### TALKING POINTS

"Civilians in Gaza need core services and supplies and for that we need rapid and immediate humanitarian access, we need water, food and medicine now. We need it at scale, and we need it to be sustained," Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres on the Gaza humanitarian crisis amid the Israel-Hamas war.

"I'm still running for speaker, and I plan to go to the floor and get the votes and win this race. But I want to go talk with a few of my colleagues, particularly want to talk with the 20 individuals who voted against me, so that we can move forward and begin to work for the American people," GOP Rep. Jim Jordan not backing down despite losing his first two ballots in his race for House speaker.

"These shorter-term measures are often volatile. In any case, inflation is still too high, and a few months of good data are only the beginning of what it will take to build confidence that inflation is moving down sustainably toward our goal." Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell speaking at the Economic Club of New York on U.S. inflation.

Gaza received a second convoy of humanitarian aid as Israel continued airstrikes. Israeli Defense forces said it hit 320 "terror targets" in Gaza and targeted sites in Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a meeting with his war cabinet and top generals to assess the situation. He warned the Hezbollah militant group against escalation, saying: "We will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell invoked the controversial phrase "axis of evil" to describe growing

BRISTOL, SOUTH DAKOTA

# HAUNTED WAREHOUSE

**OCTOBER 27 & 28**

**BRISTOL MAIN STREET**

7:00PM-11:00PM | \$15 ADMISSION | 6+ |

INCREDIBLE EDIBLES | SHARI'S JO TO GO |

ROB'S PORTA POTTIES

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS

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## "Get your eyes checked!"

If you ever played baseball, you may have been told to "keep your eye on the ball." When batting, a baseball player is taught to watch the ball the entire time from when it leaves the pitcher's hand to when, hopefully, their bat smacks the ball for a hit. It may sound simple, but some pitchers can throw fast and sometimes they throw a curveball. Great hitters use their vision and spot the difference, helping them get a hit. Lose focus, and in the blink of an eye the pitch has whipped past them for a strike.



Andrew Ellsworth, MD

Like keeping your eye on the ball in baseball, I recommend you keep your eye on your eyes. Sure, you may have good vision, but that does not necessarily mean your eyes are in good health. It is important to see an eye doctor for a regular check up, to help spot any eye issues early.

There are several common eye conditions that can be seen early by annual eye exams. Cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy are some of the examples. Catching these right away helps prevent or delay vision loss. Early detection allows for easier, more effective, and cost efficient treatments.

Cataracts are from clouding of the lens of the eye that can cause blurring and sometimes eventual blindness. Treatable with surgery, outcomes may be better when diagnosed early in the course.

Macular degeneration is a problem with the retina which can cause blurring and central vision loss. Early diagnosis and treatment helps slow the course of the disease.

Caused by increased eye pressure, glaucoma may lead to vision loss from damage to the nerve in the back of the eye called the optic nerve. Often people have glaucoma without knowing it until their vision slowly deteriorates. Once again, early detection is key for preserving vision.

Diabetic retinopathy is a common complication from diabetes that causes damage to the blood vessels in the retina, causing vision loss. If you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, please have an annual eye exam and tell your eye doctor so they know to look for associated eye problems.

Just like a baseball player needs to keep an eye on the ball to watch for changes in movement, I encourage you to get your eyes checked to detect changes in your eyes to prevent vision loss. So, the next time you hear a baseball fan yell "Get your eyes checked!" to an umpire, may it be a reminder to schedule your next eye exam.

Andrew Ellsworth, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and on Facebook and instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its 22nd season of health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR

## St Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church

### *Fall Dinner*

NOVEMBER 5TH, 5PM TO 7PM

TOSSED SALAD, LASAGNA, GARLIC BREAD,  
ICE CREAM SUNDAE BAR

.....  
**FREE WILL OFFERING**  
.....

BINGO, BINGO, BINGO!



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**Here is the Excerpt #3 for 1940 - 1945 We Will Remember.  
This comes from 1941 and ends with Pearl Harbor.**

Hope you enjoy. Lee Raines

## 1941 Prelude to Pearl Harbor

*January 1941 – Diary – January 1 Ralph still recovering from back pains. Don did the chores. Went to town for groceries. Cold as the dickens. January 4 cold again, listened to the radio in the PM. January 6 Ralph did chores by himself, felt better and Beth took music lesson for \$.50. January 9-10 Beth came home from school with the flu. Lovely day so we washed. Don helped. Hung all the white things out. Beth still in bed. Ralph and Don went to town in the evening. January 12 ordered a dress for \$8.00. January 14 Beth went to school, still didn't feel good. January 15 rained and sleeted all day. Hogs went up to \$8.50. January 16 kids had final exams. Don didn't take any. Beth took Algebra and English-got out of general science and home economics. Hogs went down \$.40. January 17 Don and Beth didn't go to school-stormed all day. Ralph hauled hogs to Sioux Falls. He got \$7.85 for 28, weighed 260. Very cold. January 24 went to International Harvester show. January 26 Ralph is 41 years old. Kids went skating with Ramsdell kids. January 29 bought a truck load of corn cobs from Mesheim. Took Beth to skating party in the evening. Ralph and Don went to basketball game at Egan in the evening.*

Ralph did not purchase any coal until sometime in February, so I assume the corn cobs were used to fuel the heater in the house.

**January 1** – Londoners greeted the new year grimly today with shouts of defiance to Adolph Hitler from blacked-out streets pock-marked with the ruin of repeated bombings. Neither the scarred capital nor any other section of Britain reported new bombings or raiders overhead throughout the night. The RAF, too, was said to have stayed home. But this time there was no talk of an undeclared truce like at Christmas. Instead, observers said the weather apparently was just too bad for air activity on either side of the channel. As Old Ben struck the 12 notes that on other New Year's Eves have touched off a din of celebration in the streets, revelers gathered beside St. Paul's cathedral and hailed 1941 with cries of "to hell with Hitler".

Colonel Joseph V. Thebaud, executive officer of the Organized Reserves in South Dakota, today announced that Lt. Donald E. Bowles, Groton, had been assigned to the Quartermaster Replacement Center (motor) effective February 9, 1941.

**Don Bowles, U.S. Army, Lieutenant Colonel, called to active duty in the Quartermaster Corps. He was promoted to captain in 1942 and lieutenant colonel in 1943. On December 10, 1944, the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division arrived in Marseilles, France. He was director of the Quartermaster Corps for that division. His division engaged the German 6<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division of SS troops in the Battle of the Bulge on Christmas Eve 1944. Don received the Bronze Star and was discharged in 1945. He and his brother-in-law, Dale Sour, purchased the Groton Ford dealership from Don's father. Bowles was born in Groton and graduated from Groton High School in 1932. Graduated from State College with a degree in electrical engineering in 1936. Bowles was born on June 25, 1914, and died September 9, 2001.**

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**January GI 16** – The ice harvest is on at Lake Amsden. Trucks laden with fine clear ice are passing through Groton every day now. Although temperatures have never been exceedingly low this season, there has been enough frigid breezes to sink the ice to a depth of 16 inches. The advent of electrical refrigeration has reduced the requirements for ice considerably where power is available, but natural ice seems to be in demand, even where mechanical refrigeration is in use. The farmers around the city, especially, are stocking up on the cooling cubes for the warm days that are sure to come.

**March 1941 – Diary** – *March 1 did the usual work. Made a cake. We all took a bath and went to town in the evening. Real mild day. March 2 rained and snowed all day. Washed a few clothes out on the “board”. March 7 took the kids to a high school party and went to show in the PM. March 11 Ralph went to a sale and to the dentist - \$15.00. March 12 Ralph went to town to get coal. March 13 Flandreau paper came out. Don was an honor student at the high school. March 14 Ralph took kids to a play in Egan (Junior Class) in the evening. I mowed in the evening. March 15 Ralph came home with a truck load of hay. Nice day. March 18 tried to start the car. Got it started and I killed the engine. We didn't get it started so didn't get to go to town. March 20 Ralph took seed corn to town. Got the first two lambs. March 21 got 4 new lambs. Don went to Sioux Falls with a bunch of boys to play basketball-stayed at the YMCA. Roads bad. March 22 Ralph gone all day delivering seed corn. March 27 Ralph went to Sioux Falls with cattle. Sold 7 steers (8,120) at \$9.75, 3 steers (2,810) at \$9.00, 1 cow 850 at \$7.50. Net \$1,083.92. Neighbor got stuck, walked to the house, made coffee for him and Ralph pulled him out. March 29 windy and sunny. Snow melted a lot. March 30 got a new lamb. One died. Ralph detailed the lambs.*

Detailing is essentially “docking” and is a seasonal process of removing lambs tails.

**March 3** – New Effington, winner of the Region 1 basketball tournament here Friday (**Webster**) will enter the state meet at Aberdeen this week with an enviable record of 24 and 2. New Effington defeated Groton 27-22 in the championship game. **Groton would not appear in another regional final in basketball until 1969 and 1970. In those years, it would be Clark that stopped them from attending the State “B” tournament. For those keeping track, that means Groton was able to win just three district championships from the beginning of the State B in 1939 through 1970. Not an enviable record for those 30 years.**

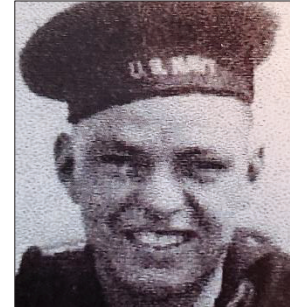
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**May 1** – A cast chosen from the senior class of Groton High School will present “One Wild Night”, a comedy, under direction of Miss Dorothy Polkinghorn on May 20.

Seventeen members of the class will have speaking parts in the production.

They are Lynn Bowles, Ruth Wilke, Robert Wood, Doris Paeth, Florence Nehls, Wallace Karnopp, Gudrun Martinson, Lyle Potter, Mary Clark, Cecil Routh, Vere Insley, Phyllis Benson, Geraldine Honey, Lulu Ann Rouse, Marvel Green, Jim Rasmussen, and Terence Abeln. **Wallace Karnopp, U.S. Navy, Seaman First Class, was lost at sea in 1944. Graduated from Groton High School in 1943. Vere Insley, PFC, U.S. Marines from Putney was killed in action July 21, 1944, on Guam.**



Wallace Karnopp

*August 1941 – Diary – August 1 Ralph went threshing. August 2 took a bath and went to town. August 3 washed dishes and separator. Gladys bought 6 pounds of lard from me for \$.75. August 4 had threshers for lunch and dinner. August 5 threshers got done at 9:30. August 6 threshers went over to Jensen’s before dinner. August 7 got five crates of peaches \$.88 each. Sugar 10 pounds for \$.63. Ralph threshed for Jensen’s. August 8 canned 30 quarts of peaches. Ralph threshed at Virginia’s. August 12 Ralph went threshing at Ramdell’s. August 13 Beth helped Alice cook for threshers. August 15 went over to Ester’s for dinner. She had threshers. Took Beth to town to take a music lesson. Men got done threshing. August 16 Ralph helped Rueben Kenison put up hay. Went to town, stayed in the car most of the time. August 17 Ralph helped Kenison put up hay. August 19 kids and I canned 21 ½ pints of pears. Dressed three chickens. August 21 Ralph helped Kenison put up hay in the PM. Got a load of hay. Painters finished the house – first coat. August 22 Don and I went to Flandreau. Sold 20 dozen eggs at \$.24 for each dozen. Went to Pipestone to get Don’s glasses \$7.00. August 23 Beth made cookies and I made a cake. Don hauled manure. Ralph went out to sell seed corn. August 25 Don hauled manure. Ralph sold seed corn. Got a new slip for \$1.60. August 28 Beth got material for a skirt “blouse”. She got a new sweater, two pair of socks, and paid for them herself. Painters back to put on a second coat of paint on the buildings. August 29 kids registered for high school. Paid the athletic fee \$3.00. Don and Ralph hauled manure. Painters here.*

**September GI 4** – The Groton school got under way Monday with a total enrollment of 300 pupils in the grades and high school, according to announcement of Supt. H.W. Iverson. Enrollment in the lower grades numbered an advance of 18 over the same time last year, while the high school showed 11 less, making a total gain of 7 for the system on the initial roster for the year. Superintendent Iverson said the gain in the lower grades was something of a pleasant surprise, since nearly all schools in this section of the state have shown a declining number of scholars for the past two or three years. He also commented that the high school enrollment is likely to equal and possibly exceed last year’s since several students are busy on farms and will be unable to enroll for a week or so. Thus it may be



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expected that Groton schools will show an increased number of students instead of less, as compared with last year.

**November GI 13** – Postmaster E.P. Erdmann announced this week that a bulletin has been received at this office outlining the mailing time for gifts intended for men serving in the armed forces of the United States at nearly all points. Complete information may be had on application at the post office. In case of mail destined for the Philippine Islands no information is at yet at hand, but experience with mail to that point in the past indicates that Christmas gifts intended for soldiers who may be there at Christmas time should be mailed immediately in order that they may have a chance to reach their destination for the holiday.

The Groton Tigers ended their season for 1941 on Tuesday afternoon by winning from Webster 6 to 0. A game which on a plot would seem to justify at least two additional touchdowns that just didn't come. It was a wet, slippery field, considerably more snow having fallen at Webster than here. So it was a wet ball and other conditions that kept the players from functioning at their best. After the game was over, so far as football was concerned, a number of Webster students, abetted by a few adults, went beserk (sic) and began a snow-ball battle with the Tigers as targets as the players were leaving the field in their bus. All of which seems like a serious breach of the rules of good sportsmanship. But perhaps the supply of sportsmanship was too limited to reach around to them. At any rate it was a regrettable incident, which visiting teams in Groton have never experienced. The Tigers, as they end their 1941 season, are a bit disappointed over finishing in what will probably be second place in the conference after the smoke of the battles clears away, but they are not weeping. They played the best game they were able to put over and that is that.

Grim tragedy stalked the home of Wm. Schaller Monday morning when the husband and father went out early as usual to do his milking and never returned. When Schaller did not return to the house in the accustomed time members of the family went to the barn to look for him to find only a farewell note deposited in a milk can by a desperate man. John Knoll, a brother of Mrs. Schaller, was called to join in the search and found Schaller's lifeless body behind a hay stack a short distance from the farm home. Near the body lay a .410 calibre shot gun. County officials were called and State's Attorney Elmer Thurow, Dr. J.A. Eckrich, coroner, Sheriff Melvin Nelson and State Patrolman Marion Thompson arrived shortly to make an official investigation. Schaller, who had lived here practically his entire lifetime was known as a quiet hard-working man. While he had struggled against financial difficulties in common with hundreds of others, no one could well believe that he had reached the end of his courage. He had not complained about ill health and not even those closest to him dreamed that he had found life hopeless. He was married to Miss Rachel Knoll in Aberdeen, February 15, 1919 and eleven children were born to the union. Nine of them, together with his wife survive. The children are Myron, Otho and Myla of Chicago Heights, Ill., Walter, Kenneth, Orville, Benny, Arlene, and Bonnie at home.

***December 1941 – Diary – December 1 Ralph helped Sorenson saw wood. December 2 Ralph tried to plow. December 3 went to D. Herbert's funeral, took rolls. December 4 Ralph plowed in the AM. Ralph went to creamery meeting. Beth sang with the glee club at the Masonic Temple. We went to show and dance at the Temple. Didn't freeze the night before. Ralph***

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*took kids to school and to the basketball game. December 6 Ralph and Don burned thistles. We all went to town. December 8 washed what few clothes I had on the board. Ralph helped me. Got done early. Ironed them in the PM. Ralph went to Mrs. Nixon's sale. Didn't stay long. US DECLARED WAR ON JAPAN (capitalized by the author) December 10 Ralph went to town to get the car tuned up. Took a quart of peaches for the poor. December 16 lovely day. Hardly needed a fire. Kids went to the basketball game. Fitted Beth's skirts. Made a batch of candy and ironed some. December 8 baked 110 cookies. Went to town. Beth stayed for debate. Don stayed for the basketball game. Ralph and I went to a dance. Had a good time. December 20 went to town. Didn't do much shopping. Sold 3 dozen eggs at \$.22 a dozen. First eggs I had sold in some time. December 22 Don is 18 years old today. December 24 Don and Ralph went to town to get groceries. Opened our gifts in the evening. December 25 misted all day and roads got slippery. We had dinner at 2:30. December 25 kids went to the dance at the Masonic Temple. Ralph and I went to the show. Beth went with George Rice. Don went with us. Snowed. We watched them dance. December 27 Ralph and Don went to town in the AM. Sold lard to Mrs. Miller for \$.50 and Mrs. Mailman \$.30. Sold chickens \$15.00. December 31 Ralph took one steer and 2 heifers to Sioux Falls. Got \$272.72 for them. Very cold.*

Laverne (Budd) Nigg was killed on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked the battleship on which he served, the USS Oklahoma. On December 21, Tony and Lillian, Budd's parents, received a telegram that their son was missing. On February 18, 1942, they received a telegram from the U.S. War Department that read: "After exhaustive search it has been found impossible to locate your son, Laverne Alious Nigg Seaman Second Class U.S. Navy and he has therefore being (sic) officially declared to have lost his life in the service of his country as of December seventh nineteen forty one. The department expresses to you its sincerest sympathy". The family held a memorial service for him in Browns Valley in May 1942. Nigg was born on a farm in Roberts County and spent his youth around Peever. Laverne Budd Nigg finally came home Thursday, June 2, 2022. Nearly 81 years after he was killed during the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. The original remains from the USS Oklahoma were unidentifiable, and all were buried in commingled graves at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. Nigg's remains were identified through DNA forensics and on April 2021, Lavern Alious Nigg was accounted for by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. DNA provided by family members matched Budd's. "It's kind of a cool story", said Dan Nigg, whose grandfather, Merville, was one of Budd's 11 siblings. "It's amazing that 81 years later we could identify him and bring him home". Also on the ship, were three first cousins – Robert, Herbert, and Edward Nigg. They survived the attack but one of the cousins remembered seeing Budd manning a gun on the Oklahoma's deck, firing at Japanese planes. The cousin looked away for a moment and when he looked back, he said Budd was lying dead on the deck. He'd apparently been hit by gunfire from a plane. He was 23 years old.



Laverne Nigg

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**December GI 11 – War Touches Neighborhood as Safety of Grotonites is Yet Unknown** – This community was passing a quiet afternoon last Sunday with residents taking their ease after eating dinner, listening to musical concerts or other radio programs when the sickening report of the Japanese attack on Hawaii interrupted the scheduled broadcasts. In common with many another community in the land there were families with great stakes in the conflict, two families here having two sons each in the war zone and another with one son on board a U.S. destroyer. The Milo Cooks anguished over the safety of their sons, Donald and Robert, the former stationed at Scofield Barrack near Honolulu and Robert on board an army transport, believed to have been on the high seas somewhere between Hawaii and the Philippines. The Cookes had a letter from Robert, posted at Honolulu, where the transport landed on November 27. It was expected to continue the journey in six or seven days, he wrote. Equal anguish struck the Fred Dombrowe home since their two sons are also in the war zone, Donald on board the U.S. Mine Sweeper, Hovey, and Robert on board the same transport as Robert Cook. The same sickening emotion entered the K.P. Haug home since their son, Roy is stationed at Honolulu as a member of the crew of the U.S. destroyer, Whitney. Ed. Bulian, former Groton boy, was on the army transport. Arthur and Kenneth Routh, sons of Mrs. Bessie Routh, last reported as members of the crew of the battleship Dewey, are believed by their mother to be in the Pacific waters somewhere, although when last heard from a month or so ago, they were in San Francisco but wrote they expected to head east again, shortly. Another Groton boy in the war zone is Marvin Holcomb, son of Mr. and Mrs. Phil Holcomb. He was on the transport with the Ft. Ord detachment. **Donald Cook was born on February 8, 1919, and died May 5, 1980. He is buried in Palm Beach, Florida. He was discharged from the U.S. Army on July 11, 1945. Robert Cook was born on September 30, 1921, and died July 1, 1979, and is buried in Indianapolis, Indiana. Robert Cook entered the U.S. Army September 24, 1939, and was discharged September 4, 1945. Fred Dombrowe was born February 20, 1923, and died on October 3, 2001. He is buried in Ocala, Florida. He entered the U.S. Army on April 24, 1940, and was discharged on July 3, 1945. Arthur Routh was born on February 27, 1921, and died on October 12, 1996. He is buried in Boulder City, Nevada. He entered the U.S. Navy on May 7, 1940, and was discharged January 18, 1945. On March 6, 1944, Routh was a member of the Dragonet SS-293. Kenneth E. Routh was born on June 19, 1918, and died on January 5, 1995. He is buried in Indianapolis, Indiana. He entered the U.S. Army on February 19, 1942, and was discharged September 20, 1945. Marvin Holcomb was born on August 5, 1918, and died February 16, 1989, and is buried in Ferney, S.D. He left the U.S. Army on July 8, 1945, as a Tec 5/Sergeant. He entered the army on January 25, 1940.**

## EARTHTALK ™

### Large-Scale Solar: Are We Doing Enough? Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss

Dear EarthTalk: What are we doing to promote and advance the kind of large-scale development of solar and other renewables needed to transition away from fossil fuels?

– Jim M., Fairfield, CT

We may not have any time to waste in our effort to wean ourselves off fossil fuels. Getting the United States to a place where our electricity needs can be met by renewables is going to take concerted effort on the part of a multitude of public and private entities...

