

# Groton Daily Independent

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## 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

"If you can heed only one piece of advice from the universe, make it this... Pay attention. Do this and everything else will fall into place."

—Bryan E. Wright



## Thursday, Oct. 26

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combo, mashed potatoes with gravy, 7-layer salad, peaches.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School LUnch: Corndogs, mashed sweet potatoes.

Second Round of Football Playoffs

## Friday, Oct. 27

Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad on croissant, tomato spoon salad, frosted brownies, fruit.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Subs, chips.

## Saturday, Oct. 28

Thrift Store open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

Junior High Volleyball Tournament at Matchbox in Aberdeen.

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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## The Bulletin by Newsweek

### World in Brief

Wednesday near Acapulco.

Actor Richard Roundtree, best known for his starring role in the Shaft film franchise, died at the age of 81.

Thirty-three states are suing tech giant Meta, claiming the company's platforms are addictive and harm children's mental health.

Japan's Supreme Court has overturned a controversial 2003 law requiring transgender people to have their reproductive organs removed in order to officially change their gender.

The Arizona Diamondbacks beat the Philadelphia Phillies 4-2 at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia in Game 7 to secure their first appearance at the World Series since 2001.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, former Ukrainian presidential advisor Oleksei Arestovych has warned that Kyiv's forces will not be able to hold on to Avdiivka, the Donetsk town where fierce fighting is ongoing..

Queen Rania of Jordan said "there is a glaring double standard" on the part of Joe Biden and Western leaders for "not even calling for a ceasefire" in the Gaza Strip.

Donald Trump's former fixer, Michael Cohen, testified in the ongoing civil fraud trial, saying he was "tasked by Mr. Trump to increase the total assets" to "whatever number Trump told us to."

Hurricane Otis intensified into an "extremely dangerous" Category 5 hurricane as it approached Mexico's southern Pacific coast and is expected to make landfall early

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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## Volleyball Region 1A Pairings

### Class A - Region 1

#### #1 -

 <b>1 Groton Area</b>	18-4	10/31 TBD
 <b>8 Waubay/Summit</b>	2-22	



#### #2 -

 <b>4 Sisseton</b>	11-14	10/31 TBD
 <b>5 Redfield</b>	10-16	

#### #3 -

 <b>2 Aberdeen Ronc...</b>	18-5	10/31 TBD
 <b>7 Tiospa Zina</b>	7-20	

#### #4 -

 <b>3 Milbank</b>	19-11	10/31 TBD
 <b>6 Webster Area</b>	10-16	

#### #5 -

<b>#1 WINNER</b>	11/2 TBD
<b>#2 WINNER</b>	

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER



#### #6 -

<b>#3 WINNER</b>	11/2 TBD
<b>#4 WINNER</b>	

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

#### Seed Points Averages (calculated Oct. 24)

#1 Groton Area 44.455 - #2 Aberdeen Roncalli 44.217 - #3 Milbank 41.867 - #4 Sisseton 40.240 - #5 Redfield 39.654 - #6 Webster Area 38.615 - #7 Tiospa Zina 36.852 - #8 Waubay/Summit 34.792

## A deep underground experiment in South Dakota leads the race to directly detect dark matter

Lead, SD (Oct. 24, 2023)— In the global race to directly detect dark matter, a project in South Dakota has lapped the field. LUX-ZEPLIN (LZ), a next-generation dark matter experiment funded by the United States Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, is located nearly a mile below the surface at the Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) in Lead, South Dakota. This summer, results published from the first 60 days of the search put LZ in the pole position against other experiments in Canada, Korea, China, Europe, and elsewhere around the globe.

“The analogy I like to use is, we've been constructing this race car, it's built, it's ready. So, we take it around the block for an initial spin—and we break the land speed record,” said Dr. Chamkaur Ghag, the spokesperson for LZ and a professor of physics at University College London. “So we are, for the first time, in completely clear, uncharted discovery territory. We're at the forefront of this race.”

Scientists believe dark matter makes up most of the missing mass in the universe, but it's invisible in everyday life—so how do you see something that is essentially invisible? In the simplest sense, LZ is a thermos that contains slightly more than ten metric tons of liquid xenon at the core. Many scientists believe the leading candidate for a dark matter particle is a WIMP, or Weakly Interacting Massive Particle. Researchers believe some of the particles of dark matter streaming through every square inch of the universe will interact with some of the xenon atoms. You can think of this interaction as two pool balls colliding. When this reaction happens, it will cause a tiny flash of light to occur at the center of the xenon chamber, possibly indicating dark matter.

But seeing a dark matter interaction is a little like trying to hear a pin drop at a massive rock concert. The only way to pick out the minuscule noise of the pin hitting the floor—amidst the waves of blaring guitar solos—is to filter out all the other sounds happening around the pin. LZ is located deep underground to help filter out the cosmic rays that constantly bombard the planet and make it difficult to detect rare dark matter interactions.



**Engineers, Charles Maupin (left) and Jake Davis work to install one of the LUX-ZEPLIN (LZ) chambers in 2019. LZ is a next-generation dark matter experiment in South Dakota.** Photo credit: Nick

Hubbard

Many people have heard of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN. It's the biggest particle accelerator on the planet and it examines the near light speed collisions of subatomic particles. "LHC does loud physics, what we are looking at in LZ is the quiet side of physics," said Ghag. We are looking for low energy particles that almost never interact with matter." But seeing these rare particle interactions is not easy.

## Engineering a particle physics experiment is not for the faint of heart

In the field of physics, theorists explore the mathematical language we use to understand our universe. Based on the math, they put forward ideas, or theories. Dark matter is just one example. Experimentalists take ideas from theorists and design tests, or experiments, needed for validation. Over time, particle physics experiments have grown more complex and today, it's up to engineers to build these large experiments.

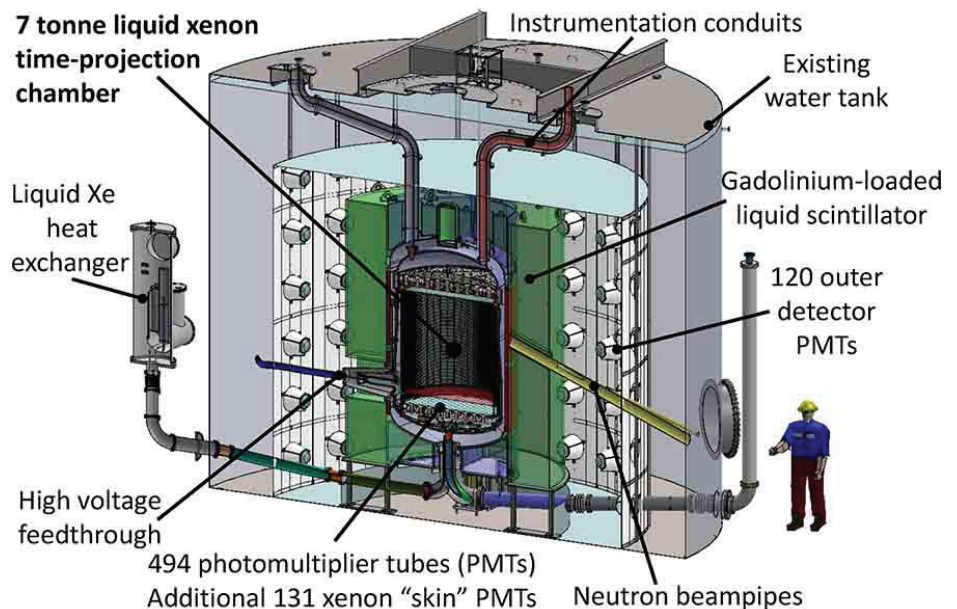
Charles Maupin, one of the engineers who built LZ, will tell you engineering a major science experiment, nearly a mile underground, is in a class of its own. The challenges of a normal building project are compounded with the unique constraints of working 4,850 feet below the surface on highly sensitive equipment with zero tolerance levels for errors and a requirement to get it right the first time, every time.

"It's like building a ship in a bottle, but the bottle neck is a mile long and you have to keep everything ultra clean and radiologically as pure as possible, Maupin said.

LZ took a full decade of planning and work before it was turned on. An ultra-clean space had to be constructed at SURF on the surface and underground. Each part of the detector had to be assayed for its own natural level of background radiation—parts with too much radiation could contaminate the experiment. A full radon mitigation system also had to be installed to reduce the natural levels of radon underground that could contaminate the results. The detector, which includes multiple nested tanks, thousands of feet of cables, and a range of highly sensitive components, was tested on the surface before the trip down the former mine shaft to the Davis Campus, 4850 feet below.

In every project of this complexity, unexpected events require occasional creative problem solving. Maupin and other engineers working on LZ had to occasionally find solutions on the fly. "You would have one fitting type here and one fitting type there, and we got very good at what we jokingly called 'adapterizing,' this is when you had to figure out what we could do with what we had on hand or what we could acquire on deadline that would work."

## The LZ Detector



**A diagram of the LZ experiment. See more at <https://lz.lbl.gov/>.**

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That hard work paid off. LZ is up and running and taking data. For Maupin and other engineers at SURF there is a sense of satisfaction in the effort. "I will say for the group on site, it is a source of pride. We're all from small communities around this region and we have been able to contribute to this world-class research right here at SURF," Maupin said.

In total, the LZ collaboration consists of about 190 scientists from 36 institutions in the U.S., U.K., Portugal, and Korea. If LZ is successful at directly detecting dark matter, it would be groundbreaking in the world of physics, opening doors to new theories, new questions, and new innovation.

## Is dark matter the next Copernican revolution?

Science has humbled us over time.

Copernicus, who was put to death in 1543 for shattering the idea at the time that the sun revolves around the earth, made the first step in western realization that we humans might not be so important in the bigger scheme of things.

Today we know that we inhabit what Carl Sagan called a "pale blue dot," that sits in a small part of a vast solar system, in an insignificant part of a mind-blowingly large galaxy, that is all but meaningless to the rest of the unimaginably large universe.

Dark matter might be the next bit of science that reduces our hubris.

"It's like another Copernican revolution," said Dr. Flip Tanedo, an associate professor of theoretical physics at the University of California, Riverside. "Not only are we not located in any particularly special part of the universe, but the very things that we are made of, the chemistry of our entire universe, as we understood it pre-1900s, is not even the most predominant stuff of the universe." Tanedo's research seeks to discover how dark matter fits into our fundamental understanding of nature.

Tanedo is excited by the experimental precision that has been reached by LZ. "This is a level of sensitivity, that I don't think we ever could have imagined 20 years ago," he said. The fact that LZ has yet to report a dark matter signal is also telling. "LZ has, unfortunately, not yet discovered dark matter. What that really means is that the things we were expecting 20 years ago, seemed to have not panned out. And something much more exciting must be happening. It's throwing down the gauntlet for theorists to be more creative."

But the race isn't over.

If dark matter is in fact a particle that can be detected "then we've known for a long time that we need an experiment something like the size of LZ," Ghag said. The fact that LZ is now operating, and planning is underway for the next generation beyond it, opens many doors for scientists to explore.

"This is a playground where you can test theories and models for new physics," he added. "But just the fact that we are here, all the technological work; the decades of experiments, research, and development; the massive holes in the ground; the infrastructure and all the people supporting it—it's kind of incredible that all of this has come together to allow us to seek answers to these questions about our universe."

LZ is led by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of High Energy Physics and the National Energy Research Scientific Computing Center, a DOE Office of Science user facility. LZ is also supported by the Science & Technology Facilities Council of the United Kingdom; the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology; and the Institute for Basic Science, Korea.

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!





## Codington County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: 462nd Avenue, south of 162nd Street, 7 miles southwest of South Shore, S.D.

When: 9:21 a.m., Tuesday October 24, 2023

Driver No. 1: Male, 60, Fatal injuries

Vehicle No. 1: 2002 International 9200I

Driver No. 2: Male, 20, Not injured

Vehicle No. 2: 2017 Ram 3500

CODINGTON COUNTY, S.D.- One person died this morning in a two vehicle crash seven miles southwest of South Shore , S.D.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2002 International 9200I pulling a loaded grain trailer was driving northbound on 462nd Avenue, which is a gravel road, just south of 162nd Street.

At the same time, a 2017 Ram 3500 pulling a loaded enclosed trailer, was driving southbound on 462nd Ave. just south of 162nd St.

The International and trailer were driving in the middle of the road. The Ram and trailer were driving on the west side of the road. The front driver's side of the International struck the driver's side of the Ram. The International came to a stop on the road. The trailer came loose from the Ram. The Ram went into the ditch and then back onto the road where it came to a stop.

The 60-year-old male driver of the 2002 International sustained fatal injuries. He was not wearing a seatbelt.

The 20-year-old male driver of the 2017 Ram was not injured. He was wearing a seatbelt.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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## Groton Wage Memorial Library

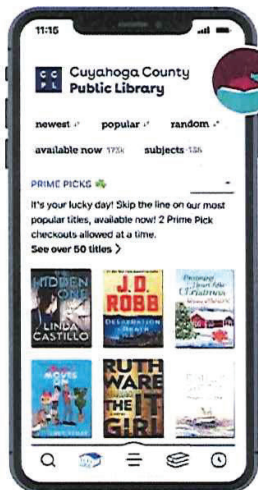


120 N Main St – Groton, SD – (605) 397-8422

Open Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

- Library Cards are FREE to ALL Groton Area Residents!
- Offer a variety of books, magazines, audiobooks and DVDs!
- Offer printing, copying, faxing and scanning services!
- Computer Lab, laptops and tablets available for public use!
- Now offering e-books and audiobooks with the FREE OverDrive/Libby App!

Discover new reads on Libby, the free app from your local library that allows you to borrow ebooks, audiobooks & more on your phone or tablet.



Why you'll love Libby:

- Quick and easy setup! Just follow the prompts to start reading
- A unified bookshelf for all your loans and holds
- Unlimited custom tags to categorize books however you'd like
- Push notifications so you never miss a thing, including available holds
- Easily find the next book in a series
- Preferences to only see the content you like
- More ways to listen on the go with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto

*With the classic OverDrive app being discontinued soon, it's time to read on Libby.* The award-winning Libby app by OverDrive offers a fresh, easy-to-use design with access to the same great titles from your library.



Visit [overdrive.com/libby](https://overdrive.com/libby) to get started with Libby today!



**Summer Storytime EVERY Thursday in the Summer June-August!**  
**'1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program' is NOW available!**

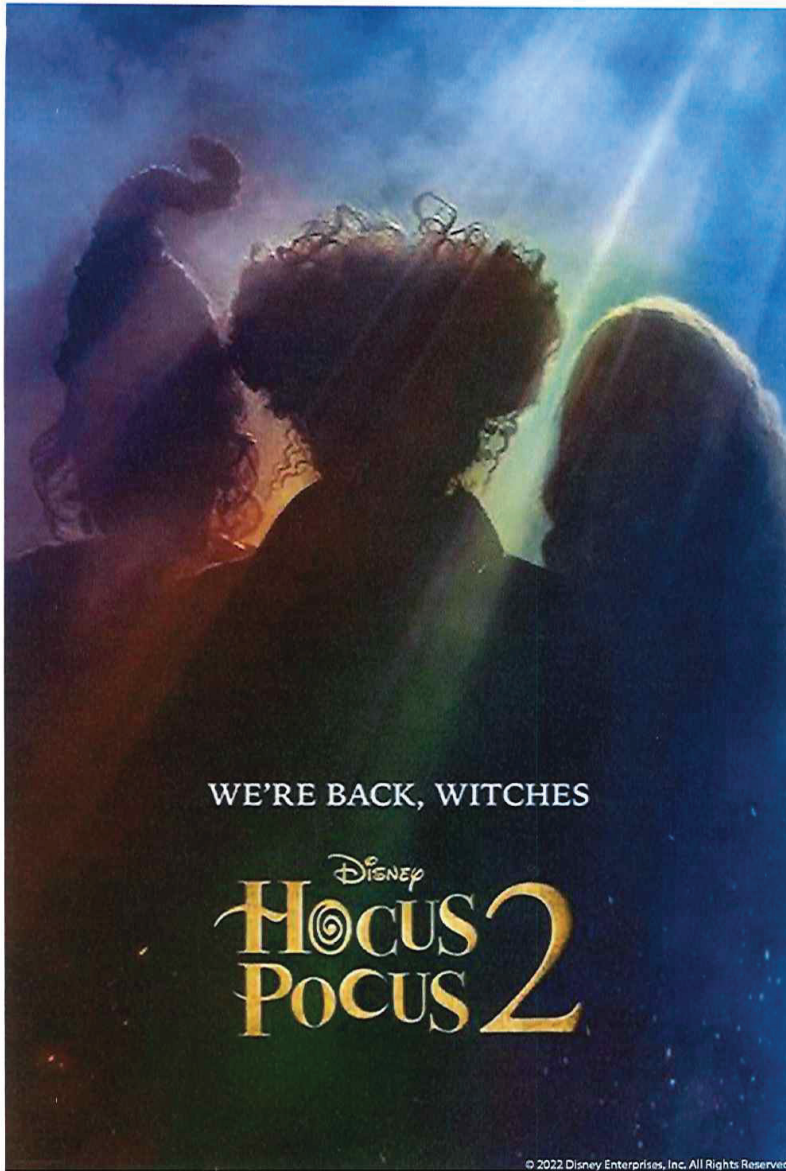
**FREE UPCOMING EVENTS: *MUST PREREGISTER BY CALLING LIBRARY***

Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> 3pm-5pm: Halloween Movie Event: Featuring Hocus Pocus 2!

Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> 11am-1pm: Christmas Movie Event (TBA). Jungle Pizza will be served!

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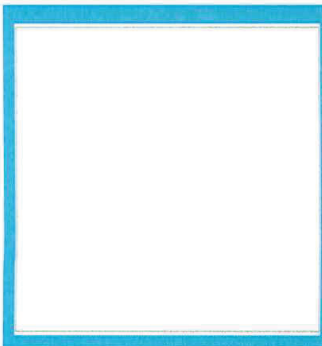
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Groton Wage Memorial  
Library  
120 N Main Street  
Saturday, October 28th  
3:00pm-5:00pm

FREE ADMISSION!  
MUST preregister! Limited  
seating available!  
Questions/Register  
(605) 397-8422

FREE SNACKS provided by  
Dacotah Bank!



**SWANK**  
MOVIE LICENSING USA

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## 8th Grade Persuasive Vacant Lot Proposal

What does Groton need? Everyone has ideas of what Groton needs, and the Groton 8th Graders were responsible for planning and developing a hypothetical vacant lot in English class. Some ideas for the vacant lot were a movie theatre, Chick-fil-A, an athletic center, and a diner. The students wrote persuasive reports, sketched a drawing of the lot, created a slide presentation, and built a small-scale model depicting what they would put in the lot. Judges for the project were April Abeln, Doug Heinrich, Jaimie Mitchell, Shelby Edwards, and Joe Schwan.



**Riley Rose, Journey Zieroth, Addison Hoeft, and Chesney Weber.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**Owen Sperry, Ryder Schelle, Kason Oswald, Trey Smith, Wyatt Wambach.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



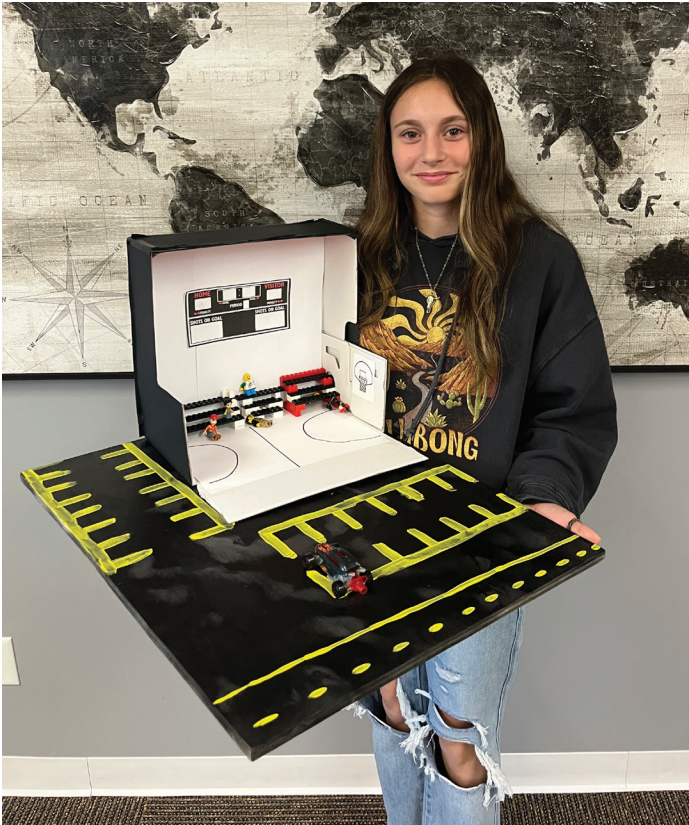
**Shaydon Wood, Jace Johnson, Layne Johnson, Easton Weber.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**Ethan Kroll, T.C. Schuster, Karson Zak, Brysen Sandness.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)

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**Taryn Thompson.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**Makenna Krause, Libby Cole, Kinsley Rowen, Sydney Locke .** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**Raelynn Feist, Mya Feser, Gracie Pearson, Audrey Davis.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**John Bisbee, Alex Abeln, Brayden Barrera.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)

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**Aimee Heilman.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**Jackson Furman, Bradyn Wipf.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)



**Ella Kettner, Rylen Ekern, Kyleigh Kroll, Trinity Dallaire.** (Photo courtesy Diane Kurtz)

## Change in basketball fouls this year

There will no longer be a 1 and 1 bonus shot for common fouls after 7 team fouls in each half. When team fouls get to 5 per quarter, there will be an automatic two shot bonus. Team fouls start back to 0 at each quarter.

## Conde National League

**Oct. 23, 2023 Team Standings:** Giants 17 ½, Cubs 17, Braves 16, Pirates 12, Tigers 11, Mets 10 ½

**Men's High Games:** Ryan Bethke 209, Dalton Locke 199, Butch Farmen 193

**Men's High Series:** Ryan Bethke 542, Dalton Locke 507, Cody Keller 458

**Women's High Games:** Nancy Radke 171, Vickie Kramp 159, Michelle Johnson 148

**Women's High Series:** Vickie Kramp 472, Nancy Radke 455, Sam Bahr 421

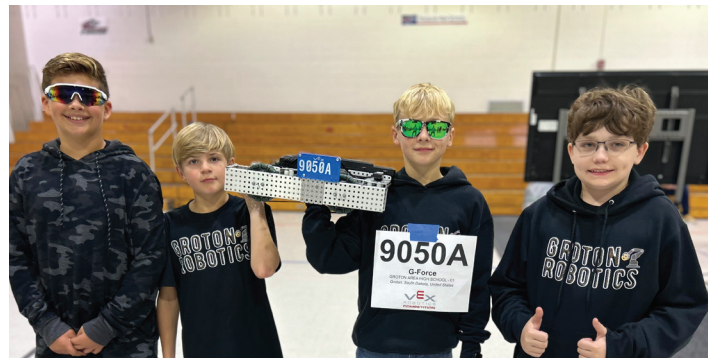
## Robotics open season at Douglas



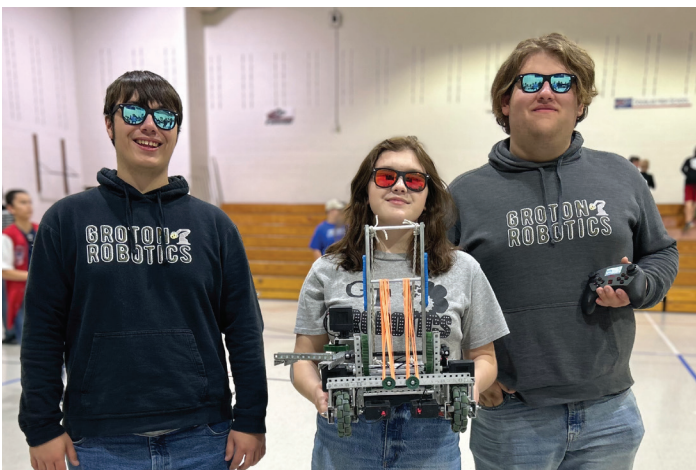
**Jameson Penning and Garrett Schultz.** (Photo Courtesy Melissa Schultz)

Groton Robotics is in full swing! We have four teams consisting of 6th grade thru 11th, 15 students in total. Coach is Neil Warrington. Our first tournament we've traveled to was Douglas High School in Box Elder on October 21st. The teams fought hard and all teams made it to the elimination round! In two weeks on November 4th, we will be traveling to Mitchell, for the first ever Robotics competition ever held in the famous Corn Palace!

- Melissa Schultz



**Haden Harder, Connor Kroll, Grant Cleveland, Logan Olson.** (Photo Courtesy Melissa Schultz)



**Axel Warrington, Kianna Sander, Corbin Weismantel.** (Photo Courtesy Melissa Schultz)



**Evie Grant, Kira Clocksene, Logan Clocksene, Hayden Zoellner.** (Photo Courtesy Melissa Schultz)



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Regulators vote to release Dakota Access Pipeline's road bond and public liaison officer

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 24, 2023 4:41 PM

South Dakota utility regulators voted Tuesday in Pierre to release the road bond and the public liaison officer associated with a controversial crude oil pipeline.

The Public Utilities Commission move comes six years after the Dakota Access Pipeline's completion in 2017.

The road bond is a financial guarantee requiring the pipeline company to cover any damages to roads during construction. The public liaison officer helped the commission manage communications with affected landowners and the pipeline company.

Brett Koenecke is the lawyer representing the pipeline and submitted the motion to terminate the bond and liaison. In a document submitted to regulators, he wrote that the motion is "based on the fact that construction is long concluded."

A few landowners criticized the PUC's decision, suggesting it's premature.

"Having the Dakota Access pipeline on our land, we witnessed the hurried construction of this pipeline in 2016," wrote Rod and Joy Hohn, of Hartford. "This, in addition to the inadequate/deficient lack of in-depth inspections, should also be of great concern."

Peggy Hoogestraat's land near Chancellor is also crossed by the pipeline. She expressed concern that the decision was being made without adequate notice to all impacted landowners.

"Some have changed their phone numbers, sold their land, and those people have no idea about any of this," she told South Dakota Searchlight.

Regulatory staff responded to her concerns, writing that landowners would receive notice; however, "It is the responsibility of formal docket parties to ensure their contact information is updated should they desire to be informed of future docket action."

The Dakota Access Pipeline, which spans 1,172 miles and transports crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois, stirred controversy during its planning and construction phases. Concerns ranged from environmental impacts to the rights of Indigenous communities, including the Standing Rock Reservation, which closely borders the pipeline route.

Commissioner Chris Nelson said the effect of removing the bond and liaison will be minimal.

"The company is still responsible, ultimately," he said, adding that the commission's staff is capable of filling the role of the liaison in the future.

The pipeline traverses 13 counties in South Dakota. The route enters South Dakota in Campbell County at the North Dakota border and extends in a southeasterly direction, exiting the state at the Iowa border in Lincoln County. The length of the pipeline through South Dakota is 272 miles.