According to the trade group, Solar Energy Industries Association, utility scale solar projects are few and far between in the U.S. right now, but represents the fastest growing sector of the domestic energy market. SEIA reports that there are more than 37,000 megawatts (MW) of utility-scale solar projects currently up and running across the country, and another 112,000 MW are under development.

According to the energy research firm Woods Mackenzie, converting the entire U.S. power grid to 100 percent renewable energy over the next 10 years—just in time to possibly avert cataclysmic climate change—is technologically and logistically possible, but would cost something like \$4.5 trillion. While that is a lot of money, how much money is too much when it comes to saving humanity and the rest of the living planet's inhabitants?

And without some kind of vision or roadmap, there's no way we can make the transition quickly enough to save ourselves. That's why six large solar developers, land conservation and environmental groups, tribal entities, agricultural interests, community groups and investors came together in October 2023 to commit to furthering the build-out of large-scale solar infrastructure across the U.S. While it may seem like bad business for competitors to work together, the challenge is great enough that they all can benefit, especially if we can transition quickly. A rising tide lifts all boats.

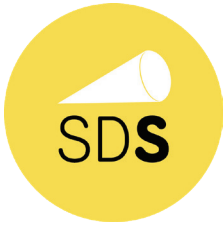
This recent agreement reinforces efforts already underway at the local and regional levels across the country. The federal government's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has been working with large-scale farms from coast-to-coast in an effort to pair solar installations with agriculture—so called agri-voltaics—creating energy and providing space for crops, grazing and native habitats under and between photovoltaic panels. NREL is partnering with researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to investigate how to optimize both crop production and the generation of renewable energy to maximize farm profitability while helping transition the nation away from fossil fuels.

Meanwhile, municipal, county and state governments across the U.S. are showing increased interest in implementing large-scale solar projects in their own locales. To this end, the American Planning Association recently published its free guidebook, *Solar@Scale*, designed to help local government practitioners—including planners, economic development professionals, local government managers and elected and appointed officials—make decisions that improve large-scale solar development outcomes that result in the creation of local jobs and power while boosting energy security and reducing communities' carbon footprints..

.. EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: [question@earthtalk.org](mailto:question@earthtalk.org).



**Environmentalists worry it could be too late to start thinking about how we can ramp up large-scale solar power development in time to avert a climate cataclysm.** Credit: Coldwell Solar.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### COMMENTARY

## South Dakota taxpayer dollars spent to make governor look good

Dana Hess

Gov. Kristi Noem is a little young to be suffering from long-term memory loss, but she seems to be forgetting this statement she made to the Legislature during her 2022 budget address:

"I recognize that taxpayer dollars are not our own – they belong to the people of South Dakota. We all must remember throughout our budget discussions, that this money belongs to the hard-working people of South Dakota."

That money may belong to us, but Noem gets to use it as she sees fit. And often she puts it to a use designed to make her look good among her conservative colleagues.

A recent example is the \$850,000 price tag on the month-long deployment to the Texas-Mexico border of 50 South Dakota National Guard troops. The deployment was paid for through funding from the state's emergency and disaster fund.

This isn't the first time South Dakota Guard soldiers have been to the border to help with security. One deployment was at the request of the federal government and paid for by the feds. Noem raised eyebrows with the other deployment, relying on a \$1 million donation from Tennessee billionaire Willis Johnson to pay for the excursion. The total cost of that deployment, according to records obtained by the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, came in at \$1.45 million.

In other words, that's \$1.3 million Noem has spent on border security that has nothing to do with the South Dakota border. Noem was polishing her credentials as a conservative by sending South Dakota Guard soldiers to the border, and she funded it with taxpayer dollars.

In a state where \$1 million still goes a long way, South Dakotans have to hope that the state's emergency and disaster fund doesn't come up short in the event of a real emergency like a tornado or a flood or a wildfire.

If Noem wants to declare an emergency, she'd be better off sticking closer to home and investing the state's money by declaring an emergency to find a solution to the child care crisis or the shortage of affordable housing.

Noem is also getting plenty of mileage out of the Freedom Works Here marketing effort designed to attract more workers to South Dakota. While the marketing program has a \$6.5 million price tag, according to a recent South Dakota News Watch story, Noem is asking businesses and communities to throw in \$10,000 to continue to help fund the program. Some have contributed, though at the time of the story they had yet to see any of the many contacts Noem touts when talking about the program's success.

Noem figures prominently in the commercials released for Freedom Works Here. At least one political pundit noted that the Freedom Works Here program came along at an especially propitious time for the governor, keeping her profile high during the runup to the 2024 elections.

Most recently, Noem wasn't spending taxpayer dollars but rather shunning them. According to a story in The Dakota Scout, South Dakota was the only state in the nation to bypass its share of the federal Local Cybersecurity Grant program. Citing too much red tape and excessive federal spending, the Noem administration decided to pass on collecting \$7 million over two years. The governor doesn't seem to catch on to the fact that she's turning down funding powered by the taxes that South Dakotans pay into their federal government. A move like that isn't so much about red tape or the federal government spending

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too much as it's about making Noem look conservative.

It's easy to understand why Noem wants to look good to the conservative wing of the Republican Party. She's likely on former President Donald Trump's short list of vice presidential candidates. To stay there, she has to burnish her conservative credentials every chance she gets. It would just be nice if she could find a way to remind the world that she's a conservative without relying on taxpayer funding.

*Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.*

**GDILIVE.COM**

Monday, Oct. 23, 2023

**GT**  
Groton Area  
Tigers

at Groton Area  
6:00 JV: Fans of Jaedyn Penning



Faulkton  
Trojans

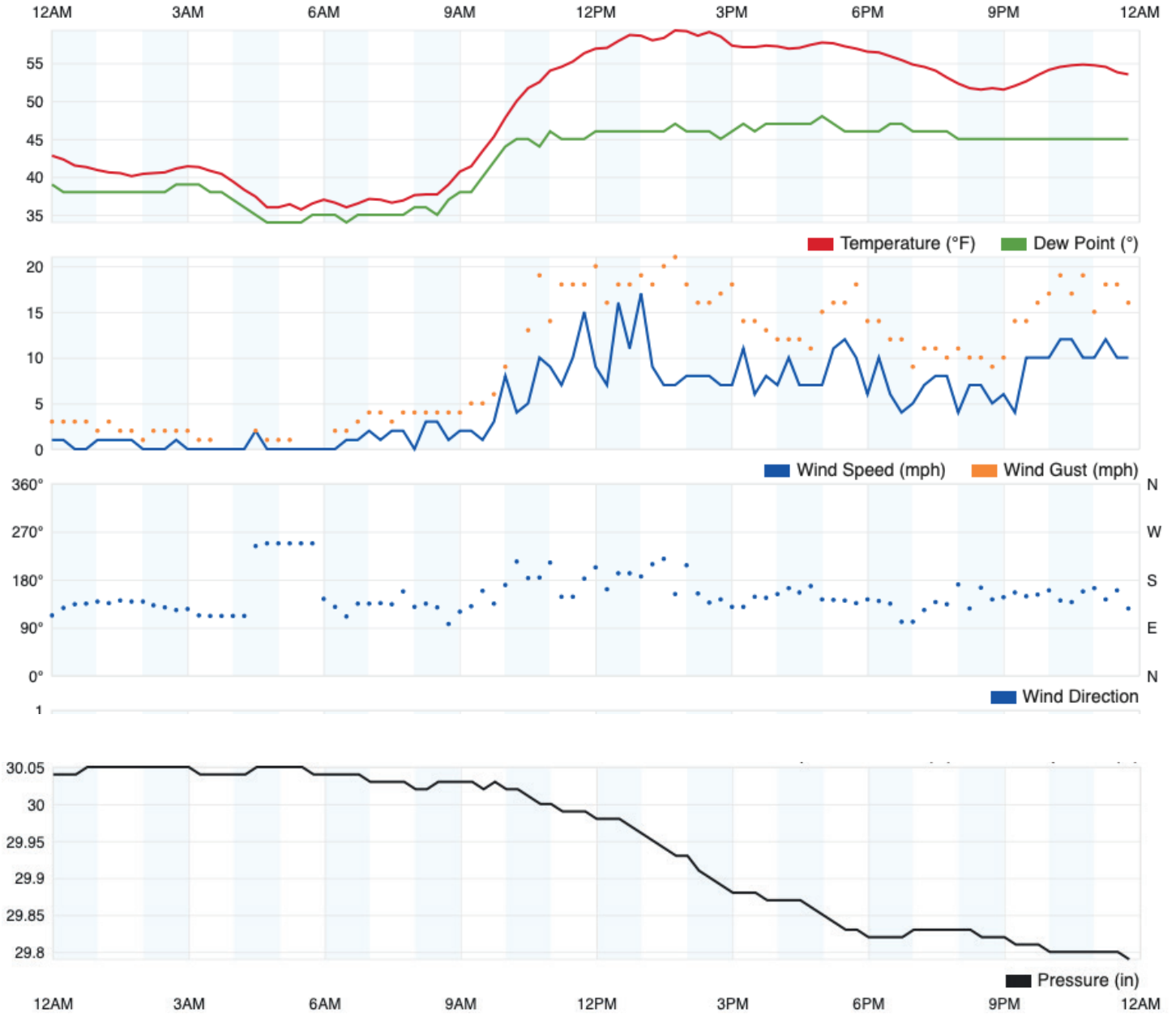


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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Mon Oct 23	Tue Oct 24	Wed Oct 25	Thu Oct 26	Fri Oct 27	Sat Oct 28	Sun Oct 29
65° F 43° F	55° F 38° F	57° F 38° F	46° F 24° F	35° F 20° F	33° F 16° F	27° F 16° F
S 17 MPH	NNE 15 MPH	NE 9 MPH	NNE 18 MPH 30%	NW 17 MPH 50%	NE 11 MPH 20%	NNW 13 MPH 30%



## Wet Weather Ahead Thursday - Friday

Low (15-30%) for Rain Tonight Over Northern South Dakota

	Probability of Precipitation Forecast												Maximum
	10/25 Wed				10/26 Thu				10/27 Fri				
	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	5	5	5	10	15	35	45	55	60	55	15	5	59
Britton	5	10	10	15	20	40	40	55	65	60	20	5	67
Brookings	15	25	30	25	15	20	35	55	40	25	20	15	55
Chamberlain	5	15	10	5	5	20	30	35	30	35	15	10	35
Clark	5	5	10	15	20	25	40	55	55	45	15	5	57
Eagle Butte	5	15	15	15	25	40	60	60	50	30	10	10	60
Ellendale	5	10	10	20	20	45	50	65	65	60	20	5	66
Eureka	5	15	15	15	30	50	60	65	65	50	15	5	67
Gettysburg	5	10	10	15	15	35	55	60	50	45	10	5	59
Huron	10	15	15	15	5	20	45	55	40	35	15	10	54
Kennebec	5	10	5	5	10	15	35	25	35	35	10	5	37
McIntosh	20	25	20	30	45	65	60	75	60	35	10	5	75
Milbank	10	5	5	15	25	25	40	55	60	40	20	5	60
Miller	5	10	10	15	10	25	50	55	50	50	15	5	56
Mobridge	5	10	15	15	25	45	60	65	55	40	10	5	64
Murdo	10	10	5	0	10	20	35	20	40	30	10	5	42
Pierre	5	5	10	5	10	20	50	30	45	35	10	5	50
Redfield	0	5	10	10	10	25	45	55	50	50	15	5	53
Sisseton	5	10	10	15	25	35	40	55	70	50	20	5	68
Watertown	10	5	10	15	25	25	40	55	60	40	20	5	58
Webster	5	10	10	15	20	35	40	55	65	50	20	5	64
Wheaton	5	5	5	10	25	30	40	50	65	45	25	5	66

### Thursday - Friday Storm

25% or less chance of Rain Wednesday.  
**Rain & Snow (35-75%)** late Wednesday night through Friday morning.

Confidence remains low regarding:

- Track of low
- Precipitation type and timing
- Specific rain/snow amounts



Stay Tuned for updates on the forecast for Wednesday through Thursday Night!



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

National Weather Service  
 Aberdeen, SD

A storm system crossing the region Thursday into Friday morning will bring widespread rain and possible accumulating snowfall. At this time, North Dakota may bear the brunt of this system.



# Groton Daily Independent

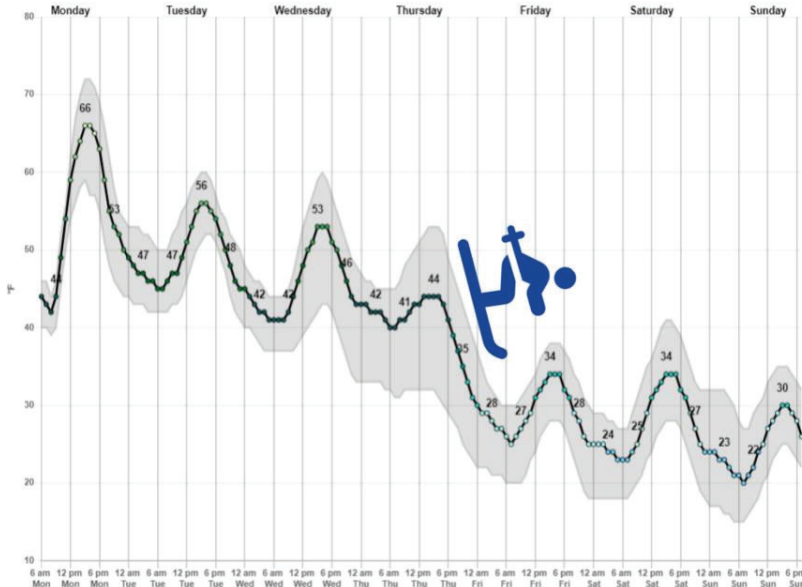
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Much Cooler Air Ahead!

May 12, 2022  
12:24 PM

Regional Temperature Forecast



## High Temperature Forecast



Monday...	60s
Tuesday...	50s
Wednesday...	50s
Thursday...	40s
Friday...	30s
Saturday...	30s
Sunday...	30s



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Much cooler air will surge into the region during the week, with temperatures topping out in the 30s Friday through Sunday!

You may see many potential solutions for upcoming weather, with some sources promoting stronger or weaker winter storms.

**Make sure to verify your source of weather information!**

mobile.weather.gov

**TRUSTED WEATHER SOURCE**

**KNOW THE ORIGIN OF YOUR WEATHER INFORMATION**

- VERIFY YOUR SOURCE**  
Are they distinguished and trustworthy?
- AVOID CLICKBAIT**  
Think before you share/retweet
- RUMOR CONTROL**  
Be wary of exaggerated forecasts
- OUTDATED GRAPHICS**  
Double check the time and date
- SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**  
Be mindful of impending weather

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 60 °F at 1:52 PM

Low Temp: 36 °F at 5:30 AM

Wind: 21 mph at 1:37 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 37 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 80 in 1963

Record Low: 5 in 1895

Average High: 55

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.71

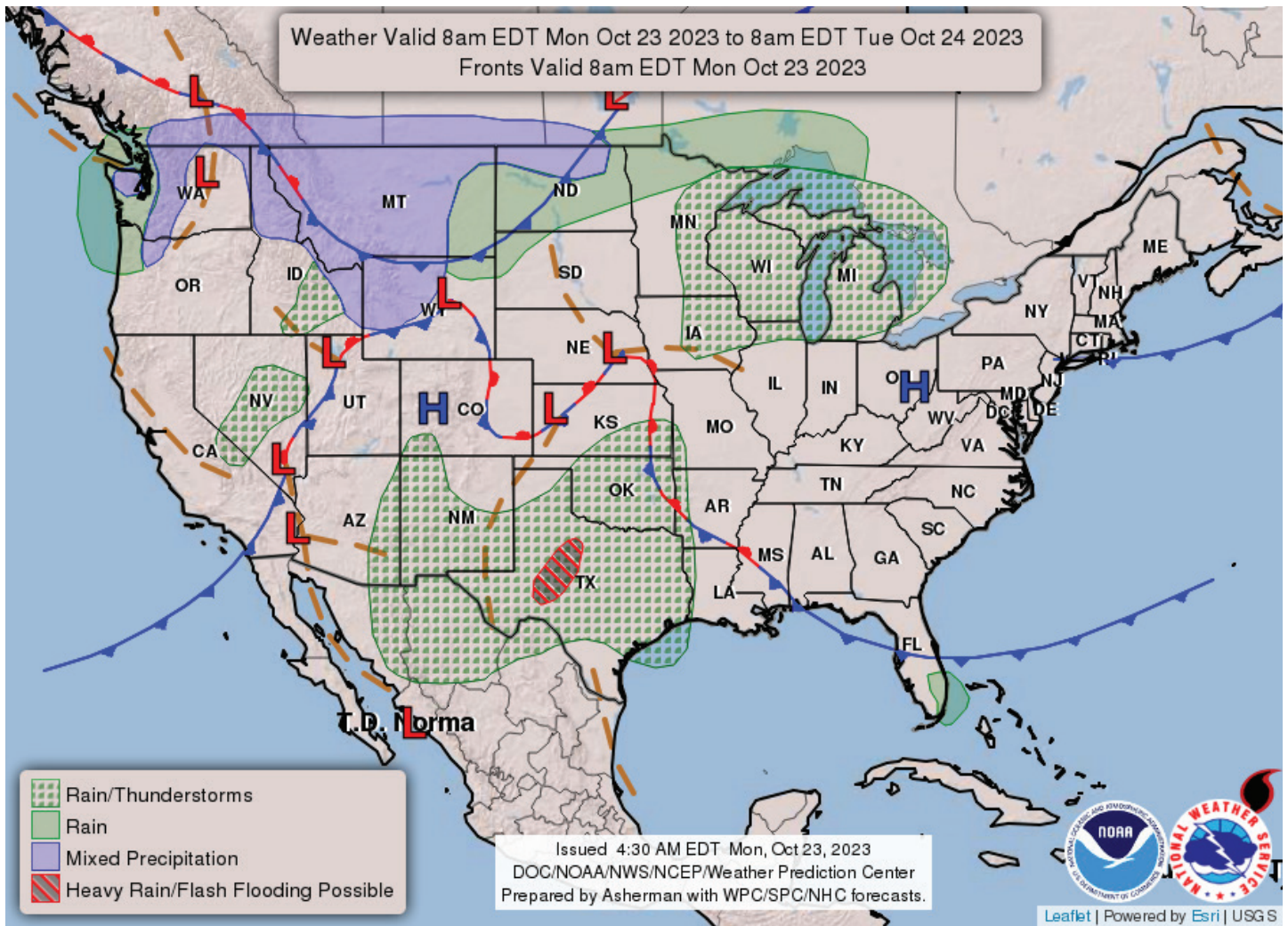
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.89

Average Precip to date: 20.04

Precip Year to Date: 22.66

Sunset Tonight: 6:35:31 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:59:16 AM



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## Today in Weather History

October 23, 1995: A major fall storm hit Central and Northeast South Dakota and dropped from four inches to one foot of wet snow. The heavy wet snow combined with high winds gusting up to 50 mph snapped several thousand power poles and downed hundreds of miles of line in the counties of Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Roberts and Grant. In Day and Lyman Counties, a few poles were downed with some short lived power outages. Marshall County had no reports of damage or power outages. Several thousand people were left without power for several hours up to several days. Power was not restored to some people until the fourth of November. Portions of Interstate 90 and Interstate 29 were closed from the evening of the 23rd until the morning of the 24th leaving hundreds of motorists stranded. There were also numerous school delays and closings. Many trees and some crops were also damaged as a result of the weight of the snow and high winds. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches near Reliance, at Doland, and near Victor, 5 inches southeast of Stephan and at Sisseton, 6 inches south of Ree Heights and at Eden, eight inches at Waubay and Grenville, 9 inches at Clear Lake, 10 inches at Watertown, and 12 inches at Summit and Milbank. This storm was the third damaging storm to the rural electric cooperatives this year and has been called the worst natural disaster in the history of the rural electrics. The total damage estimated for the rural state electrics was \$9.5 million.

1091: The earliest known tornado in Britain, possibly the most severe on record, hit central London. The church at St. Mary le Bow was severely damaged. Four rafters, each 26 feet long were driven into the ground with such force that only four feet protruded above the surface. Other churches in the area were also demolished along with over 600 houses.

1878: One of the most severe hurricanes to affect eastern Virginia in the latter half of the 19th century struck on October 23, 1878. This storm moved rapidly northward from the Bahamas on October 22nd and hit the North Carolina coast late that same day moving at a forward speed of 40 to 50 mph. The storm continued northward passing through east central Virginia, Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania. The barometric pressure fell to 28.78". The five minute sustained wind reached 84 mph at Cape Henry. During the heaviest part of the gale, the wind at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina registered 100 mph. The instrument itself has finally blown away and therefore no further record was made.

1920: Famed research meteorologist Theodore Fujita, was born on this date in Kitakyushu City, Japan. Fujita, known as "Mr. Tornado" after developing the international standard for measuring tornado severity, also discovered microbursts.

1947: Fish fell from the sky in Marksville, LA. Thousands of fish fell from the sky in an area 1,000 feet long by 80 feet wide possibly due to a waterspout.