#### Pipeline's future unclear

Despite being completed and operational, the pipeline remains under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers due to court orders arising from litigation.

Earlier this year, federal officials released a draft environmental review of the pipeline but said they're waiting for more input before deciding the future of the line – particularly the Missouri River crossing, upstream of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation.

Thousands of people protested near the pipeline's river crossing for months, resulting in hundreds of arrests when the pipeline was being constructed.



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

## State joins lawsuit accusing Meta of fueling children's social media addiction

**BY: DANA DIFILIPPO AND SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - OCTOBER 24, 2023 2:58 PM**

South Dakota has joined 32 other states in a federal lawsuit that accuses Meta of designing Facebook and Instagram to intentionally addict children and teens, in violation of state and federal laws that protect consumers and children's online privacy.

The states say that Meta knew its platforms psychologically harmed youth but hid those harms and installed features like "infinite scroll and near-constant alerts" to fuel youths' social media addiction, according to a 233-page complaint filed Tuesday in federal court in northern California. Addicting users serves Meta's profit motive because the company sells advertisements targeting users, the states allege.

Meta also collected data from underage users without the parental consent federal law requires, according to the lawsuit. And the company routinely published "profoundly misleading reports" assuring the public its products were safe for young users, even though Meta's internal research linked young people's social media use to depression, anxiety, insomnia and problems both at school and in daily life, the lawsuit charges.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said Facebook and Instagram have "played a major role in the youth mental health issues occurring in America."

"Such platforms have led or contributed to physical and emotional harm to children and devastating families," Jackley said in a news release. "Meta needs to be held accountable for its actions."

Eight other states filed complaints in their state courts alleging deceptive trade, consumer fraud, unlawful trade, unjust enrichment, negligence, product liability and public nuisance claims.

In the federal lawsuit, the states are asking a judge to order Meta to stop using its addictive features and pay financial damages.

"Despite overwhelming internal research, independent expert analysis, and publicly available data that its Social Media Platforms harm young users, Meta still refuses to abandon its use of known harmful features — and has instead redoubled its efforts to misrepresent, conceal, and downplay the impact of those features on young users' mental and physical health," the lawsuit charges.

The company is expanding its use of the addictive practices into new platforms and domains, including its Virtual Reality Metaverse, WhatsApp, and Messenger, the states complain.

The states cited five especially "psychologically manipulative" features they say exploit young users' developing brains, including:

Recommendation algorithms the states characterize as "dopamine-manipulating."

"Likes" and social comparison features.

Audiovisual and haptic alerts that continually recall users.

Visual filter features that promote body dysmorphia.

Content-presentation formats, such as infinite scroll, that keep users hooked.

Meta officially bars children under 13 from using its platform, but countless preteens use Facebook and Instagram without consequence from Meta, the lawsuit says.

*Dana DiFilippo comes to the New Jersey Monitor from WHYY, Philadelphia's NPR station, and the Philadelphia Daily News, a paper known for exposing corruption and holding public officials accountable. Prior to that, she worked at newspapers in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and suburban Philadelphia and has freelanced for various local and national magazines, newspapers and websites. She lives in Central Jersey with her husband, a photojournalist, and their two children.*

## Freedom Scholarship Board: Let schools decide if students hit GPA mark

BY: JOHN HULT - OCTOBER 24, 2023 12:11 PM

SIOUX FALLS — College students who get poor grades in a handful of semesters may be able to hold on to their South Dakota Freedom Scholarships or apply for new ones – as long as they remain on track to graduate with a 2.0 grade point average.

That guidance for participating universities came from the Freedom Scholarship Board of Directors during its Monday meeting at First Premier Bank in Sioux Falls.

The board considered a policy to outline if and when a dip in the scholarship's required GPA target would trigger ineligibility, but its members voted to leave those decisions in the hands of university administrators.

The scholarship is a pool of funds created by the South Dakota Legislature, designed to reward students who choose South Dakota schools for their bachelor's degrees and stay in the state for at least three years after graduation.

The scholarship dollars convert to loans with a 4% fixed interest rate for students who don't graduate within five years, miss the minimum GPA mark or leave the state less than three years after graduation.

The endowment for the needs-based scholarships was built from \$50 million in taxpayer funds and contributions from donors including First Premier Bank founder T. Denny Sanford, Avera and Sanford Health. In 2022, the first year the scholarships were disbursed, the total endowment stood at \$220 million.

The scholarship board voted to dispense \$5.1 million in the first round of awards in 2022, and a similar amount for this year.

In the fall of 2022, there were 1,354 scholarships awarded, according to Freedom Scholarship Coordinator Elli Haerter of the South Dakota Community Foundation. This fall saw another 1,360 awards.

The first 25 scholarship recipients to graduate earned their degrees in December of 2022, and another 129 recipients graduated this spring.

Haerter told the board there were several nursing students among those graduates, and several plan to pursue graduate degrees.

"Some of the students are on their way to med school," Haerter said.

### Board votes to stay out of GPA fray

Among the requirements for the \$1,000-\$5,000 scholarships is a stipulation that the awarded student maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).

Monday's discussion focused on what it means for a scholarship recipient to "maintain" that GPA. The law on eligibility doesn't include specifics on what that looks like, opening up questions about how long students can backslide academically before losing their shot at more scholarship dollars, or potentially seeing their scholarship become a loan.

A policy document up for discussion Monday outlined the board's possible approaches to grace for students whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0. Universities could give notice of a dip in a scholarship recipient's GPA to the board at the end of the spring semester, for example, and the scholarship board could decide if the student deserves an exemption.

Board Chair Dana Dykhouse said questions like that ought not be in the hands of the board, however.

"We are a scholarship donor. We are not a scholarship administrator. We want to do all that we can to avoid becoming scholarship administrators," Dykhouse said.

Universities award the grants, decide on the maximum amounts for each scholarship and track student progress. Dykhouse pointed out that every participating university requires a cumulative GPA of 2.0 for graduation.

If a university feels it's possible for a student to hit that mark, he said, that ought to be enough for the scholarship board.

"Our interpretation of 2.0 is maintaining it through graduation," he said.

The board voted unanimously to approve the simplified guidance.

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Universities remain empowered to monitor and manage students with scholarships as they see fit, and to inform the board if a student is unlikely to graduate with a 2.0 GPA.

## Other South Dakota scholarships

The Freedom Scholarship is the latest state-backed fund for South Dakota students. There are several others available, each meant to encourage students to learn and work in the state.

**Build Dakota Scholarship:** Full-ride scholarships to students who commit to joining high-need workforce programs at the state's technical colleges. Graduates must stay in the state and work in their field for three years.

**Critical Teaching Needs Scholarship:** Financial aid offered to students who commit to working in high-need education positions for five years after graduation.

**Dakota Corps Scholarship:** Full-ride scholarships for eligible students who choose high-need careers and commit to staying in South Dakota for as many years as the scholarship is received.

**Opportunity Scholarship:** Up to \$7,500 across four years for students who meet academic eligibility and choose South Dakota schools.

**Hagen-Harvey Scholarship:** Offers \$6,000 in financial assistance across four years for Native American students who choose South Dakota schools.

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

## Feds pledge \$2.3 billion to boost ag exports amid farm bill uncertainty

BY: JARED STRONG - OCTOBER 24, 2023 4:05 PM

Federal agricultural officials plan to spend up to \$2.3 billion to promote farm exports and to send U.S. grain to countries that are suffering food shortages.

"This will complement existing trade promotion programs as we await Congress' action on both the budget and the farm bill," U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said Tuesday.

The farm bill — which governs policy and spending for farm, food and conservation programs — is up for renewal, which typically happens every five years. Some of its provisions expired at the end of September, and more will expire at the end of the year.

It's unclear when federal lawmakers will approve a new farm bill. The U.S. House of Representatives has been without a speaker for about three weeks and, consequently, unable to act on legislation.

A popular trade promotion program that was created in 2018 amid then-President Donald Trump's trade war with China and other countries is also set to expire next year.

"We continue to look for ways in which we can increase trade opportunities for U.S. agriculture, especially because of the strength of the U.S. economy and the difficulties experienced in the global economy," Vilsack said. "We now find ourselves with unusual trade deficits in agricultural products."

The new federal funding — \$1.3 billion for the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program and \$1 billion to combat global hunger — will be paid out of the Commodity Credit Corporation, which the Biden administration has used for myriad new agriculture initiatives, including those that promote "climate smart" practices.

Some Republican lawmakers have criticized the use of CCC funds for those initiatives. The CCC was created decades ago to assist farmers with catastrophic crop losses, but the USDA has broad spending authority over it.

The latest announced spending was the result of an August request from the top Democrat and Republican of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

"We write to urge you to consider using your authorities with regard to the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act to support the creation of new and better market opportunities for our nation's farmers by addressing two key needs: trade promotion, and in-kind international food assistance," U.S. Sens. Debbie

Stabenow, a Michigan Democrat, and John Boozman, an Arkansas Republican, wrote to the USDA.

They noted bipartisan support for the food assistance because "Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine continues to disrupt supply chains and perpetuate humanitarian crises in the region and around the world."

Russia invaded Ukraine about 20 months ago. As the fighting continues, Russia has sought to block grain from being exported by Ukraine, especially through its Black Sea ports. Ukraine is a major producer of corn and wheat.

The USDA will use up to \$1 billion to buy commodities and distribute them with the help of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the lead federal agency for international emergency food aid programs.

Vilsack said the USDA hopes to finalize the details of the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program funding in the coming months.

*Jared Strong is the senior reporter for the Iowa Capital Dispatch. He has written about Iowans and the important issues that affect them for more than 15 years, previously for the Carroll Times Herald and the Des Moines Register. His investigative work exposing police misconduct has notched several state and national awards. He is a longtime trustee of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council, which fights for open records and open government. He is a lifelong Iowan and has lived mostly in rural western parts of the state.*

## Emmer nominated for U.S. House speaker but drops out after Trump opposition

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA, ASHLEY MURRAY AND JACOB FISCHLER - OCTOBER 24, 2023**

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Republicans Tuesday voted to tap Minnesota's Tom Emmer as speaker following five rounds of ballots — but Emmer quit the race just four hours later, after he was attacked by the GOP's most powerful figure, former President Donald Trump.

After beating six candidates, Emmer, the No. 3 Republican, faced an uphill battle to coalesce more than 20 hard-right Republican holdouts loyal to Trump, who took to social media shortly after the vote to warn that electing Emmer would be a "tragic mistake."

"He never respected the Power of a Trump Endorsement, or the breadth and scope of MAGA," Trump, also a 2024 candidate for president, wrote about Emmer on his site, Truth Social. "He is totally out-of-touch with Republican Voters."

Emmer, 62, who represents a safe GOP district that includes parts of the western and northern Twin Cities suburbs, the city of St. Cloud and rural areas in between, had continued to meet with holdouts on Tuesday afternoon following the closed-door conference vote.

Emmer quickly left the meeting later Tuesday, dogging reporters chasing after him. He declined to comment before entering a black car. Lawmakers said he dropped out a short time later.

With Emmer out, Republicans will have to begin their nomination process anew and it was unclear how that would proceed.

Emmer would have had to get nearly all of the 221 Republican votes on the House floor, as all Democrats are expected to vote for Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. In the final secret ballot, Emmer earned 117 GOP votes, a long way from the 217 needed for the speaker's gavel if all Republicans are present and voting.

In a roll call conference vote, again behind closed doors, on whether a member would support him on the floor, Emmer's support grew to 186, according to several lawmakers in the meeting.

Several Republicans leaving Tuesday's meeting, such as Reps. Steve Womack of Arkansas and Dusty Johnson of South Dakota, acknowledged that Emmer did not have the votes needed to become speaker, but still remained hopeful that Emmer could narrow that gap.

Womack said that because the conference had a roll call ballot, Emmer can see which Republicans were holdouts.

"I expect that Tom would want to meet with the individuals that are not calling his name and see if there is something he can say or do that could bring them around and help shore up their requisite 217," Womack said. "If he can't do that, then he's got to make a decision as to whether he goes to the floor."

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Womack added that there are some members that will always be against Emmer, but he did not name them.

"What I just saw in that room illustrates to me that there are some people that are pretty well dug in and are not going to support the current designee," he said.

For example, Georgia's Rick Allen, had already stated he will never vote for Emmer because the Minnesota Republican voted to codify same-sex marriage, according to CNN.

Johnson said that Emmer was working on flipping those holdouts.

"People with concerns are coming forward, and he's taking them head on," Johnson said.

When asked how many members voted against Emmer in the roll call vote, Mike Waltz of Florida said "too many."

## Third GOP nominee

Emmer was the third Republican nominee for speaker.

The first, Louisiana's Steve Scalise never brought his nomination for a floor vote and the second, Ohio's Jim Jordan, was tossed aside by the party after his third and final unsuccessful floor vote for the speaker's gavel.

The House has been without a speaker for 21 days.

Emmer, who serves in GOP leadership as the Republican whip, had the endorsement of former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, but would have had to court members and allies of the far-right House Freedom Caucus who are aligned closely with Trump.

On Monday, Emmer posted a video in which he said he has always "gotten along" with Trump, who is also the current GOP front-runner in the 2024 presidential election.

In a Monday campaign stop in New Hampshire, Trump was asked if he'd endorse Emmer. The former president said he'd "always gotten along with" Emmer, but said he was trying to allow House Republicans to choose their own leader.

Emmer posted a video clip of the appearance to X, saying as speaker, he would continue the pair's "strong working relationship."

However, by Tuesday, Trump had posted about his opposition to Emmer on his social media site.

Emmer was also one of the few candidates running for the speakership who voted to certify the 2020 election results.

## The speaker campaign

On Monday night, as they tried again to elect a speaker, House Republicans heard pitches from eight of their colleagues who had filed by a Sunday deadline. Pennsylvania's Dan Meuser was also a candidate but dropped out in the middle of the closed-door candidate forum.

Those GOP lawmakers who ran for the speaker's gavel included Reps. Gary Palmer of Alabama, Byron Donalds of Florida, Austin Scott of Georgia, Mike Johnson of Louisiana, Jack Bergman of Michigan, Kevin Hern of Oklahoma and Pete Sessions of Texas.

Early Tuesday, Scalise, the House majority leader, said the goal is for Republicans to unify behind a nominee and get back to legislative work that has been stalled since McCarthy was ousted earlier this month.

"There's a lot of work to do," Scalise said. "All of these things are bills that are ready to go that we want to move."

Whoever becomes speaker will be tasked with a quickly approaching Nov. 17 deadline for government funding and a nearly \$106 billion supplemental aid request from the White House for Ukraine, Israel and global aid and U.S. border security. Emmer will also have to lead in moving must-pass legislation such as the annual defense bill and five-year reauthorization of the farm bill.

On top of legislative duties the new speaker will have to balance striking deals with a White House and Senate controlled by Democrats while also fundraising and protecting vulnerable Republicans and expanding the House's slim GOP majority in the 2024 elections.

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McCarthy said he wants to see the party move beyond its deep fractures and that there must be “consequences” for the eight Republicans who voted with Democrats to oust him.

“It’s frustrating because it’s just a few, these eight, working with all the Democrats to ruin the reputation of the Republicans, but we’ll earn it back,” the California Republican said.

## Five ballots for Emmer

Republicans went through five secret ballots on Tuesday to get to a nominee. Some candidates withdrew their names prior to voting to speed the process along, such as Palmer and Meuser.

Sessions was dropped in the first round of ballots; Bergman in the second round; Scott in the third round; Hern in the fourth round; and Johnson in the fifth round. Donalds withdrew in the fourth round.

Because Republicans have struggled to rally behind one candidate, Rep. Mike Flood of Nebraska asked all speaker candidates and GOP lawmakers to sign a unity pledge.

But there were clear signs of dissent.

For the first four rounds of secret ballots, six lawmakers voted either present or for others besides the announced candidates, stirring concern that a candidate may not be able to gain the support of the majority of the conference on the floor.

Bill Huizenga of Michigan said as the final ballot was ongoing, he had a message for those Republicans who voted present: “We got to figure this out. Stop voting present, stop voting for other people. We have two candidates.”

One of those who voted present, Troy Nehls of Texas, said that Emmer had no chance of becoming speaker and that as Republicans, “we are, again, back to where we started.”

Rep. Brett Guthrie of Kentucky said Emmer asked the holdouts to remain in the room after an up-or-down roll call vote to discuss differences.

“So when I left, several people who voted different than Emmer were at the microphone,” he said.

Rep. Ann Wagner of Missouri said she hoped Emmer’s approach would rebuild trust among the conference.

“This is really good because it also does away with this feeling that there are any kind of backroom deals going on or that people are, you know, getting their wish lists,” Wagner said, referring to one-on-one meetings that other speaker candidates have held.

In January, McCarthy made a secret handshake deal with far right conservatives before he won on a 15th ballot.

Mario Díaz-Balart of Florida said that while Donalds was his first choice, he wanted to unify around Emmer whom he described as “honorable.”

As whip “he has the relationships. If he can’t pull it together then we’re running into some very, very difficult times,” he said.

House Democrats continued to criticize the GOP Tuesday.

“Chaos and dysfunction continue to be the order of the day in the House Republican majority. Today is day 21 without a speaker, and the other side is back to square one,” Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar said at a press conference.

## Emmer finances, fundraising

Known in Congress as a promoter of cryptocurrency, Emmer’s own finances are remarkably traditional, according to personal financial reports required of members of Congress.

In his most recent annual report, filed in May, Emmer listed only one asset, an investment account worth between \$15,000 and \$50,000, and one liability, a mortgage of between \$100,000 and \$250,000.

He listed no stock holdings, transactions, gifts or other finances — a rarity for congressional financial disclosures that are often more complicated.

A prolific fundraiser as the former head of the House Republican campaign operation, Emmer has raised millions from the cryptocurrency sector and promoted the technology in the House, where he sits on the Financial Services Committee.

He raised \$2 million for the National Republican Congressional Committee in the 2022 cycle from the

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political action committee of Ryan Salame, the former co-CEO of FTX, a crypto firm that went bankrupt after serious allegations of fraud.

Immediately following that scandal, Emmer maintained that the FTX example should not undermine the promise of cryptocurrency itself.

For the current campaign cycle, Emmer has raised a combined \$3.7 million for his own campaign and for his leadership PAC. He's raised \$230,000 from contributors in the securities and investment industry — more than any industry other than “retired,” according to the nonprofit campaign spending tracking group Open Secrets.

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.*

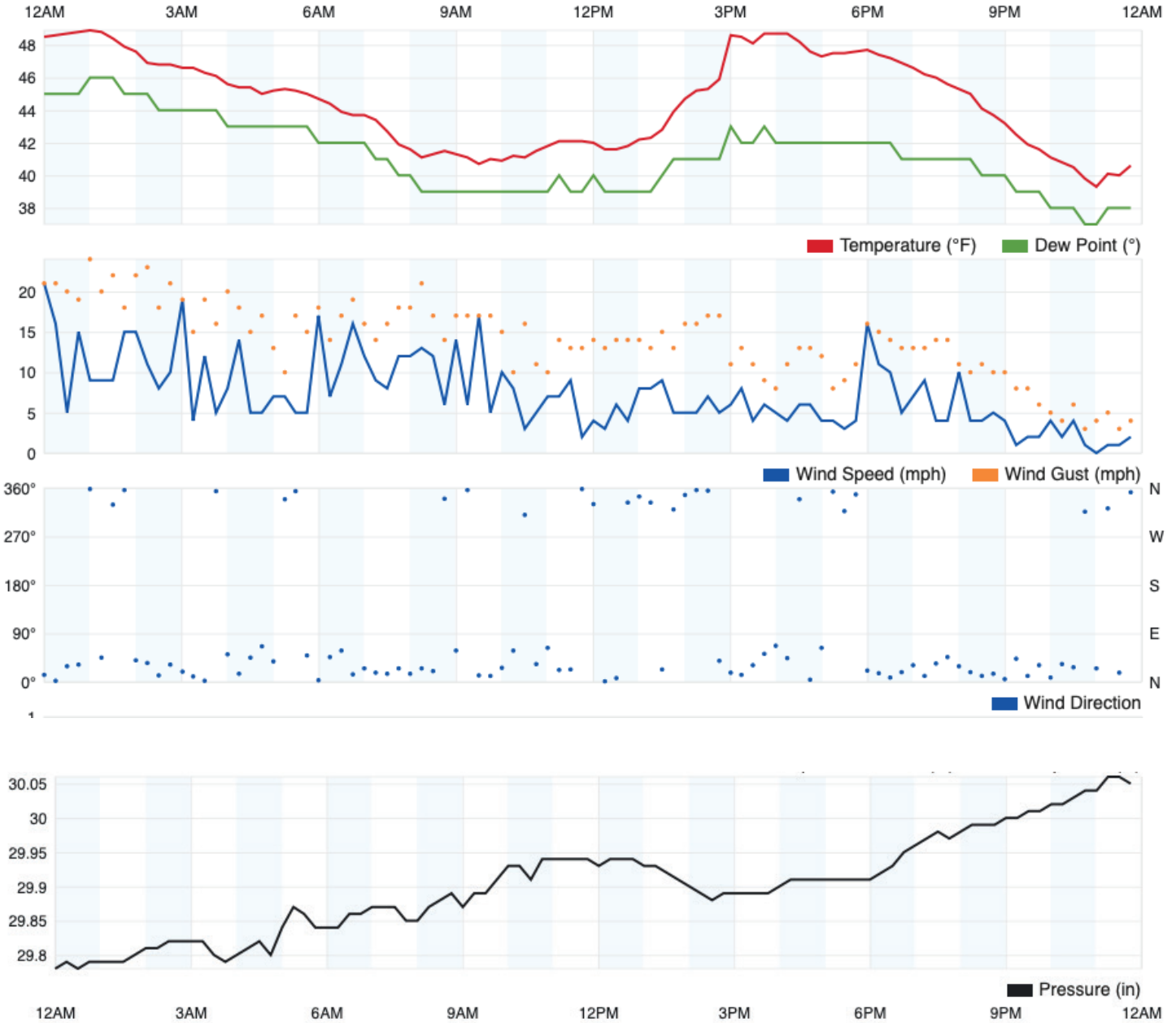
*Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.*

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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Day	Oct 25	Oct 26	Oct 27	Oct 28	Oct 29	Oct 30	Oct 31
Weather							
High	54°F	42°F	33°F	29°F	32°F	34°F	29°F
Low	39°F	24°F	17°F	13°F	14°F	13°F	21°F
Wind	NE	NNE	NW	NNW	WNW	WSW	W
Speed	10 MPH	18 MPH	26 MPH	10 MPH	13 MPH	13 MPH	17 MPH
Other		60%					

## One More Mild Day, Then Colder

October 24, 2023 2:51 PM

Dry through Wednesday, Chance of Precipitation Thursday/Friday

**Wednesday**

- Mainly Dry, Highs in the 50s

**Thursday**

- (40-80%) Likely Rain/Snow
- Highs 35-55° warmest in eastern SD

**Friday**

- Chance Morning Snow East (20-30%), Highs in the 30s

	Probability of Precipitation Forecast																					
	10/25 Wed						10/26 Thu						10/27 Fri									
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	0	0	5	5	40	40	40	35	50	50	50	50	75	75	75	60	60	15	15	0	0	
Britton	0	5	0	5	60	60	60	40	50	50	60	60	80	80	80	70	70	20	20	0	0	
Brookings	5	5	20	20	30	30	40	40	55	55	60	60	60	55	55	55	55	15	15	0	0	
Chamberlain	0	0	5	5	5	0	10	10	20	20	25	25	30	30	40	40	40	5	5	0	0	
Clark	5	5	5	5	40	40	40	35	55	55	55	55	70	70	70	60	60	15	15	0	0	
Eagle Butte	0	5	5	0	15	15	35	35	70	70	70	65	65	65	65	30	30	0	0	0	0	
Ellendale	0	5	5	10	50	50	50	40	55	55	70	70	80	80	80	60	60	15	15	0	0	
Eureka	5	5	10	10	40	40	50	50	70	70	70	65	80	80	80	45	45	10	10	0	0	
Gettysburg	5	5	5	5	10	10	30	30	60	60	60	60	70	70	70	40	40	5	5	0	0	
Huron	0	5	15	15	15	15	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50	55	55	55	5	5	0	0	
Kennebec	5	10	5	5	5	5	15	15	40	40	40	25	50	50	50	40	40	0	0	0	0	
McIntosh	5	5	10	10	30	30	60	60	60	60	90	90	90	70	70	30	30	5	5	0	0	
Milbank	0	0	0	5	55	55	55	45	45	40	55	55	70	70	70	65	65	25	25	0	0	
Miller	5	10	5	5	15	15	30	30	70	70	70	65	65	65	65	55	55	10	10	0	0	
Mobridge	0	5	5	5	20	20	45	45	75	75	75	60	75	75	75	35	35	5	5	0	0	
Murdo	5	5	5	0	5	5	15	15	40	40	40	10	55	55	55	30	30	0	0	0	5	
Pierre	0	5	0	0	5	5	20	20	55	55	55	15	50	50	50	35	35	0	0	0	0	
Redfield	0	5	5	5	25	25	30	30	50	50	50	40	65	65	65	60	60	10	10	0	0	
Sisseton	0	0	0	5	60	60	60	40	50	50	50	50	75	75	75	70	70	20	20	0	0	
Watertown	5	5	5	10	50	50	50	40	50	50	65	65	70	70	70	60	60	20	20	0	0	
Webster	0	5	0	5	50	50	50	40	50	50	55	55	75	75	75	65	65	20	20	0	0	
Wheaton	0	0	0	5	55	55	55	35	45	45	50	50	75	75	75	70	70	25	25	0	0	

Mild Wednesday, Cold later this Week

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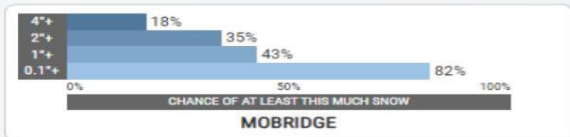
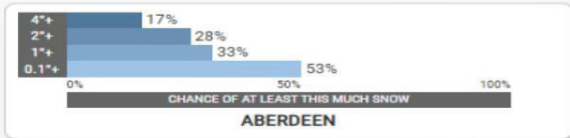


## Precipitation Timeline

October 24, 2023  
3:15 PM

### & Potential Accumulation

- **North-Northwest winds** increase Thursday night, with **gusts of 25 - 40 mph**
- While **snow accumulations will largely be on grassy surfaces**, it's still good to keep an eye on the forecast, plan ahead, and drive to conditions.