2015: On this day, Hurricane Patricia became the most powerful tropical cyclone ever measured in the Western Hemisphere as its maximum sustained winds reached an unprecedented 200 mph (320 kph) and its central pressure fell to 879 millibars (25.96 inches of mercury). Hurricane Patricia became the strongest Pacific hurricane on record shortly after midnight CDT early on Oct. 23. Air Force Hurricane Hunters had flown through the eye of Patricia and reported a sea-level pressure of 894 millibars as measured by a dropsonde inside the eye itself. Wind measurements suggested that the pressure measurement was not in the exact center of the eye and was probably not the absolute lowest pressure, prompting NHC to estimate the minimum central pressure at 892 millibars in its special 12:30 a.m. CDT advisory. Tropical cyclone strength comparisons are typically based on minimum central pressure. At 892 millibars, Patricia shattered the Eastern Pacific basin's previous record of 902 millibars set by Hurricane Linda in 1997. While a number of typhoons in the western North Pacific have been stronger, Patricia is now by far the strongest hurricane on record in any basin where the term "hurricane" applies to tropical cyclones – namely, the central and eastern North Pacific basins and the North Atlantic basin, which includes the North Atlantic Ocean itself plus the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### WHEN WE NEED REST

It only lasted fifteen seconds.

But the 1906 earthquake that leveled most of San Francisco caused 375 deaths and left over 300,000 people homeless. Destruction and devastation were everywhere.

Tragedies occur every day - some much more significant and severe than others. But the significance of any tragedy is always personal - What impact does this particular tragedy have on me, my family, or my friends.

God is so good to us and does so much for us without our even asking or noticing, that we rarely prepare for the unwelcomed, unwanted, or unanticipated events in our lives. His gifts usually come unannounced or when we least expect them. For example - when we receive an encouraging word or are blessed with a gracious smile or compliment, it "makes our day!"

But what happens when life falls apart? What impact do "bad things" or hardships have on us or the way we feel or think when things "blow-up? What do we do or where can we turn?

Fortunately, for the Christian, there is always the Lord. And, we can turn to Him.

Jesus said, "Come unto me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest!" He offers His love when we feel abandoned, He provides His strength when we are weak, He offers His peace when we are troubled, and His forgiveness when we sin.

Prayer: How marvelous are Your gifts, Father. We are blest to know that we can come to You when any need arises and know, without any doubt that You are waiting. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28



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  
11/05/2023 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Fall Dinner, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
11/11/2023 Groton American Legion Annual Turkey Party 6:30 pm.  
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:  
10.20.23

7 29 36 49 61 22

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$114,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 27  
DRAW: Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.21.23

11 23 30 36 51 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$2,940,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 42 Mins 2  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.22.23

24 30 41 46 47 6

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 57 Mins 2  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.21.23

9 15 22 23 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$31,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 57  
DRAW: Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.21.23

7 18 27 33 61 5

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

NEXT 17 Hrs 26 Mins 1  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.21.23

6 15 24 67 68 11

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$85,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 26 Mins 1  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **Israel strikes across Gaza after allowing another small aid convoy into the besieged enclave**

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli warplanes struck targets across Gaza early Monday, including in areas where Palestinian civilians have been told to seek refuge, after another small aid shipment was allowed into the besieged Hamas-ruled territory.

Israel is widely expected to launch a ground offensive in Gaza following Hamas' brutal Oct. 7 rampage into southern Israeli communities. Tanks and troops have been massed at the Gaza border, and Israel says it has stepped up airstrikes in order to reduce the risk to troops in the next stages.

Fears of a widening war have grown as Israeli warplanes have struck targets in the occupied West Bank, Syria and Lebanon in recent days. It has frequently traded fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, which is armed with tens of thousands of rockets.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told troops in northern Israel on Sunday that if Hezbollah launches a war, "it will make the mistake of its life. We will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine, and the consequences for it and the Lebanese state will be devastating."

Hezbollah's political movement is part of Lebanon's fractious government, but its fighters operate outside the state's control. Israel heavily bombed Beirut's airport and civilian infrastructure during a 2006 war with Hezbollah. Israel is meanwhile evacuating some communities on its own side of the border.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Israeli forces had wiped out eight militant cells in Lebanon over the past 24 hours and more than 20 since the start of the war, without elaborating.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack. At least 222 people were captured and dragged back to Gaza, including foreigners. Two Americans were released Friday, hours before the first shipment of humanitarian aid.

More than 4,600 people have been killed in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. That includes the disputed toll from a hospital explosion.

Israel has carried out limited ground forays into Gaza, and on Sunday, Hamas said it had destroyed an Israeli tank and two armored bulldozers inside the territory it has ruled since 2007. The Israeli military said a soldier was killed and three others were wounded by an anti-tank missile during a raid inside Gaza.

The military said the raid was part of efforts to rescue hostages abducted in the Oct. 7 attack. Hamas hopes to trade the captives for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

On Saturday, 20 trucks entered Gaza in the first aid shipment into the territory since Israel imposed a complete siege at the start of the war. Israel allowed a second convoy of 15 trucks into Gaza on Sunday. Both entered from Egypt through the Rafah crossing, the only way into Gaza not controlled by Israel.

COGAT, the Israeli defense body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs, said the aid was allowed in at the request of the United States, and included water, food and medical supplies. It said Israel inspected everything before it entered Gaza.

In a Sunday phone call, Netanyahu and U.S. President Joe Biden "affirmed that there will now be continued flow of this critical assistance into Gaza," the White House said in a statement.

Relief workers said far more aid was needed to address the spiraling humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where half the territory's 2.3 million people have fled their homes. The U.N. humanitarian agency said the 20 trucks that entered Saturday amounted to 4% of an average day's imports before the war and "a fraction of what is needed after 13 days of complete siege."

The Israeli military said the humanitarian situation was "under control," even as the U.N. called for 100 trucks a day to enter.

Israel has not allowed any fuel to enter Gaza, where there has been a full power blackout for more than a week and where hospitals say they are scrounging for generator fuel in order to keep operating life-



saving medical equipment and incubators for premature babies. The World Health Organization said seven hospitals in northern Gaza have been forced to shut down due to damage from strikes, lack of power and supplies, or Israeli evacuation orders.

The lack of fuel has also crippled water and sanitation systems. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians sheltering in U.N.-run schools and tent camps are running low on food and are drinking dirty water.

Israel repeated its calls for people to leave northern Gaza, including by dropping leaflets from the air. It estimated 700,000 have already fled. But hundreds of thousands remain. That would raise the risk of mass civilian casualties in any ground offensive.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Israel "can't go back to the status quo" in which Hamas controls Gaza and is able to threaten it, but that Israel has "absolutely no intent" to govern Gaza itself.

"Something needs to be found that ensures that Hamas can't do this again, but that also doesn't revert to Israeli governance of Gaza," he told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday. "It's something that needs to be worked even as Israel is dealing with the current threat."

Israel captured Gaza, along with the West Bank and east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state. Israel withdrew troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, but Israel and Egypt have imposed a blockade of varying degrees since Hamas seized power from rival Palestinian forces in 2007.

Heavy Israeli airstrikes and shelling continued overnight across Gaza, the Hamas-run Interior Ministry said. It said airstrikes hit residential apartments in the town of Khan Younis and the Nuseirat refugee camp, both of which are south of the evacuation line.

The Palestinian Red Crescent medical service reported heavy overnight airstrikes near al-Quds hospital in Gaza City. Aside from patients, the hospital houses more than 12,000 displaced people, it said.

The Israeli military says it does not target civilians. It says Palestinian militants have fired over 7,000 rockets at Israel since the start of the war.

The military said Monday that it had struck 320 militant targets throughout Gaza over the last 24 hours. It said it had destroyed anti-tank positions and other targets that could endanger forces preparing for "a maneuver in the Gaza Strip," an apparent reference to a ground operation.

Tensions are also high in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where over 90 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the war, mainly during violent protests and gunbattles during military arrest raids. Two Palestinians were shot dead during a raid into the Jalazone refugee camp early Monday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

## **Dwindling fuel supplies for Gaza's hospital generators put premature babies in incubators at risk**

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — A premature baby squirms inside a glass incubator in the neonatal ward of al-Aqsa Hospital in the central Gaza Strip. He cries out as intravenous lines are connected to his tiny body. A ventilator helps him breathe as a catheter delivers medication and monitors flash his fragile vital signs.

His life hinges on the constant flow of electricity, which is in danger of running out imminently unless the hospital can get more fuel for its generators. Once the generators stop, hospital director Iyad Abu Zahar fears that the babies in the ward, unable to breathe on their own, will perish.

"The responsibility on us is huge," he said.

Doctors treating premature babies across Gaza are grappling with similar fears. At least 130 premature babies are at "grave risk" across six neonatal units, aid workers said. The dangerous fuel shortages are caused by the Israeli blockade of Gaza, which started — along with airstrikes — after Hamas militants attacked Israeli towns on Oct. 7.

At least 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza are unable to access essential health services, and some 5,500 are due to give birth in the coming month, according to the World Health Organization.

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At least seven of the almost 30 hospitals have been forced to shut down due to damage from relentless Israeli strikes and lack of power, water and other supplies. Doctors in the remaining hospitals said they are on the brink. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said Sunday it has enough fuel to last three days to serve critical needs.

"The world cannot simply look on as these babies are killed by the siege on Gaza ... A failure to act is to sentence these babies to death," said Melanie Ward, chief executive of the Medical Aid for Palestinians aid group.

None of the 20 aid trucks that crossed into Gaza on Saturday, the first since the siege was imposed, contained fuel, amid Israeli fears it will end up in Hamas' hands. Limited fuel supplies inside Gaza were being sent to hospital generators.

Seven tankers took fuel from a U.N. depot on the Gaza side of the border, but it was unclear if any of that was destined for the hospitals.

But will eventually run out if more is not permitted to enter.

Tarik Jašarević, a WHO spokesman, said 150,000 liters (40,000 gallons) of fuel are required to offer basic services in Gaza's five main hospitals.

Abu Zahar worries about how long his facility can hold out.

"If the generator stops, which we are expecting in the coming few hours due to the heavy demands of different departments in the hospital, the incubators in the intensive care unit will be in a very critical situation," he said.

Guillemette Thomas, medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in the Palestinian territories, said some of the babies could die within hours, and others in a couple of days, if they don't receive the special care and medication they urgently need.

"It's sure that these babies are in danger," she told The Associated Press. "It's a real emergency to take care of these babies, as it is an emergency to take care of the population of Gaza who are suffering from these bombings since the past two weeks."

The hospital must care for patients in northern and central Gaza since several hospitals shut down, he said, forcing it to more than double its patient capacity. That also puts a strain on the limited electricity.

Nesma al-Haj brought her newborn daughter to the hospital from Nuseirat, where she was recently displaced from northern Gaza, after she suffered from oxygen deprivation and extreme pain, she said.

The baby girl was born three days ago but soon developed complications. "The hospital is lacking in supplies," she said, speaking from al-Aqsa. "We are afraid that if the situation gets worse, there won't be any medicine left to treat our kids."

The problems are exacerbated by the dirty water many have been forced to use since Israel cut off the water supply. Abu Zahar says mothers are mixing baby formula with the contaminated water to feed their infants. It has contributed to the rise in critical cases in the ward.

In the al-Awda Hospital, a private facility in northern Jabalia, up to 50 babies are born almost every day, said hospital director Ahmed Muhanna. The hospital received an evacuation order from the Israeli military, but continued to work.

"The situation is tragic in every sense of the word," he said. "We have recorded a large deficit in emergency medicines and anesthetic," as well as other medical supplies.

To ration dwindling supplies, Muhanna said all scheduled operations were stopped and the hospital devoted all its resources to emergencies and childbirths. Complex neo-natal cases are sent to al-Aqsa.

Al-Awda has enough fuel to last four days at most, Muhanna said. "We have appealed to many international institutions, the World Health Organization, to supply hospitals with fuel, but to no avail so far," he said.

Thomas said women have already given birth in U.N.-run schools where tens of thousands of displaced people have sought shelter.

"These women are in danger, and the babies are in danger right now," she said. "That's a really critical situation."

## US renews warning it will defend treaty ally Philippines after Chinese ships rammed Manila vessels

By JIM GOMEZ and SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The United States renewed a warning Monday that it would defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack under a 1951 treaty, after Chinese ships blocked and collided with two Filipino vessels off a contested shoal in the South China Sea.

Philippine diplomats summoned a Chinese Embassy official in Manila on Monday for a strongly worded protest following Sunday's collisions off Second Thomas Shoal. No injuries were reported but the encounters damaged a Philippine coast guard ship and a wooden-hulled supply boat operated by navy personnel, officials said.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. called an emergency meeting with the defense secretary and other top military and security officials to discuss the latest hostilities in the disputed waters. The Philippines and other neighbors of China have resisted Beijing's sweeping territorial claims over virtually the entire South China Sea, and some, like Manila, have sought U.S. military support as incidents multiply.

After the meeting, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro blasted China in a news conference for resorting to "brute force" that he said endangered Filipino crew members and for twisting the facts to conceal its aggression.

"The Philippine government views the latest aggression by China as a blatant violation of international law," Teodoro said. "China has no legal right or authority to conduct law enforcement operations in our territorial waters and in our exclusive economic zone."

Marcos ordered an investigation of the high-sea collisions, Teodoro said, but he refused to disclose what steps the Philippine government would take.

"We are taking these incidents seriously at the highest levels of government," he said, adding that the government called for a news conference to provide accurate facts. "The Chinese government is deliberately obfuscating the truth," the defense chief said.

The Philippines also plans to raise its alarm over the Chinese ships' dangerous maneuvers in talks between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on a proposed nonaggression pact — a "code of conduct" — to prevent a major armed conflict in the South China Sea. Beijing is hosting the three-day negotiations starting Monday, two Philippine officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to publicly discuss details of the talks.

Teodoro said it was "very ironic" that China was hosting the talks that aim to prevent major conflicts at sea when they just committed "a blatant disregard of international law."

The territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have long been regarded as a flashpoint in a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry.

About five Chinese coast guard ships, eight accompanying vessels and two navy ships formed a blockade on Sunday to prevent two Philippine coast guard ships and two boats from delivering food and other supplies to Filipino forces stationed at Second Thomas Shoal aboard a marooned navy ship, Philippine coast guard Commodore Jay Tarriela said.

During the standoff, one of the Philippine coast guard ships and a supply boat were separately hit by a Chinese coast guard ship and a vessel. Only one of the two Filipino boats managed to deliver supplies to Philippine forces, Tarriela said.

The senior Chinese diplomat who was summoned by Philippine foreign officials repeated China's assertion that the Philippine vessels intruded into Chinese territory.

"China once again urges the Philippines to take seriously China's grave concerns, honor its promise, stop making provocations at sea, stop making dangerous moves, stop groundlessly attacking and slandering China, and to tow away the illegally 'grounded' warship as soon as possible," Zhou Zhiyong was quoted as saying by the Chinese Embassy in Manila.

He was referring to the Sierra Madre, which serves as Manila's territorial outpost at the shoal after being deliberately ran aground in 1999.

The Chinese coast guard on Sunday blamed the Philippine vessels for causing the collisions and said the Filipinos were carrying construction materials to strengthen their outpost at the shoal.

The U.S. and other allies expressed alarm over the Chinese action. Washington renewed a warning that it's obligated to defend the Philippines under a 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack, including "those of its coast guard — anywhere in the South China Sea."

"The United States stands with our Philippine allies in the face of the People's Republic of China coast guard and maritime militia's dangerous and unlawful actions obstructing an October 22 Philippine resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal," the U.S. State Department said in a statement issued by its embassy in Manila.

It blamed the dangerous maneuvers by China's ships for the collisions and added that they "violated international law by intentionally interfering with the Philippine vessels' exercise of high seas freedom of navigation."

The State Department also cited a 2016 arbitration ruling that invalidated China's expansive claims to the South China Sea on historical grounds, including in Second Thomas Shoal.

Washington lays no claims to the disputed sea but has deployed forces to patrol the waters to promote freedom of navigation and overflight — moves that have angered Beijing, which has warned the U.S. to stop meddling in what it says is a purely Asian dispute.

## **Pakistani court indicts former Prime Minister Imran Khan on charges of revealing official secrets**

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A Pakistani court on Monday indicted Imran Khan on charges of revealing official secrets after his 2022 ouster from office in another dramatic move against the former prime minister who could now face a possible death sentence and will likely be unable to run in parliamentary elections in January.

Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi, a close aide and the deputy leader of Khan's opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, will go on trial this week at a high-security prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

The charge of revealing state secrets carries a sentence ranging from life in prison to the death penalty, according to Umair Niazi, one of Khan's defense lawyers. Niazi, however, said he was confident Khan and Qureshi would be acquitted as they had done "nothing wrong."

The trial starts on Friday and both Khan and Qureshi have denied the charges against them. The hearings will take place before a special court behind closed doors at the Adiyala Prison, where Khan is being held. Khan's lawyers have also objected to the closed-door trial.

The case is related to Khan's speech and waiving of a confidential diplomatic letter at a rally after his ouster in a no-confidence vote in parliament in 2022. The document — dubbed CIPHER — has not been made public by either the government or Khan's lawyers but was apparently diplomatic correspondence between the Pakistani ambassador to Washington and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.

At the time, Khan held up the alleged letter, claiming it was proof that he was being threatened and that his ouster was a U.S. conspiracy allegedly executed by the military and the government in Pakistan. Washington and Pakistani officials have denied the claim.

Another defense lawyer for Khan, Naeem Panjutha claimed on Monday that the former premier and Qureshi were "indicted in a hurry" with the intention of quickly convicting the popular opposition leader.

Khan is facing more than 150 cases, including charges ranging from contempt of court to terrorism and inciting violence, and was given a three-year sentence on corruption charges in early August. Subsequently, an Islamabad High Court suspended that sentence in what amounted to a legal victory for Khan.

The victory was short-lived, however, as he was promptly re-arrested later in August in the CIPHER case.

For the moment, Khan is not eligible to run for office in the January elections on two counts. First, he would have to be cleared of corruption charges in the graft case and second, the CIPHER case charges

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would have to be dropped or he would have to be cleared of those as well.

Panjutha, Khan's lawyer, said in a video statement to reporters on Monday that his client is being denied a fair trial.

Over the weekend, Khan's main political rival and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif returned home to Pakistan, ending his four years of self-imposed exile in London. Sharif on Saturday addressed a mammoth homecoming rally in the eastern city of Lahore, declaring that he forgives all those who caused him hardship.

Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League party are expected to face tough competition in the January vote from Khan's party, which is hugely popular among the masses.

Sharif has been a fugitive since he failed to appear before a Pakistani court in 2019 — during Khan's term in office — following his conviction and a 10-year sentence on corruption charges.

However, a federal court recently granted him protection from arrest, which may have prompted his return to Pakistan. He still has to appear before the Islamabad High Court on Tuesday.

## **Argentine minister Massa has a surprise lead over populist Milei. They head to presidential runoff**

By DANIEL POLITI and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Economy Minister Sergio Massa produced a big surprise by finishing first in the opening round of Argentina's presidential election, reflecting voters' wariness about handing the presidency to his chief rival, a right-wing populist who upended national politics and pledged to drastically diminish the state.

Massa's victory over Javier Milei, a chainsaw-wielding economist and freshman lawmaker, came despite the fact that on his watch inflation has surged into triple digits, eating away at purchasing power of salaries and boosting poverty. Still, he wasn't punished in Sunday's voting.

With nearly all ballots counted early Monday, Massa had 36.7% of the vote and Milei had 30%, meaning the two will go to a Nov. 19 runoff. Most pre-election polls, which have been notoriously unreliable, had given Milei a slight lead over Massa. Former Security Minister Patricia Bullrich, of the main center-right opposition coalition, got 23.8% to finish third in the field of five candidates.

Massa has been a leading figure in the center-left administration in power since 2019. He successfully focused messaging on the way Milei's proposals to slash the size of the state — from halving the number of government ministries to deep spending cuts — would affect everyday life for Argentines, said Mariel Fornoni of the political consulting firm Management & Fit.

That "had a significant impact and evidently instilled more fear than anything else," Fornoni said.

Andrei Roman, CEO of Brazil-based pollster Atlas Intel, whose latest survey had been one of few putting Massa ahead, said one key to the result was lower abstention than in the primary elections held in August. Around 78% of the electorate voted Sunday, some eight points higher than in the primaries that Milei won.

Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist who admires former U.S. President Donald Trump, built a groundswell of support while calling for elimination of the Central Bank, replacement of the local currency with the U.S. dollar, and a purge of the corrupt establishment that he called the "political caste."

His radical proposals and fiery, profanity-laden rhetoric caused some Argentines to vote for Massa, even if less than enthusiastically. Cristian Ariel Jacobsen, a 38-year-old photographer, said he voted for Massa to prevent Milei's "project that puts democracy at risk."

A sense of apprehension was evident on the streets of Argentina in the days before the election. People with any disposable income snapped up goods in anticipation of a possible currency devaluation, recalling that the government devalued the peso by nearly 20% the day after the August primaries. Argentines also bought dollars and removed hard currency deposits from banks as the peso accelerated its already steady depreciation.

Massa's campaign this year follows another eight years ago, when he finished a disappointing third place and was knocked out of the running. This time, he will have his shot in the runoff. That contest will determine whether Argentina will continue with a center-left administration or veer sharply to the right.

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Massa, 51, finished first in Sunday's vote despite inflation surging to 140% on his watch and the currency tanking. He told voters that he inherited an already-bad situation exacerbated by a devastating drought that decimated the country's exports, and reassured them that the worst was past.