### Weather Forecast

	10/25 Wed		10/26 Thu				10/27 Fri				
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm
Aberdeen	0%	5%	40%	40%	50%	50%	75%	75%	60%	15%	0%
Britton	5%	5%	60%	60%	50%	60%	80%	80%	70%	20%	0%
Brookings	5%	20%	30%	40%	55%	60%	60%	55%	55%	15%	0%
Chamberlain	0%	5%	5%	10%	20%	25%	30%	40%	40%	5%	0%
Clark	5%	5%	40%	40%	55%	55%	70%	70%	60%	15%	0%
Eagle Butte	5%	5%	15%	35%	70%	70%	65%	65%	30%	0%	0%
Ellendale	5%	10%	50%	50%	55%	70%	80%	80%	60%	15%	0%
Eureka	5%	10%	40%	50%	70%	70%	80%	80%	45%	10%	0%
Gettysburg	5%	5%	10%	30%	60%	60%	70%	70%	40%	5%	0%
Huron	5%	15%	15%	25%	50%	50%	50%	55%	55%	5%	0%
Kennebec	10%	5%	5%	15%	40%	40%	50%	50%	40%	0%	0%
McIntosh	5%	10%	30%	60%	60%	90%	90%	70%	30%	5%	0%
Milbank	0%	5%	55%	55%	45%	55%	70%	70%	65%	25%	0%
Miller	10%	5%	15%	30%	70%	70%	65%	65%	55%	10%	0%
Mobridge	5%	5%	20%	45%	75%	75%	75%	75%	35%	5%	0%
Murdo	5%	5%	5%	15%	40%	40%	55%	55%	30%	0%	5%
Pierre	5%	0%	5%	20%	55%	55%	50%	50%	35%	0%	0%
Redfield	5%	5%	25%	30%	50%	50%	65%	65%	60%	10%	0%
Sisseton	0%	5%	60%	60%	50%	50%	75%	75%	70%	20%	0%
Watertown	5%	10%	50%	50%	50%	65%	70%	70%	60%	20%	0%
Webster	5%	5%	50%	50%	50%	55%	75%	75%	65%	20%	0%
Wheaton	0%	5%	55%	55%	45%	50%	75%	75%	70%	25%	0%

\*Created: 3 pm CDT Tue 10/24/2023. Shows most impactful weather for the period beginning at the time shown. Weather symbols display where Probability of Precipitation ≥ 0%.

- Rain + - Wintry Mix + - Snow +



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Timeline on the right will give you some idea of when we expect rain to start, along with the timing of the transition to a mix and finally over to mostly snow. Accumulations will be generally light, mainly on grassy surfaces...but some areas could still see accumulation on the roads.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 49 °F at 12:52 AM

Low Temp: 39 °F at 10:52 PM

Wind: 24 mph at 12:57 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 31 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 81 in 1989

Record Low: 10 in 1942

Average High: 54

Average Low: 29

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.83

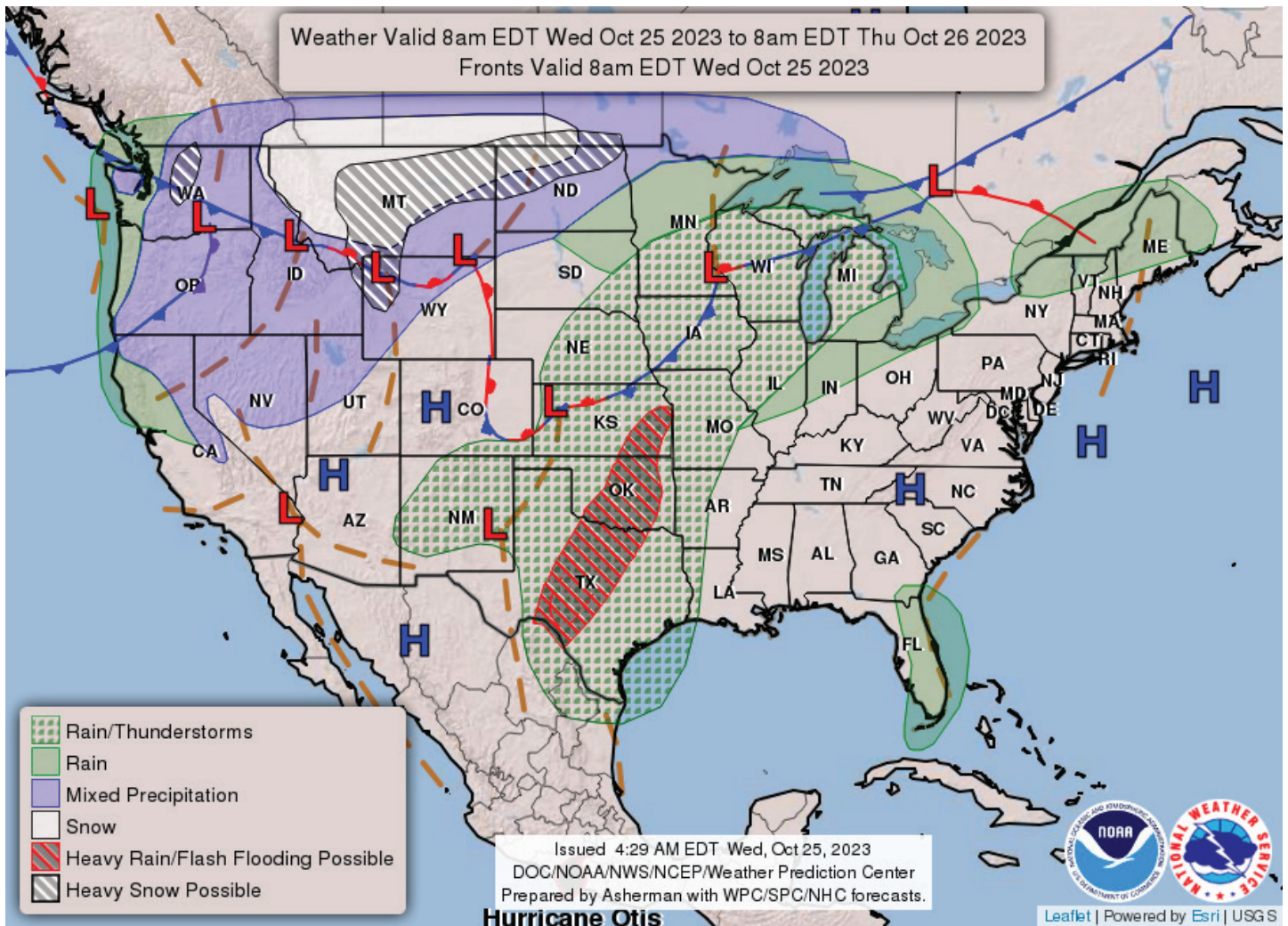
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.89

Average Precip to date: 20.16

Precip Year to Date: 22.66

Sunset Tonight: 6:32:17 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02:00 AM



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## Today in Weather History

October 25, 1954: A storm dumped snow over the region with the highest snowfall amounts at Devils Tower with sixteen inches. Other snowfall totals from the area included four inches in Colony and Faith, eight inches in Custer and Lead, and eleven inches in Spearfish.

1918: The Canadian steamship Princess Sophia carrying miners from the Yukon and Alaska becomes stranded on Vanderbilt Reef. A strong northerly gale hampers rescue attempts the day before. The ship sinks on this day, killing the 268 passengers and 75 crewmen on board.

1921: A devastating category 3 hurricane struck near Tarpon Springs, Florida. The storm caused 8 fatalities and is the latest in the calendar year a category 3 hurricane or stronger made landfall in the US.

1975: GOES-1, which was launched on October 16th, produced its first image of the earth on this day.

1977 - Dutch Harbor in Alaska reported a barometric pressure reading of 27.31 inches (925 millibars) to establish an all-time record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1981 - A northbound tornado caused two million dollars damage to Bountstown, FL, in less than five minutes. Fortunately no deaths occurred along its six mile path, which was 30 to 100 yards in width. Radar at Apalachicola had no indication of a tornado or severe weather. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A storm system moving across the Saint Lawrence Valley produced 40 to 50 mph winds east of Lake Ontario. High winds downed some trees around Watertown NY, and produced waves seven feet high between Henderson Harbor and Alexandria Bay. Mason City IA and Waterloo IA tied for honors as cold spot in the nation with record lows for the date of 19 degrees. Severe thunderstorms in Oklahoma and northern Texas produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 65 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms erupted over northeastern Texas during the late evening producing softball size hail at Newcastle and Jonesboro. Low pressure over James Bay in Canada continued to produced showers and gale force winds in the Great Lakes Region. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Low pressure over Nevada produced high winds in the southwestern U.S., and spread heavy snow into Utah. Winds gusted to 63 mph at the Mojave Airport in southern California. Snowfall totals in Utah ranged up to 12 inches at Snowbird, with 11 inches at Alta. "Indian Summer" type weather continued in the central and eastern U.S. Twenty cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 77 degrees at Alpena MI and 81 degrees at Saint Cloud MN were the warmest of record for so late in the season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: A fire began in the Cuyamaca Mountains spread quickly due to Santa Ana Winds. As of 2017, this fire, called Cedar Fire, remains the largest recorded wildfire in California history, burning 273,246 acres.

2008: A storm packing winds of more than 60 mph hits central Alberta. In Edmonton, the strongest October wind ever recorded reaches 64 mph, cutting power to 4,000. The winds blow free sheet metal, parts of billboards, garbage cans, and pieces of trees around the city.

2017: The high temperatures in Denver, Colorado was 84 degrees. By the morning hours on the 27th, the temperature fell to 13 degrees, a 71-degree change.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### TAMING A TEMPER

Bobby Jones began playing golf at the age of five. At twelve, he was able to defeat any golfer in his hometown. But he had a major problem: he had a hot temper that caused him some serious problems.

When he was fourteen, he entered the National Amateur Tournament. He had high expectations of winning but he lost this very prestigious event because of his temper. After things settled down, his "Grandpa Bart" went to him and said, "You're good enough to win. But you'll never win until you control your temper."

Later in life, when Bobby Jones became a world-famous golfer, "Grandpa Bart" said, "Bobby was fourteen when he mastered golf. But he was twenty-one when he mastered himself."

"Don't sin by letting anger gain control over you, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the devil."

We often become angry when someone does something that displeases us. It can be as simple as someone having too many items in a checkout line at the grocery store or as large as a trusted friend breaking an important promise or causing us embarrassment. The causes vary but the result is always the same: the devil is given a "mighty" foothold in our lives. And that always opens the door to bitterness and resentment that will destroy us and damage others.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to conquer our tempers and tongues that quickly get out of control when we are threatened or tested. May we be helpful, not hurtful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. Ephesians 4:26-27



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
- 11/26/2023 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
- 12/02/2023 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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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.24.23

16 20 30 54 59 7

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$137,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 12  
DRAW: Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.23.23

21 27 28 32 51 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$3,100,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 27 Mins 38  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.24.23

2 16 21 29 35 7

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 42 Mins 38  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.21.23

9 15 22 23 29

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

NEXT 16 Hrs 42 Mins 38  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.23.23

25 44 45 50 58 13

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

NEXT 17 Hrs 11 Mins 39  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
10.23.23

18 21 25 46 64 21

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$100,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 11 Mins 39  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



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## News from the Associated Press

### Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

#### PREP VOLLEYBALL

Alcester-Hudson def. Freeman, 25-15, 25-12, 24-26, 25-21  
Arlington def. DeSmet, 25-15, 25-20, 25-21  
Baltic def. Deubrook, 25-20, 25-16, 25-13  
Bon Homme def. Avon, 25-20, 25-20, 25-12  
Brookings def. Pierre T F Riggs High School, 25-22, 19-25, 27-25, 26-24  
Burke def. Parkston, 25-15, 25-23, 26-24  
Canton def. Lennox, 25-19, 25-27, 25-18, 25-13  
Castlewood def. Flandreau, 28-26, 25-23, 25-20  
Chester def. Bridgewater-Emery, 25-18, 25-14, 25-9  
Colman-Egan def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-21, 25-12, 25-19  
Corsica/Stickney def. Colome, 25-11, 25-19, 25-13  
Crow Creek Tribal School def. Todd County, 25-22, 25-23, 25-20  
Custer def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-13, 25-16, 29-27  
Dell Rapids def. Beresford, 25-16, 25-7, 25-12  
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Vermillion, 25-17, 25-18, 25-10  
Faulkton def. Wolsey-Wessington, 21-25, 25-23, 25-23, 25-20  
Flandreau Indian def. Marty Indian  
Florence/Henry def. Waubay/Summit, 25-11, 25-7, 25-13  
Hamlin def. Clark-Willow Lake, 26-24, 25-8, 25-19  
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-16, 25-19, 25-19  
Hill City def. Belle Fourche, 26-24, 22-25, 25-11, 14-5  
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Wessington Springs, 25-14, 25-11, 25-13  
Huron def. Mitchell, 25-22, 9-25, 25-12, 25-17  
Ipswich def. North Central Co-Op  
Irene-Wakonda def. Howard, 25-18, 25-18, 25-21  
Kadoka Area def. Lakota Tech, 25-11, 25-12, 25-15  
Lemmon High School def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-4, 25-5, 25-5  
Leola-Frederick High School def. Potter County, 20-25, 25-12, 25-16, 25-13  
Madison def. Garretson, 25-22, 25-16, 25-21  
Milbank def. Webster, 25-15, 25-23, 25-23  
Miller def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-2, 25-13, 25-21  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket, 25-15, 25-13, 25-16  
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-23, 21-25, 26-24, 25-23  
Philip def. New Underwood, 25-16, 25-13, 25-11  
Platte-Geddes def. Ethan, 25-19, 19-25, 25-15, 25-21  
Rapid City Christian def. St. Thomas More, 25-15, 25-15, 25-10  
Rapid City Stevens def. Sturgis Brown, 25-15, 25-23, 25-17  
Redfield def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-9, 25-23, 25-10  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-22, 25-10, 25-9  
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 16-25, 25-22, 25-19, 18-25, 15-11  
Sisseton def. Great Plains Lutheran, 22-25, 25-19, 25-15, 15-25, 15-11  
Spearfish def. Rapid City Central, 25-8, 25-15, 25-10  
St. Francis Indian def. Oelrichs

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Stanley County def. Jones County, 15-25, 25-10, 25-19, 23-25, 15-12  
Sunshine Bible Academy def. Lower Brule, 25-14, 25-22, 24-26, 23-25, 15-10  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Freeman Academy-Marion, 25-14, 25-19, 25-12  
Wakpala def. Takini, 25-16, 25-16, 25-15  
Wakpala def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-16, 25-16, 25-15  
Wall def. Timber Lake, 25-11, 16-25, 26-28, 25-14, 15-11  
Warner def. Langford, 25-9, 25-11, 25-16  
Watertown def. Aberdeen Central, 25-16, 25-12, 25-17  
Wilmot def. Britton-Hecla, 21-25, 22-25, 25-22, 25-12, 15-11  
Yankton def. Tea Area, 25-20, 25-12, 25-13

## PREP FOOTBALL

SDHSAA Playoffs=  
All Nations A=  
State Quarterfinal=  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 26, Standing Rock, N.D. 8  
Winnebago, Neb. 47, Little Wound 0  
All Nations B=  
State Quarterfinal=  
McLaughlin 56, Crow Creek Tribal School 0  
Omaha Nation, Neb. 54, Crazy Horse 8

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

## States sue Meta claiming its social platforms are addictive and harm children's mental health

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Dozens of US states, including California and New York, are suing Meta Platforms Inc. for harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms.