He focused much of his firepower in the campaign's final days on warning voters against backing Milei, painting him as a dangerous upstart. He argued that Milei's plans could have devastating effects on social welfare programs, education and health care. The health, education and social development ministries are among those Milei wants to extinguish.

Right-wing support was split between Milei and two other candidates, whereas Massa had already consolidated nearly all support from the left, Atlas Intel's Roman said.

Massa sent a signal Sunday night that he would seek to appeal to members of other parties for the runoff.

"I'm going to call for a government of national unity — a government of national unity built on the foundation of summoning the best individuals, regardless of their political affiliation," he said.

He also could find common interest with other long-serving public servants, many of whom have bristled at Milei's candidacy and the threats it posed.

Milei, who turned 53 on election day, has characterized Massa and others as part of the entrenched and corrupt establishment that brought South America's second-largest economy to its knees.

"Today is historic because two-thirds of Argentines voted for change," Milei said in a speech Sunday night at his campaign headquarters. "They voted for an alternative to this government of criminals who want to mortgage our future to stay in power."

He also has cast himself as a crusader against what he calls the sinister forces of socialism at home and abroad. He opposes sex education, feminist policies and abortion, which is legal in Argentina. He rejects the notion that humans have had a role in causing climate change.

That may have turned off some voters, said Benjamin Gedan director of the Latin America Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center.

Running as an anti-establishment candidate, Milei was the undisputed star of the campaign. So many people surrounded his vehicle as he approached his polling station that he needed a phalanx of bodyguards. Groups of supporters threw flower petals on his car.

"There was this sense of inevitability around Javier Milei in the media, but he scared too many voters and ended up with the exact same level of support he had two months ago," said Brian Winter, a longtime Argentina expert and vice president of the New York-based Council of the Americas. "And now I think we have a really uncertain race. It's going to be really tight."

In his speech Sunday night, Milei appeared to try to appeal to those who may have trembled at his bombastic speeches, and regain his edge.

"We didn't come here to take away rights; we came to take away privileges," he said.

Whatever the results, Milei has already inserted himself and his libertarian party into a political structure dominated by a center-left and a center-right coalition for almost two decades. He was celebratory at his campaign headquarters, saying the preliminary results indicated his party gained 40 seats in the lower house of Congress and eight in the Senate.

Still, supporters outside expressed disappointment.

"I won't lie; I feel a certain bitterness," said Gaston Yapur, a 35-year-old coffee importer. "But, well, it's a runoff; we mustn't give up. He who fights isn't defeated, and we must keep fighting the battle."

## Live updates | Israeli warplanes strike targets ahead of expected ground offensive in Gaza

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli warplanes are striking targets across Gaza ahead of an expected ground offensive in the besieged Hamas-ruled territory. Fears of a widening war have grown as Israel struck targets in the occupied West Bank, Syria and Lebanon and traded fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group.

Two aid convoys arrived in the Gaza Strip over the weekend through the Rafah crossing from Egypt.

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Israel said the trucks carried food, water and medical supplies. Israel has not allowed in fuel, which is critically needed for water and sanitation systems and hospitals.

The war, in its 17th day Monday, is the deadliest of five Gaza wars for both sides. The Palestinian Health Ministry said Sunday that at least 4,651 people have been killed and 14,254 wounded in the territory. In the occupied West Bank, 96 Palestinians have been killed and 1,650 wounded in violence and Israeli raids since Oct. 7.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, mostly civilians who died in the initial Hamas rampage into southern Israel. In addition, 222 people including foreigners were believed captured by Hamas during the incursion and taken into Gaza, Israel's military has said. Two of those have been released.

Currently:

1. Premature babies hooked up to incubators are at risk of dying because of dwindling fuel in the Gaza Strip

2. Biden walks tightrope with support for Israel as allies and the left push for restraint

3. A second convoy of trucks carrying desperately needed aid reaches Gaza

4. Blinken and Austin say the U.S. is ready to protect American forces should the war escalate

5. Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

Here's what's happening in the latest Israel-Hamas war:

**EUROPE MINISTERS DISCUSSING GETTING AID INTO GAZA**

BRUSSELS — European Union foreign ministers are meeting Monday to discuss ways to help vital aid get into Gaza, particularly fuel, after two convoys entered over the weekend.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that "in normal times, without war, 100 trucks enter into Gaza every day. So it's clear that 20 is not enough."

Borrell said the emphasis must be on getting power and water-providing desalination plants running again. "Without water and electricity, the hospitals can barely work," he told reporters in Luxembourg, where the meeting is taking place.

He said the ministers will also look at ways to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians longer term.

"The great powers have forgotten about the Palestinian issue, thinking it was going to be solved alone, or it doesn't matter. Yes, it matters," Borrell said.

**WORLD LEADERS CALL FOR ADHERENCE TO HUMANITARIAN LAW**

Several world leaders on Sunday spoke about the war between Israel and Hamas, reiterating their support for Israel and its right to defend itself against terrorism and called for adherence to humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians.

U.S. President Joe Biden, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, President Emmanuel Macron of France, Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of the United Kingdom also welcomed the release of two hostages and called for the immediate release of all remaining hostages.

They committed to close coordination to support their nationals in the region, in particular those wishing to leave Gaza.

The leaders welcomed the announcement of the first humanitarian convoys to reach Palestinians in need in Gaza and committed to continue coordinating with partners in the region to ensure sustained and safe access to food, water, medical care and other assistance required to meet humanitarian needs.

They also said they would continue close diplomatic coordination, including with key partners in the region, to prevent the conflict from spreading, preserve stability in the Middle East, and work toward a political solution and durable peace.

**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER WARNS HEZBOLLAH TO STAY OUT OF WAR**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited troops stationed near the border with Lebanon, where the Israeli army and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants also have traded fire during the Hamas-Israel war.

A top official with Iran Hezbollah vowed Saturday that Israel would pay a high price whenever it starts a ground offensive in the Gaza Strip and said Saturday that his militant group based in Lebanon already

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is "in the heart of the battle."

Speaking to troops in the north on Sunday, Netanyahu said Israel would react more fiercely than it did during its short 2006 war with Hezbollah, which is based in Lebanon.

"If Hezbollah decides to enter the war, it will miss the Second Lebanon War. It will make the mistake of its life. We will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine and the consequences for it and the Lebanese state are devastating," the Israeli leader said.

## ISRAEL SAYS 2ND BATCH OF HUMANITARIAN AID ENTERED GAZA

Israel says Sunday that a second batch of humanitarian aid was allowed into Gaza, at the request of the U.S. and according to instructions from other political officials.

On Saturday, 20 trucks entered in the first shipment into the territory since Israel imposed a complete siege two weeks ago. Sunday's batch included only water, food, and medical equipment, with no fuel, Israel said.

U.S. President Joe Biden and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel "affirmed that there will now be continued flow of this critical assistance into Gaza," the White House said in a statement after a phone call between the leaders.

The Israeli military said the humanitarian situation in Gaza was "under control," even as the U.N. called for 100 trucks a day to enter.

Hospitals say they are scrounging for generator fuel in order to keep operating life-saving medical equipment and incubators for premature babies.

On Sunday, Associated Press journalists saw seven fuel trucks head into Gaza. Juliette Touma, spokeswoman for the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, and the Israeli military said those trucks were taking fuel that had been stored on the Gaza side of the crossing deeper into the territory, and that no fuel had entered from Egypt.

## UNRWA SAYS THERE WILL BE NO HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE WITHOUT FUEL

AMMAN, Jordan — The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees says it will run out of fuel in Gaza in three days.

"Without fuel, there will be no water, no functioning hospitals and bakeries. Without fuel, aid will not reach many civilians in desperate need. Without fuel, there will be no humanitarian assistance," Philippe Lazzarini, the UNRWA Commissioner General, said in a statement Sunday.

A first delivery of aid that was allowed to cross into Gaza from Egypt on Saturday did not include any fuel. "Without fuel, we will fail the people of Gaza whose needs are growing by the hour, under our watch. This cannot and should not happen," Lazzarini said.

He called on "all parties and those with influence" to allow fuel into Gaza immediately, while ensuring that it is only used for humanitarian purposes.

## IRELAND CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE CEASE-FIRE

BRUSSELS — Ireland is calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza so that civilians can get access to desperately needed aid and supplies.

Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said "this is a matter of the utmost urgency. The loss of life is enormous, is at a scale that has to be stopped."

Speaking Monday in Luxembourg at a meeting of European Union foreign ministers, Martin called for food, water and medical supplies to be allowed into Gaza at an "accelerated and comprehensive scale."

"We understand Israel's need to deal with Hamas, because it was an appalling attack. But the degree of suffering now -- the innocent civilians in Gaza suffering -- is just not acceptable at all," he said.

## IRAQ SAYS IT WILL PURSUE MILITANTS WHO ATTACKED BASES HOUSING US TROOPS

BAGHDAD -- Iraq's army spokesperson says the state will go after militants who have carried out attacks against army bases housing U.S. troops in the country.

Maj. Gen. Yahya Rasoul said in a statement Monday that military advisers from the U.S.-led coalition are in the country "at the invitation of the government" and their mission is to train Iraqi forces.

Rasoul said the prime minister has ordered the country's security agencies to go after those who carried



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out attacks and prevent any attempt to harm Iraq's national security.

Over the past week, several bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq came under rocket and drone attacks that were believed to have been carried out by Iran-backed groups.

There are about 2,500 U.S. troops in Iraq, whose main mission to train Iraqi forces and prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State group.

## **A price cap on Russian oil aims to starve Putin of cash. But it's largely been untested. Until now**

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — For months after Ukraine's Western allies limited sales of Russian oil to \$60 per barrel, the price cap was still largely symbolic. Most of Moscow's crude — its main moneymaker — cost less than that.

But the cap was there in case oil prices rose — and would keep the Kremlin from pocketing extra profits to fund its war in Ukraine. That time has now come, putting the price cap to its most serious test so far and underlining its weaknesses.

Russia's benchmark oil — often exported with Western ships required to obey sanctions — has traded above the price cap since mid-July, pumping hundreds of millions of dollars a day into the Kremlin's war chest.

With Russia's profits rising, the Israel-Hamas war pushing up global oil prices and evidence that some traders and shippers are evading the cap, the first signs of enforcement are appearing 10 months after the price limit was imposed in December.

But sanctions advocates say the crackdown needs to go further to really hurt Russia.

Reducing oil profits "is the one thing that hits Russian macroeconomic stability the most," said Benjamin Hilgenstock, senior economist at the Kyiv School of Economics, which advises the Ukrainian government.

Oil income is the linchpin of Russia's economy, allowing President Vladimir Putin to pour money into the military while avoiding worsening inflation for everyday people and a currency collapse.

Moscow's ability to sell more to the world than it buys means it's weathering sanctions far better than expected. Its economy will grow this year while Germany's shrinks, the International Monetary Fund estimates.

Still, Russia's main source of income is at risk from stepped-up enforcement. The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned two ship owners last week, while U.K. officials are investigating violations.

Since the invasion began, oil sanctions have cost Russia \$100 billion through August, said an international working group on sanctions at Stanford University. But most of that, economists say, stems from Europe's ban on Russian oil, which cost Moscow its main customer.

"There are serious problems with the (price cap) policy, but it can work," Hilgenstock said. "With some improvements, it can be very effective."

Vessels owned or insured by Western nations "persisted in loading Russian oil at all ports within Russia" in recent weeks as prices rose above the cap, the Helsinki-based Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air said in a report last week. "These occurrences serve as compelling evidence of violations against the price cap policy."

Russia's oil income rose in September to some 200 million euros (\$211 million) a day as global prices increased, the think tank said. Less oil available worldwide — with Saudi Arabia and Russia cutting production — pushed prices for Moscow's key export grade crude to \$74.46 last week, S&P Global Platts said. It's been above \$60 since July 11.

The price cap is meant to limit what Russia can earn without taking its supplies off the market. Doing that threatens a shortage that could drive up fuel costs and inflation in the U.S. and Europe.

It relies on a key fact of the shipping industry: many vessel owners, traders and most insurers are based in Europe or the Group of Seven major democracies that imposed the price cap. That puts those companies within reach of sanctions.

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To comply, shipping companies need to know the price of Russia's oil. The cap, however, requires only a good-faith disclosure on a simple, one-page document with the names of the parties and the price. The actual sales contracts don't have to be revealed.

And that, analysts say, has been an invitation for unscrupulous sellers to fudge — and for some shippers to adopt a see-no-evil approach.

Suspicious about evasion grew when analysts noticed that oil from the Russian port of Kozmino on the Pacific Ocean — responsible for a relatively small share of Russia's exports — was trading well above the cap. That was even though many of the tankers stopping there were Western-owned, primarily Greek.

There was little sign of enforcement action until last week, when the U.S. Treasury Department blocked a tanker owner in the United Arab Emirates and another in Turkey from dealings in the U.S. They're accused of carrying Russian oil priced at \$75 and \$80 per barrel while relying on U.S.-connected service providers.

U.S. officials have warned insurers away from vessels that appear suspicious, a senior Treasury official told reporters last week. The department also issued recommendations to scrutinize transport costs and watch for red flags of evasion.

The U.K. Treasury says it is "actively undertaking a number of investigations into suspected breaches of the oil price cap."

There's another opportunity to sidestep the cap: the price is set as oil leaves Russia, not what's paid by a refinery in, say, India. The oil may be bought and sold several times by Russian-affiliated trading companies in countries not participating in sanctions.

Excessive "transportation costs" may be added. The difference to the end price is pocketed by traders and stays in Russian hands, analysts say.

"The problem is that no one really has any oversight as to what happens after the point of loading," said Viktor Katona, lead crude analyst at data and analytics group Kpler. "And there's a reason why the shippers haven't really complained or haven't flagged any issues with the oil price cap — because it's very easily circumvented."

Russia's top energy official, Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, told Radio Business FM on Oct. 13 that the cap was "not only ineffective, but harmful; it can completely distort the entire market and has only negative consequences, including for consumers."

Russia does not recognize the cap, and a decree by Putin forbids its inclusion in sales agreements, Novak said.

U.S. officials, on the other hand, point to the losses it has inflicted on Moscow when combined with Europe's ban on Russian oil.

That boycott forced exporters to send oil on monthlong voyages to Asia, instead of dayslong trips to Europe — essentially doubling Russia's need for expensive shipping services.

Another cost is the "shadow fleet" of used tankers that Russia bought to dodge sanctions. It has only a third of the vessels it would need to completely sanctions-proof its oil shipments, said Craig Kennedy, an associate at Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.

That makes it hard for Russia to completely avoid Western-based shipping services.

Combined with the EU oil ban, the price cap has added \$35 per barrel in costs for Russian exporters, U.S. officials say — money that doesn't go to buy weapons and military equipment.

"The price cap is working," says Nataliia Shapoval, vice president for policy research at the Kyiv school.

But Western allies "should take really urgent measures" to push oil from Russia's shadow fleet back to mainstream shipping, Shapoval said.

To do that, the Stanford sanctions group says countries should demand proof of Western insurance before letting vessels pass chokepoints — now only recommended by the U.S. Treasury. Tanker owners also could be forced to take shipments only from approved oil traders based in sanctioning countries.

## **Sen. Menendez returns to New York court to enter plea to new conspiracy charge**

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez returns to court Monday to enter an expected not guilty plea to a conspiracy charge alleging that he acted as an agent of the Egyptian government even as he chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Menendez, 69, was scheduled to appear in the afternoon before Judge Sidney H. Stein at federal court in Manhattan.

The Democrat stepped down from his powerful post leading the Senate committee after he was charged last month. Prosecutors said the senator and his wife, Nadine Menendez, accepted bribes of cash, gold bars and a luxury car over the past five years from three New Jersey businessmen in exchange for a variety of corrupt acts.

The other defendants entered not guilty charges to a superseding indictment last week. The senator was permitted to delay his arraignment so he could tend to Senate duties. He has said that throughout his whole life he has been loyal to the United States and that he will show his innocence.

Menendez has resisted calls from more than 30 Democrats that he resign.

The rewritten indictment added a charge alleging that the senator, his wife and one of the businessmen conspired to have Menendez act as an agent of the government of Egypt and Egyptian officials.

As a member of Congress, Menendez is prohibited from acting as an agent for a foreign government.

Menendez is accused of passing information to the Egyptians about the staff at the U.S. embassy in Cairo, ghostwriting a letter on Egypt's behalf intended to influence fellow senators and urging the U.S. State Department to get more involved in international negotiations to block a dam project Egypt opposed, among other things.

Last week, Nadine Menendez and a businessman, Wael Hana, pleaded not guilty to the superseding indictment.

Both of them were charged with conspiring with the senator to use him as an agent of the government of Egypt and its officials. The charge carries a potential penalty of up to five years in prison.

## **Australians' rejection of the Indigenous Voice in constitutional vote is shameful, supporters say**

By ROD MCGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Indigenous campaigners who wanted Australia to create an advisory body representing its most disadvantaged ethnic minority have said its rejection in a constitutional referendum was a "shameful act."

Many proponents of the Indigenous Voice to Parliament maintained a week of silence and flew Aboriginal flags at half-staff across Australia after the Oct. 14 vote deciding against enshrining such a representative committee in the constitution.

In an open letter to federal lawmakers, dated Sunday and seen by The Associated Press on Monday, "yes" campaigners said the result was "so appalling and mean-spirited as to be utterly unbelievable."

"The truth is that the majority of Australians have committed a shameful act whether knowingly or not and there is nothing positive to be interpreted from it," the letter said.

The letter said it was written by Indigenous leaders, community members and organizations but is not signed.

Indigenous leader Sean Gordon said on Monday he was one of the many people who had drafted the letter and had decided against adding their signatures.

"It was a statement that could allow Indigenous people across the country and non-Indigenous people across the country to commit to it and so signing it by individuals or organizations really wasn't the approach that we took," Gordon told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

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Acting Prime Minister Richard Marles, who heads the government while Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is in the United States, said he accepted the public's verdict on the Voice.

"The Australian people always get the answer right and the government absolutely accepts the result of the referendum, so we will not be moving forward with constitutional recognition," Marles told reporters.

The letter writers blamed the result partly on the main opposition parties endorsing a "no" vote.

The writers accused the conservative Liberal Party and Nationals party of choosing to impose "wanton political damage" on the center-left Labor Party government instead of supporting disadvantaged Indigenous people.

No referendum has ever passed in Australia without the bipartisan support of the major parties.

Senior Liberal senator Michaelia Cash said voters had rejected Albanese's Voice model.

"Australians on referendum day, they did not vote 'no' to uniting Indigenous people, they did not vote 'no' to better outcomes for our most disadvantaged. What Australians voted 'no' to was Mr. Albanese," Cash said.

The Indigenous writers said social media and mainstream media had "unleashed a tsunami of racism against our people" during the referendum campaign.

The referendum was defeated with 61% of Australians voting "no."

## Football provides a homecoming and hope in Lahaina, where thousands of homes are gone after wildfire

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — Fans decked in red streamed into the Lahainaluna High School football stadium, snacking on nachos and venison chili, bopping to the high school band's rendition of "Sweet Caroline," and exchanging long hugs with neighbors and classmates.

It was homecoming, and for many of the fans, coaches and the players themselves, being back at the stadium was the closest thing to feeling at home since the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century leveled their town.

"I don't know if I can put into words how much it means to Lahaina," said offensive lineman Morgan "Bula" Montgomery, who has lived in three different hotels with his family since their apartment building burned down. "Just looking in the stands, you see all the old-timers coming out, all the alumni and even the little kids — just all kind of excited, waiting for that first snap."

Classes resumed last week at Lahainaluna High and at the two other public schools that survived the Aug. 8 fire, and on Saturday night, Lahainaluna's varsity and junior varsity football teams played their first home games, both therapeutic wins, giving the community a glimmer of hope amid a tragedy that claimed at least 99 lives.

Tickets for homecoming at the 3,000-person-capacity stadium sold out in seven minutes, said Principal Richard Carosso -- an indication of how badly the community needed it.

Perched on a hillside, the school gets its name from its location overlooking historic Lahaina: "Luna" means "above" in Hawaiian.

Before the fire, fans at the stadium could see the lights twinkling from the neighborhoods down below. Now, once the sun goes down, there is darkness.

As Mary-Ann Kobatake arrived at the stadium to cheer on her son, No. 33 James Lukela-Kobatake, she refused to look toward the devastated town, where her own home was among the 2,200 buildings that burned.

"I no like look over there," she said in Hawaii Pidgin, spoken by many in the crowd.

But being back on campus was comforting for the 1993 Lahainaluna graduate: "We still have a place we can come home to," she said.

It was for Heather Filikitonga, too. A 2001 graduate and mother of a JV player, she could see the gutted remains of her apartment building from the stands.

"If they can get on the field and find some normalcy in their life," she said of the players, "then I can

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do the same.”

Similar to high school football in other American small towns, Lahainaluna’s powerhouse program is a source of pride. It won four state titles from 2016-2019. It’s an equalizer for kids from diverse backgrounds and something to do in a coastal town where country-reggae blares from lifted pickup trucks.

“Young boys dream about one day wearing the red and white and representing Lahainaluna,” said Keith Amemiya, a Honolulu bank executive who is spearheading the Luna Strong fundraising campaign for the 450 student-athletes and coaches whose homes were destroyed.

Tevainui Loft, a 17-year-old tight end and linebacker, grew up watching Lahainaluna football in the stands overlooking his hometown. The games were always packed. “I remember going in sixth grade — best times of my life,” he said.