A lawsuit filed by 33 states in federal court in California, claims that Meta routinely collects data on children under 13 without their parents' consent, in violation of federal law. In addition, nine attorneys general are filing lawsuits in their respective states, bringing the total number of states taking action to 41 and Washington, D.C.

"Meta has harnessed powerful and unprecedented technologies to entice, engage, and ultimately ensnare youth and teens. Its motive is profit, and in seeking to maximize its financial gains, Meta has repeatedly misled the public about the substantial dangers of its social media platforms," the complaint says. "It has concealed the ways in which these platforms exploit and manipulate its most vulnerable consumers: teenagers and children."

The suits seek financial damages and restitution and an end to Meta's practices that are in violation of the law.

"Kids and teenagers are suffering from record levels of poor mental health and social media companies like Meta are to blame," said New York Attorney General Letitia James in a statement. "Meta has profited from children's pain by intentionally designing its platforms with manipulative features that make children addicted to their platforms while lowering their self-esteem."

In a statement, Meta said it shares "the attorneys general's commitment to providing teens with safe, positive experiences online, and have already introduced over 30 tools to support teens and their families."

"We're disappointed that instead of working productively with companies across the industry to create clear, age-appropriate standards for the many apps teens use, the attorneys general have chosen this

path," the company added.

The broad-ranging federal suit is the result of an investigation led by a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Vermont. It follows damning newspaper reports, first by The Wall Street Journal in the fall of 2021, based on the Meta's own research that found that the company knew about the harms Instagram can cause teenagers — especially teen girls — when it comes to mental health and body image issues. One internal study cited 13.5% of teen girls saying Instagram makes thoughts of suicide worse and 17% of teen girls saying it makes eating disorders worse.

Following the first reports, a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press, published their own findings based on leaked documents from whistleblower Frances Haugen, who has testified before Congress and a British parliamentary committee about what she found.

"Meta has been harming our children and teens, cultivating addiction to boost corporate profits," said California Attorney General Rob Bonta. "With today's lawsuit, we are drawing the line."

The use of social media among teens is nearly universal in the U.S. and many other parts of the world. Almost all teens ages 13 to 17 in the U.S. report using a social media platform, with about a third saying they use social media "almost constantly," according to the Pew Research Center.

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies ban kids under 13 from signing up to their platforms — but children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents' consent, and many younger kids have social media accounts. The states' complaint says Meta knowingly violated this law, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, by collecting data on children without informing and getting permission from their parents.

Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns about children's mental health are also easily circumvented. For instance, TikTok recently introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching. TikTok, Snapchat and other social platforms that have also been blamed for contributing to the youth mental health crisis are not part of Tuesday's lawsuit.

Washington D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb wouldn't comment on whether they're also looking at TikTok or Snapchat. For now they're focusing on the Meta empire of Facebook and Instagram, he said.

"They're the worst of the worst when it comes to using technology to addict teenagers to social media, all in the furtherance of putting profits over people."

In May, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy called on tech companies, parents and caregivers to take "immediate action to protect kids now" from the harms of social media.

## **1 dead, 1 injured after small airplane crashes near Pierre, South Dakota**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — One person died and a second person was injured after a small airplane crashed near the Missouri River northwest of Pierre, South Dakota.

The crash happened Monday afternoon. The Hughes County Sheriff's Office said the single-engine plane was found at 4:35 p.m. about a half-mile from a highway. The passenger was pronounced dead at a hospital and the pilot was hospitalized in stable condition.

Authorities said both people were visiting the Pierre area and were not from South Dakota. Their names have not yet been released.

Investigators with the National Transportation Safety Board will try to determine the cause of the crash.

## Hurricane Otis weakens to Category 4 storm while heaving rains, flash floods batter southern Mexico

By JOSÉ ANTONIO RIVERA and MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Otis slammed into Mexico's southern Pacific coast as a catastrophic Category 5 hurricane early Wednesday, bringing dangerous winds and heavy rain to Acapulco and surrounding towns, stirring memories of a 1997 storm that killed dozens of people.

Now a Category 4 storm, the hurricane was expected to continue to weaken quickly in Guerrero state's steep mountains. But the five to 10 inches of rain forecast, with as much as 15 inches possible in some areas, raised the threat of landslides and floods.

Otis was about 25 miles north northwest of Acapulco with its maximum sustained winds decreasing to 130 mph (215 km/h) and moving at 10 mph (17 km/h). The center of Otis is expected to move farther inland over southern Mexico through Wednesday night.

Otis had strengthened rapidly, going from a tropical storm to a Category 5 hurricane in 12 hours Tuesday. Residents of Guerrero's coast scrambled to prepare, but the storm's sudden intensity appeared to catch many off guard.

"We're on maximum alert," Acapulco Mayor Abelina López said Tuesday night as she urged residents to hunker down at home or move to the city's shelters.

Otis is stronger than Hurricane Pauline that hit Acapulco in 1997, López said. Pauline destroyed swaths of the city and killed more than 200 people. Hundreds of others were injured in flooding and mudslides.

Between the internationally known resorts of Acapulco and Zihuatanejo are two dozen small towns and villages perched between the mountains and the ocean.

Otis' arrival came just days after Hurricane Norma struck the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California Peninsula to the north.

Acapulco is a city of more than 1 million people at the foot of steep mountains. Luxury homes and slums alike cover the city's hillsides with views of the glistening Pacific.

Guerrero is one of Mexico's most impoverished and violent states. Just Monday, a local police chief and 12 police officers were massacred and found on a highway in El Papayo, which is in the Guerrero township of Coyuca de Benitez not far from Otis' impact zone.

In the Atlantic, Hurricane Tammy continued moving northeastward over open water with winds of 85 mph (140 kph) after sweeping through the Lesser Antilles over the weekend. Tammy was located about 570 miles (915 kilometers) south-southeast of Bermuda. The storm was expected to become a powerful extratropical cyclone by Thursday, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

## U.N. warns Gaza blockade could force it to sharply cut relief operations as bombings rise

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and RAVI NESSMAN Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees warned Wednesday that without immediate deliveries of fuel it will soon have to sharply cut back relief operations across the Gaza Strip, which has been blockaded and hit by devastating Israeli airstrikes since Hamas militants launched an attack on Israel more than two weeks ago.

The warning came as hospitals in Gaza struggled to treat masses of wounded with dwindling resources, and health officials in the Hamas-ruled territory said the death toll was soaring as Israeli jets continued striking the territory overnight into Wednesday.

The Israeli military said its strikes had killed militants and destroyed tunnels, command centers, weapons storehouses and other military targets, which it has accused Hamas of hiding among Gaza's civilian population. Gaza-based militants have been launching unrelenting rocket barrages into Israel since the conflict started.

The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry said the airstrikes killed at least 704 people between Monday and

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Tuesday, mostly women and children. The Associated Press could not independently verify the death tolls cited by Hamas, which says it tallies figures from hospital directors.

The death toll was unprecedented in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Even greater loss of life could come when Israel launches an expected ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas militants.

In Washington, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters the U.S. could not verify the one-day death toll.

"The Ministry of Health is run by Hamas, and I think that all needs to be factored into anything that they put out publicly."

Israel said Tuesday it had launched 400 airstrikes over the past day, an increase from the 320 strikes the day before.

The U.N. says about 1.4 million of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are now internally displaced, with almost 600,000 crowded into U.N. shelters.

Gaza's residents have been running out of food, water and medicine since Israel sealed off the territory following the attack on southern Israel by Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction.

In recent days, Israel allowed a small number of trucks filled with aid to come over the border with Egypt but barred deliveries of fuel — needed to power hospital generators — to keep it out of Hamas' hands.

The U.N. said it had managed to deliver some of the aid in recent days to hospitals treating the wounded. But the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, the largest provider of humanitarian services in Gaza, said it would run out of fuel by Wednesday night.

Officials said they were forced to reduce their operations as they rationed what little fuel they had.

"Without fuel our trucks cannot go around to further places in the strip for distribution," said Lily Esposito, a spokesperson for the agency. "We will have to make decisions on what activities we keep or not with little fuel."

Meanwhile, more than half of Gaza's primary health care facilities, and roughly a third of its hospitals, have stopped functioning, the World Health Organization said.

Overwhelmed hospital staff struggled to triage cases as constant waves of wounded were brought in. The Health Ministry said many wounded are laid on the ground without even simple medical aid and others wait for days for surgeries because there are so many critical cases.

The Health Ministry says more than 5,700 Palestinians have been killed in the war, including some 2,300 minors. The figure includes the disputed toll from an explosion at a hospital last week.

The fighting has killed more than 1,400 people in Israel — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack, according to the Israeli government. Hamas is also holding some 222 people that it captured and brought back to Gaza.

The conflict threatened to spread across the region, as Israeli airstrikes hit Syrian military sites in the south Wednesday, killing eight soldiers and wounding seven, according to Syria's state-run SANA news agency.

The Israeli military said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that its jets had struck Syrian military infrastructure and mortar systems in response to rocket launches from Syria.

Israel has launched several strikes on Syria in recent days, including strikes that put the Damascus and Aleppo airports out of service, in an apparent attempt to prevent arms shipments from Iran to militant groups, including Lebanon's Hezbollah. Israel has been fighting the Iranian-backed group Hezbollah across the Lebanese border in recent weeks.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah met Wednesday with top Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad officials in their first reported meeting since the war started. Such a meeting could signal coordination between the groups, as Hezbollah officials warned Israel against launching a ground offensive in Gaza.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Iran was helping Hamas, with intelligence and by "whipping up incitement against Israel across the world." He said Iranian proxies were also operating against Israel from Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon.

Fighting also erupted in the West Bank, which has seen a major spike in violence.

Islamic Jihad militants said they fought with Israeli forces in Jenin overnight. The Palestinian Health Min-

istry in the West Bank said Israel killed three Palestinians in Jenin and two other in other towns, bringing the total number of those killed in the occupied West Bank since Oct. 7 to 101.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen told the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday that the proportionate response to the Oct. 7 attack is "a total destruction" of the militants. "It is not only Israel's right to destroy Hamas. It's our duty," he said.

The Israeli military said it thwarted an assault by a group of Hamas underwater divers who tried to infiltrate Israel on a beach just north of Gaza.

Across central and south Gaza, where Israel told civilians to take shelter, there were multiple scenes of rescuers pulling the dead and wounded out of large piles of rubble from collapsed buildings. Graphic photos and video shot by the AP showed rescuers unearthing bodies of children from multiple ruins.

A father knelt on the floor of the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah next to the bodies of three dead children cocooned in bloodied sheets. Later at the nearby morgue, workers prayed over 24 dead wrapped in body bags, several of them the size of small children.

Buildings that collapsed on residents killed dozens at a time in several cases, witnesses said. Two families lost 47 members in a leveled home in Rafah, the Health Ministry said.

In Gaza City, at least 19 people were killed when an airstrike hit the house of the Bahloul family, according to survivors, who said dozens more remained buried. The legs of a dead woman and another person, both still half buried, dangled out of the wreckage where workers dug through the dirt, concrete and rebar.

## **Leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah holds talks with senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures**

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah group held talks on Wednesday with senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures in a key meeting of three top anti-Israel militant groups amid the war raging in Gaza.

A brief statement following the meeting said that Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah agreed with Hamas' Saleh al-Arouri and Islamic Jihad's leader Ziad al-Nakhleh on the next steps that the three — along with other Iran-backed militants — should take at this "sensitive stage."

Their goal, according to the statement that was carried on Hezbollah-run and Lebanese state media, was to achieve "a real victory for the resistance in Gaza and Palestine" and halt Israel's "treacherous and brutal aggression against our oppressed and steadfast people in Gaza and the West Bank".

No other details were provided. The discussions in Beirut came as the war between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that rules the Gaza Strip, is now in its third week. The fighting, triggered by Hamas' deadly incursion into Israel on Oct. 7 that killed more than 1,400 people in Israel, has killed more than 5,700 Palestinians in Gaza.

As the Gaza death toll spirals, tensions have also been rising along the tense Lebanon-Israel border, where Hezbollah members have been exchanging fire with Israeli troops since the day after Hamas' rampage into Israel.

For now, those exchanges remain limited to a handful of border towns and Hezbollah and Israeli military positions on both sides. Lebanese army soldiers and United Nations peacekeeping forces have deployed in large numbers.