A few days before donning his No. 9 uniform in the homecoming game, he reflected on the new view from the field.

“I’ve been at practice the last couple days, just looking on the side like on water breaks, just looking at Lahaina — all just gone,” he said. “It’s so weird to me that it’s all gone.”

His mother’s home burned, but his father’s home away from the burn zone survived. He aspires to play Division I college football, and he was heartbroken at the possibility of the season being canceled. “If there wasn’t a season, I didn’t know what I was going to do with myself,” he said.

Amemiya knows the Lahainaluna football program well, having attended many parties hosted by coaches over the years and having been in charge of Hawaii high school sports from 1998 to 2010. He pushed the coaches not to cancel the season.

“If they somehow could have a football season, it would serve as an inspiration and a rallying point for the entire community,” he said. “In times of tragedy, sports can have a healing effect, not only for the community but the players and coaches as well.”

After the fire, “football was the furthest thing from my mind,” said Garret Tihada, one of the coaches, a 1987 Lahainaluna graduate. The home he grew up in burned down.

But a few days later he got a call from Amemiya. Tihada started talking to players, fellow coaches and community members: “They were saying, ‘We need football back. We need something to look forward to.’”

The teams soon resumed practices, first in a gym in Kahului and later at a park in Kihei, the community about 45 minutes away where high school students attended classes during Lahainaluna’s closure.

Bula Montgomery, the offensive lineman, said it’s been tough seeing his mom, Tamara Montgomery, navigate the fire’s destruction on her own with four kids. His father died in 2019 of a brain aneurysm at 41. But knowing that most of his teammates face similar circumstances has helped: “It doesn’t feel like I’m alone in this.”

Bula is unsure of his plans after high school. He’d like to play football or wrestle in college. He’s considering the University of Hawaii’s offer of full scholarships to every Lahainaluna senior.

Before the game, the Rev. Ai Hironaka looked out from the stands into the ruins of the town.

“The players will fill the ‘puka’ of the heart, he said, using a Hawaiian word for “hole.”

Watching the junior varsity team beat Baldwin High School 16-10 and then his son’s varsity team win 28-7 helped Hironaka forget for several hours about losing his home and the Japanese Buddhist temple where he was the resident minister.

After the homecoming court’s halftime presentation, freshman princess Precious Pante joined her friends in a spirited student section, wearing her lavender gown and tiara.

“We’ve all been through a hard time,” she said. “I feel like we needed this.”

After the game, the varsity team held hands in a darkened locker room and sang the alma mater in Hawaiian. One of the verses describes Lahaina as the “leading star of the Pacific,” an “ever-burning torch which cannot be extinguished by the fierce winds” the area is known for.

Coach Dean Rickard, a 1982 Lahainaluna graduate, saw hope in how resilient the players have been.

“They represent the community well,” he said. “The lights will return and everything will be much brighter from that point on.”

## **This procedure is banned in the US. Why is it a hot topic in fight over Ohio's abortion amendment?**

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — With Election Day closing in, anti-abortion groups seeking to build opposition to a reproductive rights measure in Ohio are messaging heavily around a term for an abortion procedure that was once used later in pregnancy — but hasn't been legal in the U.S. for over 15 years.

In ads, debates and public statements, the opposition campaign and top Republicans have increasingly been referencing "partial-birth abortions" as an imminent threat if voters approve the constitutional amendment on Nov. 7. "Partial-birth abortion" is a non-medical term for a procedure known as dilation and extraction, or D&X, which is already federally prohibited.

"It would allow a partial-birth abortion," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine told reporters recently as he explained his opposition to the constitutional amendment, known as Issue 1.

"For many years, in Ohio and in this country, we've had a law that said a partial-birth abortion — where the child is partially delivered and then killed and then finally delivered — was illegal in Ohio," the governor continued. "This constitutional amendment would override that."

Constitutional scholars say that is not true and that the amendment would not override the existing federal ban if Ohio voters approve it.

"So changing our constitution will not affect in the slightest way the applicability of the federal partial-birth abortion ban," said Dan Kobil, a law professor at Capital University in Columbus, who supports abortion rights. "It would be a federal crime for a doctor to violate that ban."

That's because the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution calls for federal laws to trump state laws, said Jonathan Entin, professor emeritus of law at Case Western State University.

"If the federal law prohibits a particular technique, then that's going to prevail over a state law that might be inconsistent," he said.

Ohio is the only state this November where voters will decide whether abortion should be legal. But the debate isn't happening in isolation. The state has been used as a campaign testing ground by anti-abortion groups after a string of defeats since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a constitutional right to the procedure. And next year, abortion rights supporters are planning to put the question before voters in several more states, ensuring the issue will be central to races up and down the ballot.

A D&X procedure involved dilating the woman's cervix, then pulling the fetus through the cervix, feet-first to the neck. The head was then punctured and the skull emptied and compressed to allow the fetus to fit through the dilated cervix. Before the federal ban, it was used for both abortions and miscarriages in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy.

DeWine was serving in the U.S. Senate when the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act was passed in 2003. He voted for the prohibition, which declared a "moral, medical, and ethical consensus" that the procedure was "gruesome and inhumane." President George W. Bush signed the measure into law with DeWine at his side.

The ban was largely on hold while a constitutional challenge played out. The U.S. Supreme Court in 2007 rejected arguments against the law, upholding its application across all 50 states.

Asked why the governor suggested a federal law he supported would not apply if Ohio changes its constitution, spokesman Dan Tierney said DeWine bases his position on provisions of the U.S. Constitution that prevent the federal government from regulating conduct that has no effect on interstate commerce. Kobil acknowledged that argument, but said it's "almost certain to fail" if tested, given that the Supreme Court already declared the ban constitutional.

DeWine isn't the only top elected Republican in the state to warn that the procedure would be revived if the amendment passes on Nov. 7.

In a memo earlier this month, Republican Attorney General Dave Yost said the state's laws outlawing abortions through D&X and another procedure, non-intact dilation and evacuation, or D&E, the most common second trimester method, "would both be invalidated and these abortions would be permitted" if the amendment passes. The Ohio Senate's Republican supermajority passed a resolution saying something

similar.

Entin, of Case Western, said "to the extent that the Ohio laws he's discussed are also covered by the federal law, it doesn't matter," because federally banned procedures would remain illegal.

Kelsey Pritchard, director of state public affairs for Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, whose political arm is a major funder of the campaign opposing the amendment, said the federal ban "lacks enforcement" under a Biden Administration she described as "extreme pro-abortion."

"If it's not being enforced, if there's no teeth to it, then the protections need to happen at the state level," argued spokesperson Amy Natoce of Protect Women Ohio, the Issue 1 opposition campaign. "Of course, if Issue 1 passed, we won't have those protections."

Mae Winchester, a Cleveland-based maternal fetal medicine specialist, said use of the term in the campaign messaging over the amendment is misleading.

"Partial-birth abortion' is a made-up term that only serves to create confusion and stigmatize abortion later in pregnancy," she said. "It's not a procedure that's described anywhere in medical literature, and so it's not considered a medical term or even an actual medical procedure."

Ohio passed the nation's first ban on what its lawmakers then dubbed "partial birth feticide" in 1995, just three years after Ohio physician Martin Haskell debuted the D&X procedure during an abortion practitioners conference. He touted it as a way to avoid an overnight hospital stay and as safer and less painful for women than other methods.

Protect Women Ohio has invoked Haskell's legacy in one of its ads. It shows an image of Haskell and describes the procedure he pioneered as "painful for the mother and the baby." The voiceover then calls for a no vote on the amendment "so people like Dr. Haskell can't perform painful 'late-term' abortions."

The spot doesn't note the distinction between "partial-birth" and "late-term" abortions — both non-medical terms coined by anti-abortion advocates — nor reference the federal ban.

Mike Gonidakis, president of Ohio Right to Life, said because of protections provided to individuals and abortion providers in the amendment, "The ad withstands any scrutiny."

Haskell retired from active practice two years ago. He declined comment. But he has donated to the main group supporting the constitutional amendment, Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights.

Pro-Choice Ohio Executive Director Kellie Copeland called talk of "late-term" and "partial-birth" abortions a scare tactic.

"Issue 1 allows for clear restrictions on abortion after viability that protect patients' health and safety," she said. "These situations, when a woman needs an abortion later in pregnancy, are incredibly rare and heartbreaking for families."

Ohio hasn't had an abortion of any type performed after 25 weeks' gestation since 2018 and only four have been recorded since 2013, according to statistics compiled by the state Health Department. Abortions between 21 and 24 weeks' gestation, a span that encompasses the outside limit of Ohio's current law, totaled 576, or 0.6% of the total, over that time.

Pritchard, of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, attributed the low numbers to the state's existing abortion restrictions.

## **Second aid convoy reaches Gaza as Israel attacks targets in Syria and occupied West Bank**

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and RAVI NESSMAN Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The second aid convoy destined for desperate Palestinian civilians reached Gaza on Sunday, as Israel widened its attacks to include targets in Syria and the occupied West Bank and the Israeli prime minister warned Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group that if it launches its own war, "we will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine."

For days, Israel has been on the verge of launching a ground offensive in Gaza following Hamas' brutal Oct. 7 rampage through a series of Israeli communities. Tanks and troops have been massed at the Gaza border, waiting for the command to cross.

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Israel's military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said the country had increased airstrikes across Gaza to hit targets that would reduce the risk to troops in the next stage of the war.

Fears of a widening war grew as Israeli warplanes struck targets across Gaza, two airports in Syria and a mosque in the occupied West Bank allegedly used by militants.

Israel has traded fire with Hezbollah militants since the war began, and tensions are soaring in the West Bank, where Israeli forces have battled militants in refugee camps and carried out two airstrikes in recent days.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told troops in northern Israel that if Hezbollah launches a war, "it will make the mistake of its life. We will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine, and the consequences for it and the Lebanese state will be devastating."

Hamas said it fought with Israeli forces near Khan Younis in southern Gaza and destroyed a tank and two bulldozers.

Late Sunday, Hagari announced that a soldier was killed and three others wounded by an anti-tank missile during a raid inside Gaza as part of efforts to rescue more than 200 hostages abducted in the Oct. 7 attack.

On Saturday, 20 trucks entered Gaza in the first aid shipment into the territory since Israel imposed a complete siege two weeks ago.

Israeli authorities said late Sunday they had allowed a second batch of aid into Gaza at the request of the United States. COGAT, the Israeli defense body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs, said the aid included water, food and medical supplies and that everything was inspected by Israel before it was brought into Gaza.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees confirmed the arrival of 14 trucks.

Israel has not allowed any fuel to enter Gaza.

In a sign of how precarious any movement of aid remains, the Egyptian military said Israeli shelling hit a watchtower on Egypt's side of the border, causing light injuries. The Israeli military apologized, saying a tank had accidentally fired and hit an Egyptian post, and the incident was being investigated.

Relief workers said far more aid was needed to address the spiraling humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where half the territory's 2.3 million people have fled their homes. The U.N. humanitarian agency said Saturday's convoy carried about 4% of an average day's imports before the war and "a fraction of what is needed after 13 days of complete siege."

The Israeli military said the humanitarian situation was "under control," even as the U.N. called for 100 trucks a day to enter.

In a Sunday phone call, Netanyahu and U.S. President Joe Biden "affirmed that there will now be continued flow of this critical assistance into Gaza," the White House said in a statement.

Israel repeated its calls for people to leave northern Gaza, including by dropping leaflets from the air. It estimated 700,000 have already fled. But hundreds of thousands remain. That would raise the risk of mass civilian casualties in any ground offensive.

Israeli military officials say Hamas' infrastructure and underground tunnels are concentrated in Gaza City, in the north, and that the next stage of the offensive will include unprecedented force there. Israel says it wants to crush Hamas. Officials have also spoken of carving out a buffer zone to keep Palestinians from approaching the border, though they have given no details.

Hospitals packed with patients and displaced people are running low on medical supplies and fuel for generators, forcing doctors to perform surgeries using sewing needles, resorting to vinegar as disinfectant and operating without anesthesia.

The World Health Organization says at least 130 premature babies are at "grave risk" because of a shortage of generator fuel. It said seven hospitals in northern Gaza have been forced to shut down due to damage from strikes, lack of power and supplies, or Israeli evacuation orders.

Shortages of critical supplies, including ventilators, are forcing doctors to ration treatment, said Dr. Mohammed Qandeel, who works in Khan Younis' Nasser Hospital. Dozens of patients continue to arrive and are treated in crowded, darkened corridors, as hospitals preserve electricity for intensive care units.



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"It's heartbreaking," Qandeel said.

Palestinians sheltering in U.N.-run schools and tent camps are running low on food and are drinking dirty water. The lack of fuel has crippled water and sanitation systems.

Heavy airstrikes were reported across Gaza, including in the southern part of the coastal strip, where Israel has told civilians to seek refuge. At the Al-Aqsa hospital in Deir al-Balah, south of the evacuation line, several bodies wrapped in white shrouds were lined up outside.

Khalil al-Degran, a hospital official, said more than 90 bodies had been brought in since early Sunday, as the sound of nearby bombing echoed behind him. He said 180 wounded people had arrived, mostly children, women and the elderly displaced from other areas.

Airstrikes also smashed through the marketplace in the Nuseirat refugee camp. Witnesses said at least a dozen people were killed.

The Israeli military has said it is striking Hamas fighters and installations and insists it does not target civilians. Palestinian militants have fired over 7,000 rockets at Israel, according to the military, and Hamas says it targeted Tel Aviv early Sunday.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack. At least 212 people were captured and dragged back to Gaza.

Two Americans were released Friday, hours before the first shipment of humanitarian aid.

More than 4,600 people have been killed in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. That includes the disputed toll from a hospital explosion.

Syrian state media, meanwhile, reported that Israeli airstrikes hit the international airports in the capital, Damascus, and the northern city of Aleppo, killing one person and putting the runways out of service.

Israel has carried out several strikes in Syria since the war began. Israel rarely acknowledges individual strikes, but says it acts to prevent Hezbollah and other militants from bringing in arms from Iran, which also supports Hamas.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah said six fighters were killed Saturday, and the group's deputy leader, Sheikh Naim Kasseem, warned that Israel would pay a high price if it invades Gaza. Israel struck Hezbollah in response to rocket fire, the military said.

Israel also announced evacuation plans for another 14 communities near the Lebanon border.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, 93 Palestinians have been killed — including eight Sunday — in clashes with Israeli troops, arrest raids and attacks by Jewish settlers since the Hamas attacks, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Israeli forces have closed crossings into the territory and checkpoints between cities, measures they say are aimed at preventing attacks. Israel says it has arrested more than 700 Palestinians since Oct. 7, including 480 suspected Hamas members.

The internationally recognized Palestinian Authority administers parts of the West Bank and cooperates with Israel on security, but it is deeply unpopular and has been the target of violent Palestinian protests.

## **Economy minister surprises by beating populist in first round of Argentina's presidential election**

By DANIEL POLITI and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Economy Minister Sergio Massa surprised Sunday night by finishing on top in the first round of Argentina's presidential election, reflecting voters' wariness about handing the presidency to his chief rival, a right-wing populist who upended national politics and pledged to drastically diminish the state.

Massa's victory over Javier Milei, a chainsaw-wielding economist and freshman lawmaker, came despite the fact that on his watch inflation has surged into triple digits, eating away at purchasing power of salaries and boosting poverty. Still, he wasn't punished.

With 98.3% of the votes counted, Massa had 36.7% and Milei was at 30%, meaning the two will go to a November runoff. Most pre-election polls, which have been notoriously unreliable, gave Milei a slight lead and put Massa in second place. Former Security Minister Patricia Bullrich, of the main center-right

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opposition coalition, finished in third place with 23.8%.

Massa has been a leading figure in the center-left administration in power since 2019. He successfully focused messaging on the way in which Milei's proposal to slash the size of the state — from halving the number of government ministries to deep spending cuts — would affect everyday life for Argentines, said Mariel Fornoni of the political consulting firm Management & Fit.

That "had a significant impact and evidently instilled more fear than anything else," Fornoni said.

Andrei Roman, CEO of Brazil-based pollster Atlas Intel, whose latest survey was one of few showing Massa ahead, said one key to the result was lower abstention than in the primary elections held in August. Around 78% of the electorate voted Sunday, some eight points higher than in the primaries that Milei won, sending shockwaves through the nation.

Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist who admires former U.S. President Donald Trump, amassed a groundswell of support while calling for elimination of the Central Bank, replacement of the local currency with the U.S. dollar, and a purge of the establishment that he called the "political caste."

His radical proposals and fiery, profanity-laden rhetoric caused some Argentines to vote for Massa, even if less than enthused at the prospect. Cristian Ariel Jacobsen, a 38-year-old photographer, said he voted for Massa to prevent Milei's "project that puts democracy at risk."

Massa's campaign this year follows another eight years ago, when he finished a disappointing third place and was knocked out of the running. This time, he will have his shot at a runoff. That contest will determine whether Argentina will continue with a center-left administration or veer sharply to the right.

Massa finished first in Sunday's vote despite the fact that inflation surged to 140% on his watch and the currency tanked. He had told voters that he inherited an already-bad situation exacerbated by a devastating drought that decimated the country's exports, and reassured voters that the worst was past.

Right-wing support was split between Milei and two other candidates, whereas Massa had already consolidated support from the left, Atlas Intel's Roman said.

Speaking Sunday night, Massa sent a signal he would seek to appeal to members of other parties for the runoff.

"I'm going to call for a government of national unity — a government of national unity built on the foundation of summoning the best individuals, regardless of their political affiliation," he said.

Massa focused much of his firepower in the campaign's final days on warning voters against backing Milei, painting him as a dangerous upstart. He argued that Milei's plans could have devastating effects on social welfare programs, education and health care. The health, education and social development ministries are among those Milei wants to extinguish.

Milei also cast himself as a crusader against what he called the sinister forces of socialism at home and abroad. He opposes sex education, feminist policies and abortion, which is legal in Argentina. He rejects the notion that humans have had a role in causing climate change.

Such stances may have ended up turning off some voters, said Benjamin Gedan director of the Latin America Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center.

Running as an anti-establishment candidate, Milei became the undisputed star of the campaign. So many people surrounded his vehicle as he approached his polling station that he needed a phalanx of bodyguards. Groups of supporters threw flower petals on his car.

A sense of apprehension was evident on the streets of Argentina this week, with citizens bracing for impact. Those with any disposable income snapped up goods in anticipation of a possible currency devaluation. The day after the primaries, the government devalued the peso by nearly 20%. Argentines were also buying dollars and removing hard currency deposits from banks as the peso accelerated its already steady depreciation.

"There was this sense of inevitability around Javier Milei in the media, but he scared too many voters and ended up with the exact same level of support he had two months ago," said Brian Winter, a longtime Argentina expert and vice president of the New York-based Council of the Americas. "And now I think we have a really uncertain race. It's going to be really tight."

In a speech Sunday night, Milei appeared to try to appeal to those who may have trembled at his bom-

basic speeches, and regain his edge.

"We didn't come here to take away rights; we came to take away privileges," Milei said. He has characterized Massa as part of the entrenched and corrupt establishment that brought South America's second-largest economy to its knees.

Whatever the results, Milei has already inserted himself and his libertarian party into a political structure dominated by a center-left and a center-right coalition for almost two decades. He was celebratory Sunday night at his campaign headquarters, saying that preliminary results indicate his party gained 40 seats in the lower house of Congress and eight in the Senate.

Still, supporters outside expressed disappointment.

"I won't lie; I feel a certain bitterness," said Gaston Yapur, a 35-year-old coffee importer. "But, well, it's a runoff; we mustn't give up. He who fights isn't defeated, and we must keep fighting the battle."

## China crackdown on cyber scams in Southeast Asia nets thousands but leaves networks intact

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Zhang Hongliang, a former restaurant manager in central China, took various gigs in and outside China to support his family after losing his job during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March, a job offer to teach Chinese cooking at a restaurant led him into a cyber scam compound in Myanmar, where he was instead ordered to lure Chinese into giving up their savings for fake investment schemes via social media platforms.

Zhang is one of tens of thousands of people, mostly but not all Chinese, who have become ensnared in cyber scam networks run by powerful Chinese criminal syndicates in Southeast Asia. Regional and Chinese authorities have netted thousands of people in a crackdown, but experts say they are failing to root out the local elites and criminal networks that are bound to keep running the schemes.

When scam operations are shut down in one place they often just resurface elsewhere. The problem is an embarrassment for Beijing and is discouraging ordinary Chinese from traveling to Southeast Asia out of fear they might be duped or kidnapped and caught up in a cyber scam operation.

In recent years, media reports have uncovered instances of young people being lured to places in Cambodia or Myanmar for high-paying jobs, only to be forced to work as scammers. Rescue organizations say people are regularly beaten or face physical punishments such as being forced to run laps if they don't perform well.

In August, China, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar agreed to set up a joint police operations center to tackle cyber scams in the region. On Oct. 10, China's Ministry of Public Security announced that its "Summer Operation" had successfully brought back 2,317 scam suspects from northern Myanmar to China.

China calls such people suspects, though experts say most of them are victims who were forced to work for the criminals. They question how they will be treated once back in China.

The schemes based in countries like Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are run by Chinese bosses hand-in-hand with local elites. Many are based in places where China has financed big construction projects through leader Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative.

Myanmar's border regions long have been a magnet for criminals — historically including drug producers and traffickers — because of lax law enforcement. Such places are generally under the control of ethnic minority armed groups, either opposed to or allied with Myanmar's central government. Some also cooperate with organized crime gangs.