Dozens of Hezbollah fighters have been killed in the clashes so far, the group says, while the Israeli military has also announced some deaths among its ranks.

Nasrallah has yet to publicly speak about the war in Gaza and clashes along the Lebanon-Israel border. However, other Hezbollah top officials have warned Israel against its planned ground invasion into the besieged territory.

Israeli officials have said they would retaliate aggressively in case of a cross-border attack by Hezbollah from Lebanon.

"We will cripple it with a force it cannot even imagine, and the consequences for it and the Lebanese

state (will be) devastating," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said while visiting Israeli troops along the border with Lebanon on Sunday.

Lebanon's cash-strapped caretaker government, along regional and international figures, has been scrambling to keep the country out of the war.

Hezbollah and Israel fought a monthlong war in 2006 that ended in a tense stalemate. Israel sees Iran-backed Hezbollah as its most serious threat, estimating it has some 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel.

## **'I wanted to scream': Growing conflict in Congo drives sexual assault against displaced women**

By JUSTIN KABUMBA and ZANE IRWIN Associated Press

BULENGO, Congo (AP) — A hooded man burst into the 42-year-old woman's tent while her children were out searching for food, then raped her in the displacement camp where she had fled war in eastern Congo.

"I wanted to scream (but) he took my mouth and he threatened me with death," said the mother of four, who was abandoned by her husband after she became disabled in a motorcycle accident several years ago. Now, she says, she lives in fear and hesitates to let her children leave her side.

Sexual violence by armed men against displaced women is increasing rapidly in eastern Congo as yearslong conflicts continue. The trend underscores the disproportionate consequences for women and girls in the region's perpetual state of war. The Associated Press is not identifying survivors who spoke to journalists in the Bulengo displacement camp.

In Bulengo and other displacement sites nearby, an average of 70 sexual assault victims each day visit clinics run by Doctors Without Borders, also known by its French acronym MSF.

Conflict has simmered in eastern Congo for nearly three decades. The United Nations estimates that more than 130 armed groups are active in the country's northeast, vying for land or resources while some have formed to protect their communities. Sexual violence has long been used as a weapon of war by armed fighters in the region.

More than 4 million people were displaced within Congo because of conflict in 2022, the most in Africa and second in the world only to Ukraine, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. Of nearly 100,000 people who arrived at displacement sites near the eastern city of Goma in July, nearly 60% were women and girls, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Doctors Without Borders treated 1,500 female victims of sexual violence in just three displacement camps outside Goma in July, more than double the number in May, the organization said in a Sept. 18 report.

Survivors and aid workers say displacement rips people from their livelihoods and leaves women and girls vulnerable to assault.

Like many other displaced single mothers, the 42-year-old mother of four is struggling to feed her family and unsure when she might return home.

With the help of her two sons and two daughters, she had cultivated her fields of cassava, potatoes and beans. But in February, armed rebels and Congolese security forces clashed close to her home in the northeastern village of Karenga.

"We were forced to flee, leaving behind all our belongings," she said. Limping, she walked an entire day to bring her family to one of more than 100 sites where displaced people have gathered around Goma.

One May evening, after three months of struggling to feed her family in a camp with tens of thousands of other displaced people, she sent her children to find food. They hadn't eaten all day, she said. That's when a stranger found her alone and raped her.

After the attack, she confided in a friend who directed her to a clinic run by MSF. The charity group along with United Nations agencies and local organizations help provide medical services, psychological treatment, latrines and other measures to improve conditions for survivors of sexual violence.

But their role is limited. Deliveries of food and other basic needs to the camp are infrequent, said Rebecca Kihui, MSF's regional sexual violence activity manager.

The camp's conditions leave women vulnerable to abuse. Shelters are little more than plastic sheets, with no way of securing them from intruders, Kihiu said. Armed men lurk outside the camp, where women and girls are forced to venture to find firewood and other necessities.

"They know that they will go and find these assaults outside the camp. But they have no option," Kihiu said.

Already scarred by fleeing their homes, survivors of sexual assault in camps like Bulengo live with the experience long afterward. "It's a trauma that will stay for a lifetime," said Esmeralda Alabre, coordinator for UNFPA gender-based violence programming in northeast Congo.

A mother of eight in the same displacement camp received some medical help after she was raped. But she is still afraid, especially at night. She now arranges her children around her when they sleep, hoping their presence will deter a future aggressor.

Kihiu says some groups of women band together on trips outside the camp for added security, but this tactic falters if they need to split up to collect resources more efficiently.

For hundreds of thousands of other displaced women in northeast Congo, escalating armed conflict stands in the way of a return to normal life. The two women interviewed by the AP said they think each day about how they can return to farming in their village.

And each night they fear for their safety.

"Let the government do everything to end this war so that we can give up this life of misery," the mother of four said.

## Japan's top court strikes down required removal of reproductive organs to officially change gender

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that a law requiring transgender people to have their reproductive organs removed in order to officially change their gender is unconstitutional.

The decision by the top court's 15-judge Grand Bench was its first on the constitutionality of Japan's 2003 law requiring the removal of reproductive organs for a state-recognized gender change, a practice long criticized by international rights and medical groups.

The decision now requires the government to revise the law, which paves the way for transgender people to have their gender changed in official documents without surgery.

The case was filed by a plaintiff whose request for a gender change in her family registry — to female from her biologically assigned male — was turned down by lower courts.

The decision comes at a time of heightened awareness of issues surrounding LGBTQ+ people in Japan and is a major victory for that community.

Kyodo News said the judges unanimously ruled that the part of the law requiring the loss of reproductive functions for a gender change is unconstitutional. Other details of the decision were not immediately available.

Under the law that was struck down, transgender people who want to have their biologically assigned gender changed on family registries and other official documents must be diagnosed as having Gender Identity Disorder and undergo an operation to remove their reproductive organs.

LGBTQ+ activists in Japan have recently stepped up efforts to pass an anti-discrimination law since a former aide to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said in February that he wouldn't want to live next to LGBTQ+ people and that citizens would flee Japan if same-sex marriage were allowed.

But changes have come slowly and Japan remains the only Group of Seven member that does not allow same-sex marriage or legal protections, including an effective anti-discrimination law.

The plaintiff, who is only identified as a resident in western Japan, originally filed the request in 2000, saying the surgery requirement forces a huge burden economically and physically and that it violates the constitution's equal rights protections.

Rights groups and the LGBTQ+ community in Japan have been hopeful for a change in the law after a



local family court, in an unprecedented ruling earlier this month, accepted a transgender male's request for a gender change without the compulsory surgery, saying the rule is unconstitutional.

The special law that took effect in 2004 states that people who wish to register a gender change must have their original reproductive organs, including testes or ovaries, removed and have a body that "appears to have parts that resemble the genital organs" of the new gender they want to register with.

More than 10,000 Japanese have had their genders officially changed since then, according to court documents from the Oct. 11 ruling that accepted Gen Suzuki's request for a gender change without the required surgery.

Surgery to remove reproductive organs is not required in most of some 50 European and central Asian countries that have laws allowing people to change their gender on official documents, the Shizuoka ruling said. The practice of changing one's gender in such a way has become mainstream in many places around the world, it noted.

In a country of conformity where the conservative government sticks to traditional paternalistic family values and is reluctant to accept sexual and family diversity, many LGBTQ+ people still hide their sexuality due to fear of discrimination at work and schools.

Some groups opposing more inclusivity for transgender people, especially to those changing from male to female, had submitted petitions on Tuesday to the Supreme Court, asking it to keep the surgery requirement in place.

Hundreds of municipalities now issue partnership certificates for same-sex couples to ease hurdles in renting apartments and other areas, but they are not legally binding.

In 2019, the Supreme Court in another case filed by a transgender male seeking a gender registration change without the required sexual organ removal and sterilization surgery found the ongoing law constitutional.

In that ruling, the top court said the law was constitutional because it was meant to reduce confusion in families and society, though it acknowledged that it restricts freedom and could become out of step with changing social values and should be reviewed later.

## **Hurricane Otis now a catastrophic Category 5 storm off Mexico's Pacific coast nearing Acapulco**

By JOSÉ ANTONIO RIVERA and MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP) — Residents of Mexico's once glamorous port of Acapulco and surrounding coastal towns braced for the arrival of the "potentially catastrophic" Hurricane Otis, a rapidly intensifying Category 5 hurricane that stirred memories of a 1997 storm that killed dozens of people.

"A nightmare scenario is unfolding for southern Mexico this evening with rapidly intensifying Otis approaching the coastline," a National Hurricane Center forecaster said late Tuesday.

Hurricane Otis strengthened from a tropical storm to a dangerous Category 5 hurricane in 12 hours Tuesday as it approached Mexico's southern Pacific coast.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Otis had maximum sustained winds of 160 mph (260 kph) late Tuesday evening and was expected to make landfall early Wednesday near Acapulco. It was centered about 55 miles (90 kilometers) south-southeast of Acapulco and moving north-northwest at 9 mph (15 kph).

Acapulco is a city of more than 1 million people at the foot of steep mountains. Luxury homes and slums alike cover the city's hillsides with views of the glistening Pacific.

While it drew Hollywood stars in its heyday for its nightlife, sport fishing and cliff diving shows, Acapulco has in more recent years fallen victim to competing organized crime groups that sank the city into violence, driving many international tourists to the Caribbean waters of Cancun and the Riviera Maya or hippie beaches farther down the Pacific coast in Oaxaca.

A hurricane warning was in effect from Punta Maldonado to Zihuatanejo. A hurricane watch was in effect from Lagunas de Chacahua to Punta Maldonado

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Otis was forecast to remain a Category 5 hurricane through landfall but rapid weakening is then forecast due to the higher terrain of Mexico. Otis will likely dissipate over southern Mexico on Wednesday night.

"This is an extremely serious situation for the Acapulco metropolitan area with the core of the destructive hurricane likely to come near or over that large city early on Wednesday," the weather service said. "There are no hurricanes on record even close to this intensity for this part of Mexico."

In Acapulco, people hurried home as rain began to pelt the resort and winds picked up, driving tourists from the beach.

The Guerrero state government said it was preparing 396 shelters in anticipation of families being driven from their homes by wind damage or surging waters.

"We're on maximum alert," Acapulco Mayor Abelina López said Tuesday night as she urged residents to hunker down at home or move to the city's shelters. She said Otis could be more devastating than Hurricane Pauline that hit Acapulco in 1997, destroying swaths of the city and killing more than 200 people. Hundreds of others were injured in flooding and mudslides.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador told people via the platform X, formally known as Twitter, "to go to shelters, stay in safe places away from rivers, streams, ravines and be alert, without being overconfident."

At the Las Brisas hotel, further inland from Acapulco's beach, Jesús Pantaleón said guests from ocean front hotels began arriving late Tuesday. "People from various hotels along the ocean drive are arriving because they felt that being higher up, they are safer," he said.

Authorities circulated through low-lying parts of the city warning over megaphones that people should move, said Roberto Arroyo, Guerrero state's civil defense secretary.

Mexico's army and navy deployed more than 8,000 troops to the area with specialized equipment to aid in rescues. Authorities closed Acapulco's port, home to some 300 fishing boats.

Otis was expected to dump five to 10 inches (13 to 25 centimeters) of rain on Guerrero, with as much as 15 inches (38 centimeters) possible in some areas. That raised the possibility of mudslides and flashfloods in Guerrero's steep mountainous terrain.

The National Hurricane Center considers a storm to rapidly intensify if it increases wind speed by 35 mph (46 kph) in 24 hours. With warmer oceans serving as fuel, Atlantic hurricanes are now more than twice as likely as before to rapidly intensify from wimpy minor hurricanes to powerful and catastrophic, a study by study Andra Garner, a climate scientist at Rowan University in New Jersey, said Thursday.

In 2020, a record year for hurricanes and the last year of Garner's study, six storms rapidly intensified that much. Hannah, Laura, Sally, Teddy, Gamma and Delta. Since then, there have been several rapid intensifying and deadly storms, including 2021's Ida, 2022's Ian and 2023's Idalia.

Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach said via X that Otis had intensified Tuesday by 80 mph in the past 12 hours from 65 mph to 145 mph. "That's the fastest 12 hr intensification rate in the eastern North Pacific" since 1966.

In the Atlantic, Hurricane Tammy continued moving northeastward over open water with winds of 85 mph (140 kph) after sweeping through the Lesser Antilles over the weekend. Tammy was located about 570 miles (915 kilometers) south-southeast of Bermuda. The storm was expected to become a powerful extratropical cyclone by Thursday, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

## Diamondbacks stun Phillies 4-2 in Game 7 of NLCS to reach first World Series in 22 years

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Corbin Carroll ducked late into the Arizona Diamondbacks' clubhouse with his uniform pants stained in dirt — two stolen bases will get a player dirty — but was otherwise clean when he was spotted by the rest of his bubbly-bathed teammates.

"Have yourself a Game 7!" jubilant teammates shouted as they chased down the breakout postseason star. "Why are you dry?"

Carroll had little room to escape inside a cramped visitors' locker room — not that he wanted to — and

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was soon doused with beer before a victory cigar followed.

World Series trips don't come often for this franchise in the desert. So when it was time to celebrate, the Diamondbacks did it with the same vigor they used to knock off last year's NL champs.

Carroll went 3 for 4 with two RBIs and two runs scored, and Arizona advanced to the World Series for the first time in 22 years Tuesday night by stunning the Philadelphia Phillies 4-2 in Game 7 of the NL Championship Series.

"We did it! That's all I can say," said Carroll, the frontrunner for NL Rookie of the Year. "Just believe in each other, believe in our guys. We know what we have in that clubhouse, and it's special. We've known it all year."

Arizona will play the Texas Rangers in an all-wild card World Series no one saw coming, with Game 1 set for Friday night at Globe Life Field.