"From the vantage point of the Chinese government, it's a source of extreme embarrassment that you have so many of these Chinese criminals operating all across Southeast Asia," said Jason Tower, an expert on transnational crime with the United States Institute of Peace.

The syndicates also are known for "pig butchering" cons, where scammers entice individuals, often half-way across the world, to invest their money in bogus schemes after duping them into digital romances.

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The scammers divide their targets into two categories: Chinese and non-Chinese. They use scripts, images of models and influencers and translation software to trick the people they contact by phone or online into parting with their money. Victims can be anywhere in the world.

The criminals have "ridden on the shoulders of the Belt and Road Initiative," said Tower, who outlined links between the criminals and Chinese state enterprises, think tanks and government officials in a 2020 report written for the United States Institute of Peace.

Zhang was working in Thailand and on a visa run to Laos when he met the man who lured him to the scam compound in Myanmar. Giving what he said was his last name, Gao, he claimed to be a broker and travel agent for Chinese living in Thailand. Zhang and his wife wanted extra money to pay for in vitro fertilization to have another child. Gao suggested he go work in Myawaddy, in eastern Myanmar's Kayin state, teaching a local chef how to cook Chinese dishes in Gao's new restaurant. The pay would be double what Zhang made in China.

Zhang was wary. Since a 2021 coup, military-controlled Myanmar has been embroiled in civil conflict. But Gao reassured him that he wouldn't be doing anything illegal and said the restaurant would have plenty of customers since many cyber scam businesses were operating in the area.

That might have raised a red flag but it was only once he got to Myanmar that Zhang realized his predicament. He asked to go back home, saying there was a family emergency. His family helped him scrape together some 40,000 yuan (\$5,472) to pay off the debt Gao claimed he owed him, and he slipped away one night, swimming across the Moei River into Thailand, where he turned himself in to Thai police, who contacted the Chinese Embassy.

Zhang showed the AP copies of his deportation notice from the Thai Immigration police and a temporary ID card. He returned to China in late June and was questioned by Chinese police but not detained. He has been sharing his story on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, to alert others to the risks and says people often contact him about relatives trapped in cyber scam compounds.

"We all went out with this wonderful sense of hope, but then reality slammed us in the face," he said.

In total, China has detained some 4,000 suspects and returned them back to China.

The Ministry of Public Security has claimed "breakthrough results" through operations in coordination with Myanmar authorities. On Monday, they announced they had repatriated another 2,349 people. The ministry did not respond to a faxed request for comment.

One 31-year old former chef who was smuggled into Myanmar's Wa State earlier this year said he saw his company hand over four people to Chinese police with little fanfare in September. Other companies did the same, said the man, who was smuggled into Myanmar and later rescued by a non-profit organization. He declined to be named out of fear of government retribution, and The Associated Press could not independently verify his account.

Overall, the enforcement actions don't seem very comprehensive, experts say. The groups now based in Myanmar originally were located in Cambodia. When Cambodia cracked down on online gambling rings and illegal casinos in 2019, many of the groups just moved to less well policed places in Myanmar. Some were taken over by rival gangs.

China's efforts to repair its image have so far not made much headway, said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University.

"You can crack down on these symptoms and the manifestations ... that you can see in the borderland areas," he said, "but they'll come back unless you really have a sustained effort."

## **Blinken, Austin say US is ready to respond if US personnel become targets of Israel-Hamas war**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

REHOBOTH BEACH, Del. (AP) — Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Sunday that the United States expects the Israel-Hamas war to escalate through involvement by proxies of Iran, and they asserted that the Biden administration is prepared to respond if American personnel

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or armed forces become the target of any such hostilities.

"This is not what we want, not what we're looking for. We don't want escalation," Blinken said. "We don't want to see our forces or our personnel come under fire. But if that happens, we're ready for it."

Austin, echoing Blinken, said "what we're seeing is a prospect of a significant escalation of attacks on our troops and our people throughout the region."

He said the U.S. has the right to self-defense "and we won't hesitate to take the appropriate action."

The warning from the high-ranking U.S. officials came as Israel's military response to a deadly Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on civilians in communities in southern Israel entered its third week.

Israeli warplanes struck targets across Gaza overnight and into Sunday, as well as two airports in Syria and a mosque in the occupied West Bank allegedly used by militants as the war threatened to engulf more of the Middle East.

Israel has traded fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group on a near-daily basis since the war began, and tensions are soaring in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces have battled militants in refugee camps and carried out two airstrikes in recent days.

The U.S. announced Sunday that non-essential staff at its embassy in Iraq should leave the country.

Blinken, who recently spent several days in the region, spoke of a "likelihood of escalation" while saying no one wants to see a second or third front to the hostilities between Israel and Hamas, which rules Gaza.

The secretary said he expects "escalation by Iranian proxies directed against our forces, directed against our personnel," and added: "We are taking steps to make sure that we can effectively defend our people and respond decisively if we need to." Iran is an enemy of Israel.

Blinken, appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press," noted that additional military assets had been deployed to the region, including two aircraft carrier battle groups, "not to provoke, but to deter, to make clear that if anyone tries to do anything, we're there."

President Joe Biden, repeatedly has used one word to warn Israel's enemies against trying to take advantage of the situation: "Don't."

Meanwhile, trucks loaded with food, water and other supplies that Palestinians living in Gaza desperately need continued to enter the enclave on Sunday after a key crossing at the border with Egypt was opened a day earlier to allow humanitarian assistance to begin flowing.

But Cindy McCain, executive director of the U.N. World Food Program, said the situation in Gaza remained "catastrophic." She said even more aid needs to be allowed in.

She said her organization was able to feed 200,000 people dinner on Saturday "but that's not enough. That's a drop. We need secure and sustainable access in there, in that region, so we can feed people."

Four hundred aid trucks were entering Gaza daily before the latest war, she said.

"This is a catastrophe happening and we just simply have to get these trucks in," she said.

Biden, who was at his home on the Delaware coast, was briefed by his national security team on the latest developments, the White House said. Biden also discussed the situation during separate conversations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Pope Francis.

Biden and Netanyahu talked about "the need to prevent escalation in the region and to work toward a durable peace in the Middle East," the White House said. Israel has promised a military ground invasion of Gaza to destroy Hamas.

Biden also convened a call with the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom to discuss the conflict. Among topics discussed, the White House said the leaders committed to working closely to keep the war from spreading, while seeking a political solution.

The State Department on Sunday ordered non-essential U.S. diplomats and their families at the U.S. Embassy in Iraq and the U.S. consulate in Irbil to leave the country due to the heightened tensions. In an updated message to Americans in Iraq, the department said the security situation in Iraq made it impossible to carry out normal operations.

Austin and McCain spoke on ABC's "This Week."

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## Norma downgraded to a tropical storm in Mexico as Hurricane Tammy leaves Barbuda

By IGNACIO MARTÍNEZ and FERNANDO LLANO Associated Press

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico (AP) — Norma strengthened slightly and dumped heavy rain after being downgraded to a tropical storm Sunday as it moved into mainland Mexico, while Hurricane Tammy left the Caribbean island of Barbuda with minor damage.

Once a Category 4 hurricane, Norma came ashore Saturday as a Category 1 near the Pacific resort of Los Cabos at the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California Peninsula. Tens of thousands were left without power.

Norma's gusts continued to cause damage as the storm moved northeast, crossing the Gulf of California toward the Mexico mainland's Sinaloa state, where schools were ordered closed Monday. Shelters were set up in Sinaloa and neighboring Sonora with capacity for nearly 13,000 people.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said Sunday evening that Norma was about 120 miles (195 kilometers) west of Culiacan, and about 65 miles (105 kilometers) south-southwest of Los Mochis. The storm regained a bit of strength as it moved northeastward across the Gulf of California with maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kph).

Up to 18 inches (45 centimeters) of rain could fall in some areas Monday, forecasters warned. "These rains will produce flash and urban flooding, along with mudslides in areas of higher terrain," the hurricane center said.

In Los Cabos, fallen trees blocked some streets. But with no major damage, tourists began to emerge, some with the intention of leaving.

"They told us that the air terminal is now open and we want to return to San Diego, since the danger of the hurricane is over," said Henry Brown, a U.S. citizen waiting for a cab to take him and his wife to the San Jose del Cabo airport, which resumed operations in the morning.

Brown acknowledged the wind was very strong Saturday but said they had no major problems because they stayed sheltered in the hotel.

Others, like American Noah Johnson and his family, went for a walk to see how the beach had been left but were willing to continue their vacation, which ends on Tuesday, even though they regretted that many restaurants and other businesses remained closed.

But to the north, there was no flying out of La Paz, the capital of Baja California Sur. It was hit with so much rain that the airport remained closed. Streams of water with logs, dirt and garbage crossed many of the highways so many entrances to the city were blocked. Elements of the security forces made rounds looking for people in need of help.

In the city's bay, 400 people remained on a ferry that was transporting them from Sinaloa to Baja California Sur and was caught in the storm. They have not been able to get off the ferry because the port is still closed, said Santiago Jorge Morgado, commander of the Fourth Naval Region in La Paz.

Baja California Sur authorities had not reported any fatalities, but said an Argentine tourist was injured. The main damage was to boats, three of which sank, Morgado said.

The Mexican navy said it has 5,000 marines deployed to attend the states affected by Norma with ships, helicopters, trucks, food, water and first aid.

Meanwhile, Antigua and Barbuda escaped with no reported injuries from Hurricane Tammy. A late and sudden shift spared the Antigua from a direct hit, but left the sister island in line for the system's full force during the late night hours Saturday.

"To the best of my knowledge, there has been no significant damage. At least we got some rain. It may not be a lot but much needed rain," a relieved Prime Minister Gaston Browne told The Associated Press.

The hurricane made landfall on the 62-square-mile Barbuda at approximately 9:15 p.m. Saturday, bringing heavy rain and winds as high as 92 mph. The storm knocked down some power lines, triggered an island wideblackout and caused minor damage to a few homes. However, no major infrastructural damage was reported.

At least two families had to be evacuated by a local rescue team, Barbuda's disaster coordinator, Tessa

Webber, told AP.

Tammy hit as the memory and trauma of Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm that razed the island in 2017, remained foremost in the minds of Barbudans.

Antigua fared much better, with only a few broken branches and broken utility lines reported.

Acting electricity manager for the country's lone utility company, Lyndon Francis, could not yet put a timeline on restoration work in Barbuda and the few communities in Antigua that lost power during the storm. Crews were out assessing the damage, he said.

Tropical Storm Otis formed over the Pacific far from Mexico's coast, the National Hurricane Center said.

The storm was about 500 miles (800 km) south-southeast of Acapulco. It was moving at 5 mph (7 kph) north-northwest, with maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph).

The NHC estimated that Otis would remain a tropical storm while moving closer to Mexico, before weakening to a tropical depression by Friday. But it said "heavy rainfall may impact coastal areas of southern Mexico from Oaxaca to Guerrero later this week."

## Deal to force multinational companies to pay a 15% minimum tax is marred by loopholes, watchdog says

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — An ambitious 2021 agreement by more than 140 countries and territories to weed out tax havens and force multinational corporations to pay a minimum tax has been weakened by loopholes and will raise only a fraction of the revenue that was envisioned, a tax watchdog backed by the European Union has warned.

The landmark agreement, brokered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, set a minimum global corporate tax of 15%. The idea was to stop multinational corporations, among them Apple and Nike, from using accounting and legal maneuvers to shift earnings to low- or no-tax havens.

Those havens are typically places like Bermuda and the Cayman Islands where the companies actually do little or no business. The companies' maneuvers result in lost tax revenue of \$100 billion to \$240 billion a year, the OECD has said.

According to the report, being released Monday by the EU Tax Observatory, the agreement was expected to raise an amount equal to nearly 10% of global corporate tax revenue. Instead, because the plan has been weakened, it says the minimum tax will generate only half that — less than 5% of corporate tax revenue.

Much of the hoped-for revenue has been drained away by loopholes, some of them introduced as the OECD has been refining details of the agreement, which has yet to take effect. The watchdog group estimates that a 15% minimum tax could have raised roughly \$270 billion in 2023. With the loopholes, it says, that figure drops to about \$136 billion.

Over the summer, the OECD agreed to delay for at least a year — until 2026 — a provision that would have let foreign countries impose additional taxes on U.S. multinational companies that failed to pay at least a 15% rate on their overseas earnings.

The EU Tax Observatory noted that even under the rules of the 2021 agreement, companies would maintain some ability to evade taxes. Companies that have tangible businesses — factories, warehouses, stores and offices — operating in a particular country, for example, could continue to pay a tax rate below 15%. That carveout, the EU Tax Observatory warned, could "give firms incentives to move production to countries with tax rates below 15%."

"This risks exacerbating the race-to-the-bottom with corporate income tax rates," it said.

Another loophole lets countries offer tax credits, for such things as conducting research and investing in local factories, that can reduce companies' tax rates below the 15% mark and still comply with the 2021 agreement.

The Tax Observatory also expressed concern that the race by governments to grant tax breaks for green technologies to fight climate change "raises some of the same issues as standard tax competition. It depletes government revenues."

It also “risks increasing inequality by boosting the after-tax profits of shareholders, who tend to be towards the top of the income distribution,” it said.

The EU Tax Observatory isn’t calling for an outright ban on green-technology subsidies. But it is urging governments to consider other policies to offset the financial gains to the wealthy from such tax breaks.

The group said that multinational corporations shifted \$1 trillion — 35% of the profits they earned outside their home countries — to tax havens. American companies account for about 40% of such global profit shifting.

Last week, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the minimum-tax agreement wouldn’t be finalized until 2024.

“There are some matters that are important to the United States and other countries that remain unresolved — open issues that still must be resolved before the treaty can be signed,” she said after meeting with European finance ministers.

The EU Tax Observatory is run by Gabriel Zucman, a leading economist and tax-and-inequality researcher of the Paris School of Economics and the University of California, Berkeley. Its report is based on the work of more than 100 researchers around the world who often work with government tax agencies. It draws upon new sources of data on multinational corporate finances and offshore wealth held by corporations.

Despite its criticisms of what has happened to the minimum tax, the EU Tax Observatory praised a separate effort to stop the wealthy from dodging taxes. In 2017, tax authorities around the world began exchanging taxpayer information from financial institutions to better enforce tax laws. The results, essentially ending bank secrecy, have been dramatic, the Tax Observatory found.

Until the “automatic information exchange,” was introduced, it said, virtually all wealth that the world’s rich held offshore went untaxed. Now, only 25% escapes taxes.

Still, the group says, “the effective tax rates of billionaires appear significantly lower than those of all other groups of the population” because the richest use tax-avoidance schemes. In the United States, it says, billionaires pay an effective average tax rate of 23%, including all taxes at all levels of government. The poorest 10% of Americans pay more — 25.6%.

The EU TAX Observatory is calling for a 2% global tax on billionaires’ wealth, a proposal it says would raise \$250 billion annually from fewer than 3,000 people.

## **No evidence of hate crime, police say as slain Detroit synagogue president mourned as devoted leader**

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

A Detroit synagogue president who was fatally stabbed at her home was remembered Sunday by family, friends and top Michigan officials as a generous, thoughtful leader who built bridges between communities.

As mourners gathered to pay respects to Samantha Woll, police said their ongoing investigation of her killing found no evidence of antisemitism as a motive.

The 40-year-old Woll, or “Sam” as she was known to friends and family, led the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue, and was a campaign staffer for Attorney General Dana Nessel and former aide to Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin.

“You so deeply wanted peace for this world. You fought for everyone regardless of who they were or where they came from,” said Monica Woll Rosen, directly addressing her late sister before mourners at the Jewish funeral home. “You were the definition of a leader. Our world is shattered without you.”

Woll’s body was found at her home Saturday morning after a caller alerted officers to a person lying on the ground unresponsive. Officers followed a “trail of blood” to Woll’s home, where authorities believe she was killed, Cpl. Dan Donakowski said.

Police Chief James E. White said Sunday that investigators were working with the FBI to analyze forensic evidence to piece together a timeline leading to Woll’s death. That included interviewing “individuals with information that may further this investigation.”

White, who had asked the public not to draw quick conclusions, added that “no evidence has surfaced



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suggesting that this crime was motivated by antisemitism." He said more information would come Monday.

Woll was born and raised in the Detroit area, and was a University of Michigan graduate. She became the president of the board of directors at Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue in 2022.

Mourners noted the crowd was comprised of people belonging to many different religions, which friends and family said symbolized who Woll was. She was credited for her interfaith work, including by Muslim advocacy groups. Family members said she looked for ways to connect to other movements, including Black Lives Matter.

Colleagues remembered how she loved travel, the arts and had an "infectious smile" that would light up a room. The service included moments of levity about her nature, with jokes about her food allergies and how when she was complimented on something she wore, she would remove it and give it away.

Nessel, who called Woll one of her most enthusiastic supporters, said she had been looking at old photos and marveling at how active she was.

"She was at every campaign event, every political protest, every religious service, every ribbon cutting. I think I saw her in a picture of the moon landing," Nessel joked. "I don't know how she could be so many places at the same time."

The last text message Woll sent was a heart to a friend, according to her sister.

"You sent hearts to cheer people up and let them know you were thinking of them because you cared," Monica Woll Rosen said, addressing her late sister. "A light has gone out in Detroit, in our hearts, for our people, for the world."

## **Biden walks a tightrope with his support for Israel as his party's left urges restraint**

By AAMER MADHANI and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden told a crowd of Democratic donors over the weekend about a decades-old photo he took with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, an aside that seemed intended to illustrate his long support of Israel and track record of speaking bluntly with the conservative Israeli leader.

Biden said he'd written on the photo of himself as a young senator and Netanyahu as an embassy hand, "Bibi, I love you. I don't agree with a damn thing you say." He told donors at a Friday night fundraiser that Netanyahu still keeps the photo on his desk and had brought it up during Biden's lightning visit to Tel Aviv last week.

As expectations grow that Israel will soon launch a ground offensive aimed at rooting out Hamas militants who rule the Gaza Strip, Biden finds himself facing anew the difficult balancing act of demonstrating full-throated support for America's closest ally in the Middle East while trying to also press the Israelis to act with enough restraint to keep the war from spreading into a broader conflagration.

Biden has literally, and figuratively, wrapped Netanyahu in a warm embrace since the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas. He's repeatedly promised to have Israel's back as it aims to take out the militant group that controls the Gaza Strip and carried out the brutal attacks that killed 1,400 Israelis and captured more than 200 others.

But he also increasingly is paying greater public heed to the plight of Palestinians and the potential consequences of a hardline Israeli response.

White House officials say Biden, during his visit to Tel Aviv last week, asked Netanyahu "tough" questions about his strategy and the way forward. Biden himself told reporters on his way back from Israel that he had a "long talk" with Israeli officials "about what the alternatives are" to a possible extended ground operation. U.S. defense officials were also consulting with Israel on the matter.

"We're going to make sure other hostile actors in the region know that Israel is stronger than ever and prevent this conflict from spreading," Biden said Thursday in a nationally televised address on assisting Israel and Ukraine in their wars. "At the same time ... Netanyahu and I discussed again yesterday the critical need for Israel to operate by the laws of war. That means protecting civilians in combat as best as they can."

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Both Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the executive director of United Nations' World Food Program, Cindy McCain, offered grim warnings Sunday that the situation on the ground is only becoming more complicated.

Blinken on NBC's "Meet the Press" warned "there's a likelihood of escalation" against U.S. forces stationed in the region by Iranian proxies. Iran is the biggest financial backer of Hamas, Hezbollah militants in Lebanon and Shiite militias in Iraq.

McCain said on ABC's "This Week" that the humanitarian situation her organization is confronting in Gaza is "catastrophic."

As well, Biden and Pope Francis spoke on the phone for about 20 minutes Sunday, addressing the need to "pinpoint paths of peace" in world conflicts, the Vatican press office said in a brief statement.

The pressure on Biden for a balanced approach comes from Arab leaders in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and beyond who have seen large protests erupt in their capitals over the crisis in Gaza. It also comes from European officials, who have expressed horror at the most brutal attack on Israeli soil in decades, but also underscored that the Israelis must abide by international and humanitarian law. Biden also faces scrutiny from people in the younger and more liberal wing of his Democratic Party, who are more divided over the Israel-Palestinian issue than the party's centrist and older leaders.

Less than week into the war, dozens of lawmakers wrote to Biden and Blinken urging them to ensure the protection of Israeli and Palestinian civilians by calling for Israeli military operations to follow the rules of international humanitarian law, the safe return of hostages, and diplomatic efforts to ensure long-lasting peace. That was followed by more than a dozen lawmakers introducing a resolution urging the Biden administration to call for an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire.

Three members of the Democratic caucus — Reps. Delia Ramirez of Illinois, Summer Lee of Pennsylvania and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan — wrote to Blinken last week about the "lack of meaningful information" about the status of U.S. civilians, particularly those in Gaza and the West Bank. The administration has said some 500 to 600 U.S. citizens may be in Gaza.

Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., has suggested that the administration has demonstrated a double standard when it comes to valuing the lives of innocent Israelis and Gaza residents. Israel's retaliatory bombing campaign has killed more than 4,300 Palestinians, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. Many of the victims are women and children.

"How do you look at one atrocity and say, 'This is wrong,' but you watch as bodies pile up as neighborhoods are leveled?" Omar asked at a news conference. "Israel has dropped more bombs in the last 10 days than we dropped in a whole year in Afghanistan. Where is your humanity? Where is your outrage? Where is your care for people?"

Inside the administration there has been debate over whether Biden is pursuing a policy too closely aligned to Israel's.

Last week, at least one department official resigned, saying he could no longer support what he called a "one-sided" policy that favors Israel at the expense of the Palestinians.

"I cannot work in support of a set of major policy decisions, including rushing more arms to one side of the conflict, that I believe to be short-sighted, destructive, unjust and contradictory to the very values that we publicly espouse," Josh Paul, an 11-year veteran of the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, wrote in a statement posted to his LinkedIn account on Wednesday.

Other State Department officials have expressed similar concerns and some of them spoke at a series of internal discussions for employees that were held on Friday, according to people familiar with the events who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. Many of those comments were angry and emotional, these people said.

Blinken sent a department-wide memo Thursday urging employees to remember the administration's broader goals for equal justice and peace for both Israel and the Palestinians.

Biden administration officials, meanwhile, in their interactions with their Israeli counterparts have witnessed trauma — and rage — that is palpable.

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The most significant announcement to come out of Biden's visit to Israel this past week was getting Egypt and Israel to agree to allow a limited number of trucks carrying food, water, medicine and other essentials into Gaza via the Rafah border crossing

While the agreement to allow some aid into to Gaza appeared to be minor considering the enormity of the humanitarian crisis, U.S. officials said it represented a significant concession in the position Israel held before Blinken's meeting with Netanyahu on Monday and Biden's talks with the Israeli leader on Wednesday.

During the Blinken-Netanyahu talks, U.S. officials familiar with the discussions said they had become increasingly alarmed by comments from their Israeli counterparts about their intention to deny even supplies of water, electricity, fuel, food and medicine into Gaza, as well as the inevitability of civilian casualties.

Those comments, according to four U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations, reflected intense anguish, anger and outright hostility toward all Palestinians in Gaza.

The officials said that members of the Israeli security and political establishment were absolutely opposed to the provision of any assistance to Gazans and argued that the eradication of Hamas would require methods used in the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II.

One official said that he and others had heard from Israeli counterparts that "a lot of innocent Germans died in WWII" and had been reminded of the massive deaths of Japanese civilians in the U.S. nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Similarly, Biden and his top aides heard deep anguish from some of the high-ranking Israeli officials involved in the private talks, according to a U.S. official familiar with the matter.

As he wrapped up his 7 1/2-hour visit to Tel Aviv, Biden compared the Oct. 7 assault to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people and he recalled the rage Americans felt and the desire for justice by many in the United States. He also urged the Israelis to remember American missteps after 9/11, an era that left the U.S. military ensconced in a 20-year war in Afghanistan.

"I caution this: While you feel that rage, don't be consumed by it," he said. "After 9/11, we were enraged in the United States. And while we sought justice and got justice, we also made mistakes."

## **AP Top 25: Georgia is No. 1 for 19th straight poll, 3rd-best streak ever; Alabama in top 10 again**

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Georgia extended its streak of No. 1 rankings in The Associated Press college football poll to 19 straight weeks, the third best in the history of the rankings, and Alabama moved back into the top 10 on Sunday.

The Bulldogs received 38 of 63 first-place votes, their second-lowest total of the season, after an off week but still bested No. 2 Michigan, 1,536 points to 1,504.

Georgia's No. 1 streak, which started on Oct. 9, 2022, is behind only Miami's streak of 21 weeks from 2001-02 and Southern California's 33 in a row from 2003-05.

The Wolverines received 19 first-place votes after their latest blowout, 49-0 against Michigan State on Saturday night. Michigan was unfazed after a week in which it was revealed the program is being investigated by the NCAA for a sign-stealing scheme that allegedly involved impermissible in-person scouting.

Ohio State held steady at No. 3 after winning a top-10 matchup with Penn State. The Nittany Lions slipped three spots to 10th. The Buckeyes received three first-place votes, as did No. 4 Florida State.

No. 5 Washington and No. 6 Oklahoma held their spots after close calls against unranked teams at home. No. 7 Texas and No. 8 Oregon each moved up a spot.

No. 9 Alabama returned to the top 10 after falling out in mid-September, which snapped a streak of 128 top-10 appearances that dated back to 2015. The Crimson Tide beat Tennessee for their sixth straight victory.

"The challenges are great. I enjoy coaching this team," Tide coach Nick Saban said after the game. "That's not to say that they're not taking years off my life, but I'm OK with that. It's fun. They've got a good spirit about them."

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The Volunteers dropped four spots to No. 21.

## POLL POINTS

While Washington, Oklahoma and Texas all survived scares against unranked foes, North Carolina was not so fortunate.

The Tar Heels lost to Virginia, the Cavaliers' first win of the season against an FBS team, to become just the second top-10 team to lose to an unranked team this season. The other was then-No. 9 Clemson in Week 1 at Duke.

North Carolina dropped seven spots to No. 17.

Clemson has not been ranked since the second week of the season and after losing its third Atlantic Coast Conference game, to Miami on Saturday night, the Tigers received no points in Sunday's poll. It is just the fourth time in the last 197 polls that Clemson has been totally shut out by voters.

The number of major upsets to Top 25 teams overall in college football this season remains minimal. The current Top 25 has lost a total of 23 games. Of those losses, 19 have been to other teams that currently are ranked.

## IN-N-OUT

Iowa dropped out of the Top 25 after its second loss of the season and was replaced by No. 25 James Madison.

The Dukes (7-0) made a brief appearance at No. 25 in early October of last year before going on a three-game losing streak.

JMU is in its second season playing in the Bowl Subdivision, the highest level of Division I, leaving the Dukes ineligible to play for the Sun Belt Conference title and a bowl game. NCAA rules require a two-year transition period for schools moving up a level.

## CONFERENCE CALL

James Madison gives the Sun Belt a ranked team for the first time this season and also three non-Power Five conference teams in the poll, joining No. 19 Air Force of the Mountain West and No. 22 Tulane of the American Athletic Conference.

Air Force (7-0) has its highest ranking since being No. 18 on Oct. 13, 2002.

SEC — 6 (Nos. 1, 9, 12, 15, 16, 21).

Pac-12 — 6 (Nos. 5, 8, 11, 13, 23, 24).

ACC — 4 (Nos. 4, 17, 18, 20).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 3, 10).

Big 12 — 2 (Nos. 6, 7).

Mountain West — 1 (No. 19).

American — 1 (No. 22).

Sun Belt — 1 (No. 25).

Independent — 1 (No. 14).

## RANKED vs. RANKED

No. 8 Oregon at No. 13 Utah. This will be the fifth straight meeting dating back to 2018 with both teams ranked. The Ducks and Utes have split the last four.

No. 20 Duke at No. 18 Louisville. Basketball powers have played only three times in football, despite the Cardinals joining the ACC in 2014. This will be the first game where both are ranked.

## European cities see vigils to oppose antisemitism and rallies seeking relief for Gaza

By SYLVIE CORBET and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Thousands of people joined vigils in Berlin and London on Sunday to oppose antisemitism and support Israel, while in Paris and other cities, thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators demanded a cease-fire and relief for people in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Some of those who gathered in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate carried Israeli flags or posters with

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photos of some of the more than 200 people seized by Hamas as hostages during the militants' deadly Oct. 7 incursion into Israel.

"It is unbearable that Jews are living in fear again today — in our country of all places," President Frank-Walter Steinmeier told the crowd, estimated at 20,000 by organizers and 10,000 by police. "Every single attack on Jews, on Jewish institutions is a disgrace for Germany. Every single attack fills me with shame and anger."

Earlier, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz inaugurated a new synagogue in the eastern city of Dessau and said he was "outraged" by the upsurge in antisemitism since the conflict began.

Several buildings in Berlin where Jews live had the star of David painted on doors and walls, and assailants threw two Molotov cocktails at a synagogue in Berlin last week.

"Here in Germany, of all places," Scholz said, vowing that "our 'never again' must be unbreakable."

At a vigil attended by thousands in London's Trafalgar Square, participants held posters bearing the images of hostages and the missing. They chanted "bring them home," falling silent as the names of the hostages were read out.

Speakers from both the U.K.'s governing Conservative Party and the opposition Labour Party addressed the crowd. Communities Secretary Michael Gove said Hamas' Oct. 7 attack was an act of "unparalleled evil and barbarism."

"We must stand together against it. We must stand for life. We must bring the hostages home," he said.

Hundreds of people rallied outside the United Nations' offices in Geneva to demand the hostages' release. Waving mostly Israeli, but also Swiss and German flags, the demonstrators held aloft signs that read "Children aren't bargaining chips" or T-shirts with the words #SetThemFree.

A day earlier, about 4,500 pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched in the Swiss city of Lausanne, police said.

The war has raised tensions worldwide, leaving Jewish and Muslim communities feeling vulnerable. London's Metropolitan Police force says it has seen a 13-fold upsurge in reports of antisemitic offenses in October compared to last year. Reports of anti-Muslim crimes have more than doubled.

Sunday's rallies came a day after tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian demonstrators — 100,000 by police estimates — marched through the British capital to demand Israel stop its bombardment of Gaza, launched in response to Hamas' brutal incursion.

Authorities in Gaza say more than 4,600 people have been killed in the territory since the latest war began. More than 1,400 people have been killed in Israel, majority of them civilians slain in the Oct. 7 attack.

Israel intensified its bombardment of Gaza ahead of an expected ground offensive. United Nations officials were pressing for more humanitarian aid to get into the besieged strip, after 20 trucks were allowed Saturday to enter Gaza across the southern Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

In France, which has Europe's largest Jewish and Muslim communities, thousands of demonstrators gathered in Paris to demand Israel stop its strikes on Gaza. Police estimated 15,000 people took part.

Some waved red, green and black Palestinian flags and clambered onto the Republique plaza's central statue. A banner read "Stop the massacre in Gaza. France must call for an immediate cease-fire."

Organizers — including Palestinian and Muslim groups, peace associations, workers' and students' unions and leftist political parties — condemned Hamas' attack on civilians, urged the militant group to release all hostages and called for an end to Israel's assault.

Sarah Alaoui, a 23-year-old French student of Moroccan descent, said she came to "support the Palestinian people who have suffered too much for too long."

"Humanitarian aid is not enough. Palestinians need to be able to live a decent life and have their own state," she said.

Nicole Pomier, a 49-year-old Parisian and longtime activist, said she was relieved the protest had not been banned by authorities.

"We want to be able to support the Palestinian people without risking being arrested by the police," she said.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin had ordered all pro-Palestinian demonstrations banned, before authori-

ties ruled permission for protests should be decided locally on a case-by-case basis.

Jewish groups planned a gathering in Paris later Sunday to call for the release of Hamas' hostages.

A crowd estimated at 12,000 by police gathered outside European Union institutions in Brussels for a rally organized by groups including trade unions, Christian organizations and Arab solidarity movements.

Several thousand people took to the streets in Sarajevo, with some comparing the situation in Gaza with the suffering of Bosniaks, who are mainly Muslims, during the country's 1992-95 war.

"What is happening in Gaza is simply human disaster. Collective punishment. War crimes. These things have to be named by their rightful name," said Nabil Naser, a Palestinian doctor who worked in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war.

Hundreds also rallied in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, and in Podgorica, the capital of neighboring Montenegro.

More than 3,000 people attended a "Freedom for Palestine" rally on Sunday at a square in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Malaysia is a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause, and has no diplomatic ties with Israel. Muslims in the country have staged weekly rallies after Friday prayers outside the American Embassy, slamming the U.S. for its support of Israel.

Retiree Munir Izwan urged neighbors of the Palestinians to step up efforts to help.

"Even in Islamic teachings, the closest neighbors should help the most in making peace between the two parties. But from what I see, the neighboring countries of Palestine, they are only talking but no actions," Munir said.

## **A police dog attacked a Black trucker on his knees. An Ohio city is dealing with the aftermath**

By PATRICK ORSAGOS Associated Press

CIRCLEVILLE, Ohio (AP) — As Jadarius Rose drove his 18-wheeler through rural Ohio, a simple missing mudflap caught the highway patrol's eye. The trip ended with a police dog's powerful jaws clamping down on Rose even as he tried to surrender.

As he stood with his hands up beside the highway on July 4, at least six law enforcement officers surrounded him at a distance, one calling forcefully to the K-9 handler: "Do not release the dog," highway patrol video shows.

Nevertheless, a Belgian Malinois is seen on the video either breaking free or being set loose. At first, the animal seems confused, racing past Rose toward officers at the far end of the truck, then turning back and running for Rose, then 23.

By then the trucker is on his knees, hands still high, as an officer shouts, "Get the dog off of him!"

That day, Rose joined a long list of Black Americans attacked by police dogs, a history well documented by journalists, academics and filmmakers. Investigations into such cases have been launched regularly in recent years. For some, the scenes harken back to the Civil Rights Movement, when authorities often turned dogs and firehoses on peaceful Black protesters marching for equality.

The Associated Press captured one such attack in a photograph from Birmingham, Alabama, taken in the spring of 1963. It shows two police officers setting a pair of K-9s on 15-year-old Walter Gadsden. One of the dogs lunges straight for the teenager's belly as the other strains against his leash, panting.

Over the past five years, controversial police K-9 attacks have made headlines across the U.S.

Records reviewed by the AP in 2018 showed the Ohio State Highway Patrol used drug dogs in 28% of its stops involving Black motorists from 2013 through 2017, although the Black population accounts for only about 11.5% of people old enough to have a driver's permit or license in the state.

The Salt Lake City police department suspended its dog apprehension program in 2020 after a Black man was bitten and an audit found 27 dog bite cases during the previous two years.

The FBI opened an investigation into the police department in Woodson Terrace, Missouri, in 2021 after cellphone video showed three officers allowing a dog to repeatedly bite a Black man. And in 2020, a Black man in Lafayette, Indiana, was placed in a medically induced coma after police dogs mauled him as he was arrested in a battery case.

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## A TROUBLED HISTORY

Circleville, located about 25 miles (40 km) south of Columbus, Ohio, resembles many rural towns across the country. The city's downtown is filled with restaurants, law offices and a bakery. Flags honoring fallen servicemen and women hang from lampposts lining Main Street.

While the picture may be idyllic to some of the town's 14,000 residents, the Rev. Derrick Holmes, longtime leader of the Second Baptist Church, said Black and white residents describe their lives very differently.

"Everyone doesn't have the same experience, even though they're all in the same town," Holmes said. "And I think those divisions exist around the realities of bigotry, the realities of racism."

At church services the day after the video of Rose's arrest aired, Holmes said the congregation was appalled, but not entirely surprised.

"People were horrified by it," he said. "Angered by it. Frustrated by it. And also there was a feeling of, 'Well, here we go again.'"

This isn't the first time Circleville police have grappled with uncomfortable questions about how they train and use police dogs. Nearly 20 years ago, a founder of the K-9 unit sued the department after he was fired for insubordination. Officer David Haynes had publicly opposed cutting training hours for dogs and their handlers to 172 hours annually from 500 hours, according to court documents.

Haynes warned in a 2003 memo that "words like 'deliberate indifference,' 'negligence' and 'failure to train' will someday be brought up."

Today, Circleville's K-9s train 16 hours per month, or 192 hours a year, according to the department. Police Chief Shawn Baer did not respond to numerous messages seeking comment.

Employing dogs to dominate a population can be traced back at least to European settlers colonizing the Americas, when the animals were used against Indigenous people. They were introduced in Southern U.S. states to capture — and sometimes kill — enslaved Black people who escaped, said Madalyn Wasilczuk, a University of South Carolina professor and author of a law journal article titled, "The Racialized Violence of Police Canine Force."

Wasilczuk found data on K-9 police attacks sparse, but said the animals are often used in nonviolent situations and their presence can lead to serious injury.

"When you talk about an apprehension, police talk about bite and hold, and that sounds very antiseptic," Wasilczuk said. "But when you look at a video of what happens, you see a dog doing what it does with a chew toy, which is it grabs on, it tries to hold on, its head whips back and forth and its teeth are sunk into that body part as deeply as they can."

## THE AFTERMATH

In Rose's case, law enforcement originally sought to pull him over because of his truck's missing mudflap, according to a highway patrol report. Circleville Police were there to assist.

What happened next can be pieced together from law enforcement video and the incident report.

Rose initially didn't stop as police pursued him. When he did, he saw officers with their guns drawn and took off again. At some point, he called 911 and told a dispatcher he feared the officers were "trying to kill" him. After pulling over a second time, he delayed getting out of the truck and did not immediately get on the ground as instructed.

He initially was charged with a felony for failing to comply with officers, but prosecutors dropped the case. Online court documents show Rose was charged Sept. 26 with a misdemeanor version of the offense and there is an active warrant for his arrest.

Neither Rose nor his attorney responded to repeated messages seeking comment.

It's not clear why a K-9 unit was at the scene that day. Michael Gould, a former New York City police officer and founding member of the NYPD's K-9 unit, said officers appeared to have control once they surrounded Rose with their guns drawn. And then there's the image of Rose with his hands up.

"He was compliant and not a threat to anyone," Gould said.

Rose required hospital care for the bites he suffered. Whether he sustained lasting injury is unclear.

The dog's police handler, Officer Ryan Speakman, was fired, but the Ohio Patrolman's Benevolent As-

sociation filed a grievance on his behalf arguing the officer was fired without just cause.

Circleville City Councilwoman Caryn Koch-Esterline said police have yet to account for what happened. "I'm just waiting for all the information to come out," she said in a brief interview with the AP three months after Rose's arrest.

For those working to improve race relations in Ohio, the roadside attack was a reminder of all that is still left to do.

"If it were a white man and a dog was unleashed on that individual, what would that community be saying? I bet they would be up in arms," said Nana Jones, president of the Columbus Chapter of the NAACP.

## **Manhunt continues for Nashville police chief's son suspected in shooting of 2 Tennessee officers**

LA VERGNE, Tenn. (AP) — Police in Tennessee were searching Sunday for the estranged son of Nashville's police chief as the suspect in the shooting of two police officers outside a Dollar General store.

Officers in La Vergne, a city about 20 miles (32 kilometers) southeast of Nashville, were investigating a stolen vehicle outside the store Saturday afternoon when they struggled with the suspect, who pulled a handgun and shot them, said LaVergne Police Chief Christopher Moews.

Police identified the suspect as John C. Drake, Jr., 38, who is the son of Metro Nashville Police Department Chief John Drake.

One of the officers was shot twice, in the groin and right forearm, while the other officer was hit in the rear left shoulder. Both were taken to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. One of the officers was released from the hospital Saturday night. The other officer was kept overnight for observation and was in stable condition, said Anne Smith, a spokesperson for the city of La Vergne. Their identities have not been released.

The police chief issued a statement Saturday confirming his son was the suspect in the shooting. Drake said they were estranged and over many years he has had only minimal contact with his son. The younger Drake is a convicted felon who "resorted to years of criminal activity," he said.

"He now needs to be found and held accountable for his actions today. I hope that anyone who sees him or has information about him will contact law enforcement immediately," Drake said in the statement.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said in a social media post that a statewide alert had been issued for Drake, who was wanted on two counts of attempted first-degree murder. Smith said about a dozen law enforcement agencies are involved in the search.

After the shooting, the La Vergne police issued a shelter-in-place order for residents in the city. The shelter order was later lifted while the search for Drake continued, the department said in a social media post.

Mayor Freddie O'Connell issued a statement in support of the police chief.

"My heart goes out to Chief Drake, his family, and the two wounded LaVergne police officers. I know that despite our best efforts — including in their early years — we can't be responsible for the choices of family members," O'Connell said. "I support Chief Drake and stand by him at this difficult time. "

## **6 killed in Russian rocket strike on mail depot as Ukraine reports record bomb attack numbers**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A missile strike on a mail depot in the eastern city of Kharkiv killed six people, Ukrainian officials said Sunday, as Ukraine reported a record number of bomb attacks in the southern Kherson region.

A further 17 people were wounded in the blast late Saturday, which is believed to have been caused by a Russian S-300 rocket, Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said on social media. All of the victims were employees of private Ukrainian postal and courier service Nova Poshta.

The Ukrainian-held front-line city has been at the heart of fierce fighting as both Moscow and Kyiv push



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for battlefield breakthroughs amid the looming onset of wintry conditions. Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his war against Ukraine in February last year.

In a statement, Nova Poshta said the air raid siren had sounded just moments before the attack, leaving those inside the depot with no time to reach shelter. It announced that Sunday would be a day of mourning for the firm.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the strike as an attack on an "ordinary civilian object." "We need to respond to Russian terror every day with results on the front line. And, even more so, we need to strengthen global unity in order to fight against this terror," he wrote on social media. "Russia will not be able to achieve anything through terror and murder. The end result for all terrorists is the same: the need to face responsibility for what they have done."

Elsewhere in the Kharkiv region, three people were wounded in Russian shelling on the city of Kupiansk, Syniehubov said.

Officials in southern Ukraine said Sunday the Russian military had used a record number of aerial bombs over the country's Kherson region in the previous 24 hours.

Natalia Humeniuk, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian military's Operational Command South, said that 36 missiles had been recorded over the area, with some villages being hit by several strikes.

In a report released Saturday, the Institute for the Study of War said that Russian forces could be diversifying the mix of missiles, guided bombs, and drones used in strikes on Ukraine. The Washington-based think tank speculated that the change could be part of an attempt to find gaps in Ukraine's air defenses ahead of further strikes over the winter.

Ukrainian officials also reported Sunday that two people had been killed by Russian shelling in the Donetsk region. A 58-year-old man in the village of Kalinovka died in his home, while a 61-year-old man was killed in the town of Vasiukovka from a direct hit to his car, according to the Ukrainian prosecutor's office.

In a separate incident, Nikopol military district chief Yevhen Yevtushenko said that a 71-year-old man had been killed the previous day while fishing at a local reservoir. He said the victim had been found with a fishing rod in his hand, and accused Russian forces of deliberately targeting him with artillery fire.

Meanwhile, Moscow-appointed officials said Sunday that they had intercepted three Ukrainian missiles headed toward Russian-occupied Crimea. Vladimir Saldo, the Kremlin-installed leader of the Russian-occupied portion of Ukraine's Kherson region, said all three missiles had been shot down.

## Turnover has plagued local election offices since 2020. One swing state county is trying to recover

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. (AP) — The polls had just opened for last year's midterms in Pennsylvania when the phones began ringing at the election office in Luzerne County.

Polling places were running low on paper to print ballots. Volunteers were frustrated, and voters were worried they might not be able to vote.

Emily Cook, the office's interim deputy director who had been in her position for just two months, rushed to the department's warehouse. She found stacks of paper, but it was the wrong kind — ordered long ago and too thick to meet the requirements for the county's voting equipment.

Conspiracy theories swiftly began to spread: Republican polling places were being targeted; Democrats overseeing elections were trying to disenfranchise Republicans.

"The feeling early on in the day was panic -- concern -- which grew to overwhelming panic," Cook said. "And then at some point throughout the day, there was definitely a feeling of people are starting to point fingers — before the day was over, before things were even investigated."

The paper shortage, corrected later in the day, turned out to be an administrative oversight by a new staff but has had consequences that are still rippling through the county of 200,000 voters, sowing doubt about how elections are run and leading to a congressional hearing.

It also serves as a cautionary tale about the perils of a change that has been largely hidden from public

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view but has transformed the election landscape across the U.S. since the 2020 presidential election: an exodus of local election directors and their staff.

Election offices have been understaffed for years. But 2020 was a tipping point, with all the pandemic-related challenges before the presidential vote and the hostility afterward stemming from false claims of a stolen election.

A wave of retirements and resignations has followed, creating a vacuum of institutional knowledge across the country. Experts in the field say widespread inexperience creates risk in an environment where the slightest mistake related to voting or ballot counting can be twisted by conspiracy theorists into a nefarious plot to subvert the vote.

In Pennsylvania, officials estimate 40 of the state's 67 county election offices have new directors or deputy directors since 2020. The turnover is even more stark in other presidential swing states. In Nevada, election directors in 11 of 17 counties will be overseeing their first presidential election next year, while in Arizona at least 12 of 15 counties have lost at least one top election official.

The dangers are not lost on Al Schmidt, a Republican who helped oversee elections in Philadelphia and faced death threats in 2020. Now Pennsylvania's top election official, Schmidt said his department has been working to increase training materials and build relationships among local election officials in the hopes of reducing future mistakes.

"There are no redoes of Election Day," Schmidt said. "Everything has to be right, and it has to be right every time."

That has not been the case in recent years in Luzerne County. The 2022 ballot debacle, referred to locally as "papergate," was just the latest problem in a county that is on its fifth election director in the three years since the 2020 presidential election.

The troubles have only increased doubts among voters, some of whom were already distrustful of elections because of persistent falsehoods about the last presidential contest.

There's no one reason why the county has experienced so much turnover in its election office, but there is little doubt the churn has added to challenges confronting the department. Staffers reported finding instructions about important election procedures written on scraps of paper.

Hired as an administrative assistant, Cook found herself serving as interim deputy director within a year despite having no previous election experience. When she started in September 2021, the director who hired her gave his notice on her first day. His replacement was on the job about eight months before he, too, left.

"I don't begrudge anybody that has left," said Cook, 26, a native of the county. "It is a very difficult role to be in."

In Luzerne County, the distrust of elections has sometimes boiled over in public meetings. One recent meeting of the elections board focused almost entirely on ballot drop boxes, a frequent target of conspiracy theories.

Frustration also was evident during a congressional hearing last spring into the paper ballot shortage. One local resident, Theodore "T.J." Fitzgerald, told lawmakers the Democratic-led board of elections was "more interested in drop boxes than making sure there were policies and procedures."

District Attorney Sam Sanguedolce, a Republican elected in 2021, said he was disappointed the congressional hearing was held before his investigation into the paper shortage was complete. He said there was no evidence of voter suppression and local election officials were in a tough position trying to explain what happened given the active investigation.

"No matter what you were going to say, it was going to be twisted by people who wanted things to be twisted," he said.

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, a Republican from Illinois who chairs the committee that held the hearing, said it provided important answers and accountability for local residents.

A new county manager, Romilda Crocamo, was hired earlier this year — responsible for overseeing everything from Luzerne County's airport and roads to the election office. She has brought in a consultant to

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create an elections manual so there would be no confusion about what needs to be done if an employee leaves.

Crocamo has been encouraging staff to be more accessible, hold more public demonstrations about how they work and provide regular updates on election preparations.

"When you don't do that, then the stories start morphing into something that really isn't happening," she said. "We have nothing to hide."

## Hezbollah and Israel exchange fire and warnings of a widened war

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah announced the deaths of five more militants as clashes along the Lebanon-Israel border intensified and the Israeli prime minister warned Lebanon on Sunday not to let itself get dragged into a new war.

The tiny Mediterranean country is home to Hezbollah, a Shiite Muslim political party with an armed wing of the same name. Israeli soldiers and militants have traded fire across the border since Israel's war with the Palestinian group Hamas began, but the launches so far have targeted limited areas.

Hezbollah has reported the deaths of 24 of its militants since Hamas' bloody Oct. 7 rampage in southern Israel. At least six militants from Hamas and another militant group, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and at least four civilians have died in the near-daily hostilities.

Hezbollah has vowed to escalate if Israel begins a ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, which is likely, and Israel said it would aggressively retaliate.

"If Hezbollah decides to enter the war, it will miss the Second Lebanon War. It will make the mistake of its life," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday as he visited troops stationed near the border with Lebanon. "We will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine, and the consequences for it and the Lebanese state are devastating."

Hezbollah and Israel fought a monthlong war in 2006 that ended in a tense stalemate.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that small arms fire was heard along the tense border coming from near the Lebanese village of Aitaroun toward the northern Israeli town of Avivim where key military barracks are located. Meanwhile, Israel shelled areas near the southeastern Lebanese town of Blida.

Israel sees Iran-backed Hezbollah as its most serious threat, estimating it has some 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel.

Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus accused the group early Sunday of "escalating the situation steadily." He said the recent cross-border skirmishes had produced both Israeli troop and civilian casualties but did not provide additional details.

Hezbollah on Sunday posted a video of what it said was a Friday attack targeting the Biranit barracks near the Lebanon-Israel border, the command center of the Israeli military's northern division. Footage shared by the group showed an overhead view of a strike on what it described as a gathering of soldiers.

During a video briefing, Conricus said the group has especially attacked military positions in Mount Dov in recent days, a disputed territory known as Shebaa Farms in Lebanon, where the borders of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel meet.

"Bottom line is ... Hezbollah is playing a very, very dangerous game," he said. "(It is) extremely important for everybody in Lebanon to ask themselves the question of the price. Is the Lebanese state really willing to jeopardize what is left of Lebanese prosperity and Lebanese sovereignty for the sake of terrorists in Gaza?"

The international community and Lebanese authorities have been scrambling to ensure the cash-strapped country does not find itself in a new war.

Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, has yet to comment on the latest Hamas-Israel war, though other officials have. Hezbollah legislator Hassan Fadlallah said Sunday said Nasrallah's silence was part of a strategy to deter Israel from Lebanon and to "prevent the enemy from reaching its goal in Gaza."

"When the time comes for his His Eminence (Hassan Nasrallah) to appear in the media, should managing this battle require so, everyone will see that he will reflect public opinion," Fadlallah said.

## **Palestinian death toll in West Bank surges as Israel pursues militants following Hamas rampage**

By AMY TEIBEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Deadly violence has been surging in the West Bank as the Israeli military pursues Palestinian militants in the aftermath of the Hamas attack from Gaza, with more than 90 Palestinians killed in the Israeli-occupied territory in the past two weeks, mainly in clashes with Israeli troops.

The violence threatens to open another front in the 2-week-old war, and puts pressure on the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the West Bank and is deeply unpopular among Palestinians, in large part because it cooperates with Israel on security matters.

The tally includes six Palestinians killed in separate incidents on Sunday, including two who died in an airstrike on a mosque in the volatile Jenin refugee camp that Israel said was being used by militants. Israel carried out an airstrike during a battle in another West Bank refugee camp last week, in which 13 Palestinians, including five minors, and a member of Israel's paramilitary Border Police were killed.

Israel rarely uses air power in the occupied West Bank, even as it has bombarded Hamas-ruled Gaza since the militant group stormed across the border on Oct. 7.

More than 1,400 people have been killed in Israel since the war began, mostly civilians killed in the initial Hamas assault. The Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza says over 4,300 Palestinians have been killed.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank says 91 Palestinians have been killed there since Oct. 7. In the rest of the year leading up to the Hamas attack, 197 Palestinians were killed, according to an Associated Press count.

In addition to the raids, Palestinians have been killed in violent anti-Israel protests and in some instances in attacks by Jewish settlers.

Israel clamped down on the territory immediately after the Hamas assault, closing crossings and checkpoints between Palestinian towns. Israel says its forces have detained over 700 suspects in the West Bank, including 480 members of Hamas, since the start of hostilities.

Israel's resumption of aerial attacks — which in a July operation in Jenin reached a level of intensity not seen since the Palestinian uprising against Israel two decades ago — suggests a shift in military tactics.

The military described the Al-Ansar Mosque in Jenin as a militant compound belonging to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, a smaller and more radical Palestinian militant group. It said the militants had carried out several attacks in recent months and were planning another imminent assault.

The intensified violence follows more than a year of escalating raids and arrests in the West Bank and deadly Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with Gaza and east Jerusalem, in the 1967 war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state. Over 500,000 Israelis live in settlements across the West Bank that most of the international community considers illegal, while the territory's more than 2.5 million Palestinians live under Israeli military rule.

The Palestinians view the settlements as the greatest obstacle to resolving the conflict with Israel. The last serious and substantive peace talks broke down over a decade ago.

Settler violence against Palestinians has also intensified since the Hamas attack. At least five Palestinians have been killed by settlers, according to Palestinian authorities, and rights groups say settlers have torched cars and attacked several small Bedouin communities, forcing them to evacuate to other areas.

The West Bank Protection Consortium, a coalition of non-governmental organizations and donor countries, including the European Union, says at least 470 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced in the West Bank due to settler violence since Oct. 7. That's in addition to over 1,100 displaced since 2022.

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By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

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Emily Cook, the office's interim deputy director who had been in her position for just two months, rushed to the department's warehouse. She found stacks of paper, but it was the wrong kind — ordered long ago and too thick to meet the requirements for the county's voting equipment.

Conspiracy theories swiftly began to spread: Republican polling places were being targeted; Democrats overseeing elections were trying to disenfranchise Republicans.

"The feeling early on in the day was panic — concern — which grew to overwhelming panic," said Cook, a 26-year-old native of Luzerne County. "And then at some point throughout the day, there was definitely a feeling of people are starting to point fingers — before the day was over, before things were even investigated."

The paper shortage, corrected later in the day, turned out to be an administrative oversight by a new staff but has had consequences that are still rippling through the county of 200,000 voters, sowing doubt about how elections are run and leading to a congressional hearing.

It also serves as a cautionary tale about the perils of a change that has been largely hidden from public view but has transformed the election landscape across the U.S. since the 2020 presidential election: an exodus of local election directors and their staff.

Election offices have been understaffed for years. But 2020 was a tipping point, with all the pandemic-related challenges before the presidential vote and the hostility afterward driven by false claims of a stolen election.

A wave of retirements and resignations has followed, creating a vacuum of institutional knowledge across the country. Experts in the field say widespread inexperience creates risk in an environment where the slightest mistake related to voting or ballot counting can be twisted by conspiracy theorists into a nefarious plot to subvert the vote.

"People growing weary of dealing with the constant criticism, the unending workload, the inability to have any sort of work-life balance at all, and then finding themselves constantly in the spotlight and under scrutiny has, I think, put us in a national crisis," said Jennifer Morrell, a former local election official in Utah and Colorado. "This feels like a really precarious spot."

In Pennsylvania, officials estimate 40 of the state's 67 county election offices have new directors or deputy directors since 2020. The turnover is even more stark in other presidential swing states. In Nevada, election directors in 11 of 17 counties will be overseeing their first presidential election next year, while in Arizona at least 12 of 15 counties have lost at least one top election official.

In North Carolina, where the Republican Legislature recently moved to gain more control of state and local election boards, roughly a third of 100 county election directors have left since the 2020 election.

The dangers are not lost on Al Schmidt, a Republican who helped oversee elections in Philadelphia and faced death threats in 2020. Now Pennsylvania's top election official, Schmidt said his department has been working to increase training materials and build relationships among local election officials in the hopes of reducing future mistakes.

"There are no redoes of Election Day," Schmidt said. "Everything has to be right, and it has to be right every time."

That has not been the case in recent years in Luzerne County. The 2022 ballot debacle, referred to locally as "papergate," was just the latest problem in a county that is on its fifth election director in the three years since the 2020 presidential election.

The troubles have only increased doubts among voters, some of whom were already distrustful of

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elections because of the persistent falsehoods about the last presidential contest — despite Republicans holding 10 of 11 seats on the local governing board.

“We’ve had a whole host of things that have gone on in this county where people sit back now, the electorate sits back and goes, ‘They’re just rigging the election,’” said County Controller Walter Griffith Jr., a Republican and longtime resident. “I try to tell people we got to figure out a way to get past all of those things because you’re not going to win anything and you’re not going to make anything better by doing that.”

There’s no one reason for why the county has experienced so much turnover in its election office, but there is little doubt the churn has added to problems confronting the department. Staffers reported finding instructions about important election procedures written on scraps of paper.

Griffith and others note recent hires have lacked significant election experience.

“They’re brought in because a lot of people don’t want to work in elections, and that’s understandable with so much divisiveness,” said Denise Williams, a Democrat who chairs the Board of Elections, a citizen group formed under the county charter that, among other duties, certifies election results.

Cook understands the pressure first hand. Hired as an administrative assistant, she found herself serving as interim deputy director within a year despite having no previous election experience. When she started in September 2021, the director who hired her gave his notice on her first day. His replacement was on the job about eight months before he, too, left.

“Just in the two years that I’ve been here, I find it difficult to believe when somebody starts that they’re going to be here for the long haul,” Cook said. “I don’t begrudge anybody that has left. It is a very difficult role to be in.”

Nationally, the harassment of election workers has drawn the attention of Congress, state lawmakers and law enforcement. During a 2021 congressional hearing, Schmidt quoted one of the threats he had received: “Tell the truth or your three kids will be fatally shot.” Lawmakers in several states have increased criminal penalties for those who threaten election workers, and the Justice Department has formed a task force that has charged more than a dozen people across the country.

In Luzerne County, the distrust of elections has sometimes boiled over in public meetings. One recent meeting of the elections board focused almost entirely on ballot drop boxes, a frequent target of conspiracy theories. A few cities within the county have banned them, and the board was considering whether to replace one that had to be moved as a result.

Public comment was dominated by those who don’t trust the boxes and who feel the board is ignoring their concerns. They called on the board to release security footage of drop boxes from previous elections.

“If you really have nothing to hide, then why aren’t you doing whatever it takes to be transparent — particularly knowing of all the problems we’ve had in the elections over the last few year?” one resident asked the board.

Frustration also was evident during a congressional hearing last spring into the paper ballot shortage during the midterms. One local resident, Theodore “T.J.” Fitzgerald, told lawmakers the Democrat-led board of elections was “more interested in drop boxes than making sure there were policies and procedures.” Fitzgerald, who has called for leadership changes and more training for election workers, also represents the county’s political transformation.

A former Democrat, he said he is now unhappy with both major parties and has started his own group of like-minded conservatives. County voters, in previous elections, backed Democrats Al Gore, John Kerry and Barack Obama, but then twice voted for Trump.

Of the local election office, Fitzgerald said he knows they are trying to improve: “But they are not coming through when you need them the most,” he said. “It would be nice for nothing to happen.”

District Attorney Sam Sanguedolce, a Republican elected in 2021, said he was disappointed the congressional hearing was held before his investigation into the paper shortage was complete. He said there was no evidence of voter suppression.

Local election officials were in a tough position trying to explain what happened given the active investigation, Sanguedolce said.

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"No matter what you were going to say, it was going to be twisted by people who wanted things to be twisted," he said.

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, a Republican from Illinois who chairs the committee that held the hearing, said it provided important answers and accountability for local residents.

A new county manager, Romilda Crocamo, was hired earlier this year — responsible for overseeing everything from Luzerne County's airport and roads to the election office. She has brought in a consultant to create an elections manual so there will be no confusion about what needs to be done if an employee leaves.

She also has been encouraging staff to be more accessible, hold public demonstrations showing how they work and provide regular updates on election preparations, including how they handle unexpected problems — like a recent glitch that mixed up city council races on some ballots.

"When you don't do that, then the stories start morphing into something that really isn't happening," Crocamo said. "We have nothing to hide."

As the county prepares for municipal elections in November, the memory of the last one and its aftermath remains fresh for Cook. She recalls angry voters showing up at the election office, contentious public meetings and law enforcement officials warning her about threats.

"I wish there were words to describe the feeling of sitting in a room with detectives from the district attorney's office and the sheriff and being told, 'This is what people are saying about you, you need to be careful,'" she said.

After that meeting and being told that she deserved to be executed, Cook said she considered leaving the job.

"There's only one way to fix what's happened in this office, and it's not by quitting and leaving it in further turmoil," she said. "Two years from now, somebody could make the same mistake. But I'm here. I lived it, and I'm never going to make the mistakes again."

## Today in History: October 23

### Beirut truck bombing kills 241 US service members

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Oct. 23, the 296th day of 2023. There are 69 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 23, 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck bombing at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon, while a near-simultaneous attack on French forces killed 58 paratroopers.

On this date:

In 1707, the first Parliament of Great Britain, created by the Acts of Union between England and Scotland, held its first meeting.

In 1910, Blanche S. Scott became the first woman to make a public solo airplane flight, reaching an altitude of 12 feet at a park in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In 1915, tens of thousands of women paraded up Fifth Avenue in New York City, demanding the right to vote.

In 1942, during World War II, Britain launched a major offensive against Axis forces at El Alamein (el ah-lah-MAYN') in Egypt, resulting in an Allied victory.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of Leyte (LAY'-tee) Gulf began, resulting in a major Allied victory against Japanese forces.

In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary's Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces started entering the country, and the uprising was put down within weeks.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon agreed to turn over White House tape recordings subpoenaed by the Watergate special prosecutor to Judge John J. Sirica.

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In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork 58-42.

In 1989, 23 people were killed in an explosion at Phillips Petroleum Co.'s chemical complex in Pasadena, Texas.

In 1995, a jury in Houston convicted Yolanda Saldivar of murdering Tejano singing star Selena.

In 2009, President Barack Obama declared the swine flu outbreak a national emergency, giving his health chief the power to let hospitals move emergency rooms offsite to speed treatment and protect non-infected patients.

In 2014, officials announced that an emergency room doctor who'd recently returned to New York City after treating Ebola patients in West Africa tested positive for the virus, becoming the first case in the city and the fourth in the nation. (Dr. Craig Spencer later recovered.)

In 2017, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced a civil rights investigation into the Weinstein Co., amid sexual harassment and assault allegations against its founder, Harvey Weinstein.

In 2021, a driver lost control during a Texas drag racing event on an airport runway and slammed into a crowd of spectators, killing two children and injuring eight other people.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Philip Kaufman is 87. R&B singer Barbara Ann Hawkins (The Dixie Cups) is 80. Former ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross is 75. Actor Michael Rupert is 72. Movie director Ang Lee is 69. Jazz singer Dianne Reeves is 67. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 67. Community activist Martin Luther King III is 66. Movie director Sam Raimi is 64. Parodist "Weird Al" Yankovic is 64. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 59. Rock musician Brian Nevin (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 57. Actor Jon Huertas is 54. Movie director Chris Weitz is 54. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 54. Bluegrass musician Eric Gibson (The Gibson Brothers) is 53. Country singer Jimmy Wayne is 51. Actor Vivian Bang is 50. Rock musician Eric Bass (Shinedown) is 49. TV personality and host Cat Deeley is 47. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 47. Actor Saycon Sengbloh is 46. Rock singer Matthew Shultz (Cage the Elephant) is 40. TV personality Meghan McCain is 39. R&B singer Miguel is 38. Actor Masiela Lusha (MAH'-see-el-la loo-SHA') is 38. Actor Emilia Clarke is 37. Actor Briana Evigan is 37. Actor Inbar Lavi is 37. Actor Jessica Stroup is 37. Neo-soul musician Allen Branstetter (St. Paul & the Broken Bones) is 33. Actor Taylor Spreitler is 30. Actor Margaret Qualley is 29. Actor Amandla Stenberg is 25.