In their only other trip to the Fall Classic, the Diamondbacks won a seven-game thriller against the New York Yankees in 2001.

The young Diamondbacks, who at 84-78 squeezed into the playoffs as the final NL wild card, completed their comeback from an 0-2 hole in the NLCS. They won Games 6 and 7 in Philadelphia, where the defending National League champions had been 12-2 over the past two postseasons — including 11-0 in NL playoff games.

"I've said it a million times, and I'll say it again: A connected team is a very dangerous team," Arizona manager Torey Lovullo said. "No matter what happened in those times of crisis, these guys stuck together."

Rookie starter Brandon Pfaadt struck out seven, and five relievers combined on five scoreless innings of one-hit ball for the surprising NL pennant winners.

"They played great baseball," Phillies slugger Kyle Schwarber said. "There's no way around it. Everyone's got a sick feeling in their stomach. It's not the way we pictured this thing ending."

Bryce Harper and the rest of the Phillies are forced to ponder this offseason how they let a second straight World Series trip slip away. Philadelphia returned home one win from another pennant but couldn't close it out, falling behind early in Game 6 and then losing the first Game 7 in the 141-year history of the franchise.

"It's very disappointing. It really is," manager Rob Thomson said. "I told the club if you asked me two days ago, two weeks ago, two months ago if we would be going home tonight, I would have said no. So that's how much belief I have in this club."

Kevin Ginkel, the fourth Arizona reliever, showed his mettle with a gutsy performance in the seventh. After left-hander Andrew Saalfrank walked consecutive batters with one out, Ginkel entered and retired Trea Turner and Harper on flyouts to center field.

Ginkel then struck out all three hitters in the eighth, and Paul Sewald pitched a perfect ninth for his sixth save this postseason.

With that, Arizona's bullpen slammed the door on Philadelphia's powerful lineup — and shushed Phillies fans who were left weeping on their own.

"That's a good club, and they really played well. You come into this building and beat us twice in this type of atmosphere, you're doing some things right," Thomson said. "They pitched well. They really did."

Again, the Diamondbacks struck first when Christian Walker grounded into a fielder's choice against Phillies starter Ranger Suárez in the first inning for a 1-0 lead. It may have seemed like a rather innocuous play, but Arizona was already 5-0 this postseason when scoring first. And that run — similar to a three-run second for the Diamondbacks in Game 6 — deflated a boisterous crowd that came prepped for a clinch.

Well, Phillies fans did see one.

Just not the pennant winner they paid to watch at Citizens Bank Park.

Pfaadt, who struck out nine in Game 3, allowed Alec Bohm's tying homer in the second that put a jolt in the crowd and a needed one into the offense. Bohm pointed to his ring finger — symbolizing the World Series bling he wanted to win.

Bohm was at it again in the fourth when he walked and scored on Bryson Stott's double for a 2-1 lead. But the free-swinging Phillies let prime opportunities go to waste. With runners on the corners, Nick

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Castellanos struck out — at that point, 0 for 21 with 11 strikeouts since a Game 1 homer — and, after a walk to Brandon Marsh, Johan Rojas struck out to end the fourth.

Thomson had few pinch-hitting options for Rojas, so he let the light-hitting center fielder take his cuts and promptly fall to 3 for 22 in the NLCS.

Pfaadt's big strikeout let the Diamondbacks exhale.

Suárez fanned Ketel Marte for the third straight time in the fifth to make it two outs and a runner on second. Carroll — just 3 for 23 in the first six games of the series — grounded an RBI single up the middle for his third hit of Game 7. Suárez was replaced by Jeff Hoffman, and Carroll stole second before 23-year-old catcher Gabriel Moreno made it 3-2 with another single.

"The performance hasn't been there for me, for whatever reason," Carroll said. "I kind of chalked it up to it just being baseball and I kind of stuck to my approach."

Pfaadt had done his part and the 25-year-old righty who went just 3-9 this year kept Arizona — which swept the division champion Brewers and Dodgers to reach the NLCS — in position for one of the biggest wins in team history.

"He knows when he is the center of the moment," Lovullo said ahead of Game 7. "I think he's used to that."

Carroll tacked on a sacrifice fly in the seventh for a 4-2 lead, and the Diamondbacks never looked back.

"They started to run a little bit, started to put pressure on us. They started playing their game," Thomson said about the momentum shift when the series returned to Philly.

By the time Philadelphia broke the in-case-of-emergency on ace Zack Wheeler in the seventh, it was too late. The Phillies team that bashed homers at a record pace against Miami and Atlanta never cashed in back home, finishing 1 for 10 with runners in scoring position in Game 7.

"We had some people on base tonight. We couldn't get the big hit," Thomson said.

## MVP MARTE

Marte batted .387 with 12 hits, four doubles, a triple and a stolen base in the series to earn NLCS MVP honors. His 19 hits in a single postseason are a club record.

"There was times this year where it was like, how do you even pitch this guy? He is kind of back in that mode right now. It's special to watch," Carroll said.

Marte has hit safely in all 16 career postseason games, the longest streak in NL history and second in major league annals to Derek Jeter's 17-game postseason hitting streak for the Yankees.

## LAST LAUGH

Arizona ace Zac Gallen was raised in South Jersey and considers himself a diehard fan of Philly sports teams.

Except the Phillies.

He actually grew up a St. Louis Cardinals fan because he loved Mark McGwire. It was his mother, Stacey, who considered herself a diehard Phillies fan and took Gallen and his brother to games at Citizens Bank Park.

"I have a lot of text messages that I'm going to have to send out after this game," Gallen said. "A lot of people showed their true colors, asking me for tickets back in May when we played the Phillies. This feels sweeter to the 11-year-old kid who used to be a Cardinals fan."

## HOME COOKED

After winning their first six home playoff games this year, the Phillies dropped the last two and fell to 28-13 in the postseason at Citizens Bank Park.

## Israeli airstrikes surge in Gaza, destroying homes and killing dozens at a time

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and RAVI NESSMAN Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel escalated airstrikes across the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, crushing families in the rubble of residential buildings, as health officials said hundreds of Palestinians were killed in the past day and medical facilities were shut down because of bomb damage and lack of power.

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The massive air bombardment continued through the night as Israeli jets hit sites across Gaza, the Hamas-run Interior Ministry said.

The soaring death toll from the bombardment is unprecedented in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It augurs an even greater loss of life in Gaza once Israeli forces backed by tanks and artillery launch an expected ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas militants.

Gaza's 2.3 million people have been running out of food, water and medicine since Israel sealed off the territory following the devastating Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on towns in southern Israel.

The Gaza Health Ministry, which is run by Hamas, said Israeli airstrikes killed at least 704 people over the past day, mostly women and children. The Associated Press could not independently verify the death tolls cited by Hamas, which says it tallies figures from hospital directors.

In Washington, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters that the U.S. also could not verify that one-day death toll.

"The Ministry of Health is run by Hamas, and I think that all needs to be factored into anything that they put out publicly."

Israel said Tuesday it had launched 400 airstrikes over the past day, killing Hamas commanders, hitting militants as they prepared to fire rockets into Israel and striking command centers and a Hamas tunnel shaft. Israel reported 320 strikes the day before.

Hamas is sworn to Israel's destruction.

Israel, for its part, has vowed repeatedly since the massacre to crush Hamas.

On Tuesday, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen told the U.N. Security Council that the proportionate response to the Oct. 7 attack is "a total destruction to the last one" of the militants. "It is not only Israel's right to destroy Hamas. It's our duty," he said.

The Israeli military said it thwarted an assault by a group of Hamas underwater divers who tried to infiltrate Israel on a beach just north of Gaza. They were attacked by air, naval and ground forces.

Across central and south Gaza, where Israel told civilians to take shelter, there were multiple scenes of rescuers pulling the dead and wounded out of large piles of rubble from collapsed buildings. Graphic photos and video shot by the AP showed rescuers unearthing bodies of children from multiple ruins.

A father knelt on the floor of the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah next to the bodies of three dead children cocooned in bloodied sheets. Later at the nearby morgue, workers prayed over 24 dead wrapped in body bags, several of them the size of small children.

Buildings that collapsed on residents killed dozens at a time in several cases, witnesses said. Two families lost a total 47 members in a leveled home in Rafah, the Health Ministry said.

A strike on a four-story building in Khan Younis killed at least 32 people, including 13 members of the Saqallah family, said Ammar al-Butta, a relative who survived the airstrike. He said there were about 100 people sheltering in the building, including many who had evacuated from Gaza City.

"We thought that our area would be safe," he said.

Another strike destroyed a bustling marketplace in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, witnesses said. AP photos showed the floor of a vegetable shop covered with blood.

In Gaza City, at least 19 people were killed when an airstrike hit the house of the Bahloul family, according to survivors, who said dozens more people remained buried. The legs of a dead woman and another person, both still half buried, dangled out of the wreckage where workers dug through the dirt, concrete and rebar.

The Health Ministry says more than 5,700 Palestinians have been killed in the war, including some 2,300 minors. The figure includes the disputed toll from an explosion at a hospital last week.

The fighting has killed more than 1,400 people in Israel — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack, according to the Israeli government.

As the death toll in Gaza spirals, and fuel supplies dwindle, the number of facilities able to deal with casualties is shrinking. More than half of primary health care facilities, and roughly 1 of every 3 hospitals, have stopped functioning, the World Health Organization said.

Overwhelmed hospital staff struggled to triage cases as constant waves of wounded were brought in.

The Health Ministry said many wounded are laid on the ground without even simple medical intervention and others wait for days for surgeries because there are so many critical cases.

While Israel has allowed a small number of trucks filled with aid to enter, it has barred deliveries of fuel to Gaza to keep it out of Hamas' hands. The U.N. said its operation distributing aid will halt Wednesday evening if it does not receive fuel.

To make room for the dead, cemeteries have been forced to excavate and reuse old plots. Families have dug trenches to bury multiple bodies at a time.

"Bodies pour in by the hundreds every day. We use every empty inch in the cemeteries," said Abdel Rahman Mohamed, a volunteer who helps transfer bodies to Khan Younis' main cemetery.

Israel says it does not target civilians and that Hamas militants are using them as cover for their attacks. Palestinian militants have fired over 7,000 rockets at Israel since the start of the war, according to Israel, and Hamas said it fired a fresh barrage on Tuesday.

On Monday, Hamas released two elderly Israeli women who were among the roughly 220 people Israel says were taken hostage during the Oct. 7 attack and forced into Gaza.

Appearing weak in a wheelchair and speaking softly, 85-year-old Yocheved Lifshitz told reporters Tuesday that the militants beat her with sticks, bruising her ribs and making it hard to breathe as they kidnapped her. They drove her into Gaza, then forced her to walk several kilometers (miles) on wet ground to reach a network of tunnels that looked like a spider web, she said.

Once there, she said, she was treated well, fed and given medical care.

Lifshitz and 79-year-old Nurit Cooper were freed days after an American woman and her teenage daughter were released.

The Israeli military dropped leaflets in Gaza asking Palestinians to reveal information on the hostages' whereabouts. In exchange, the military promised a reward and protection for the informant's home.

Iranian-backed fighters around the region are warning of possible escalation, including the targeting of U.S. forces deployed in the Mideast, if a ground offensive is launched. Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire almost daily across the Israel-Lebanon border.

## Recovering from attack that killed Illinois boy, Palestinian American mother urges prayers for peace

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A Palestinian American woman whose 6-year-old son was killed in what police are calling a hate crime in a Chicago suburb has asked the public to "pray for peace" as she recuperates from her injuries.

Hanaan Shahin issued a statement Tuesday through the Chicago chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations after meeting with the group's executive director a day earlier. The written statement marked her first public comments since the brutal Oct. 14 attack that left her with more than a dozen stab wounds and stitches on her face.

Authorities said the family's suburban Chicago landlord singled them out because of their Islamic faith and as a response to the escalating Israel-Hamas war.

"Pray for peace," Shahin said, thanking authorities, doctors and others. She was released from the hospital last week and has declined interviews with reporters.

Shahin, who works as a caregiver to seniors, lost her son, Wadea Al-Fayoume, in the attack that has contributed to fears about rising hostility against Muslims and Palestinians in the U.S. In Illinois alone in the past week, a suburban man was charged with a hate crime in an assault against two Muslims and an Islamic day school canceled class after receiving threats.

Joseph Czuba, 71, faces murder, attempted murder and hate crime charges. He is due in court next week. Czuba's attorney, George Lenard, released a statement last week via the Will County Public Defender's Office saying he would not comment on the case beyond "what is presented in the courtroom."

Shahin, who was hospitalized during her son's funeral, remembered him as an intelligent and funny child who cared about the planet and liked to join her in prayers.

She said she felt comforted "remembering her son as an angel on earth, and knowing that he is now an angel in heaven."

She added, "He was my best friend."

## **Support for Israel becomes a top issue for Iowa evangelicals key to the first Republican caucuses**

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

NEWTON, Iowa (AP) — Steve Rowland peered beneath the brim of his baseball cap and admonished the roughly 500 people at Rising Sun Church of Christ in the Des Moines suburb of Altoona.

It had been three days since Hamas attacked Israel and killed hundreds of civilians. In Iowa, where evangelical Christians dominate the first-in-the-nation Republican presidential caucuses, Rowland and other pastors are delivering a message meant to resonate both biblically and politically.

"What we're seeing in that region is pure evil," Rowland said. "Israel has mobilized their army and they are intent on stamping out evil, and we should be behind them. That's where we should be, and I want you to know that, as a pastor."

Support for Israel has leapt to a top priority for evangelicals in the leadoff Republican presidential caucuses now less than three months away, according to interviews with more than a dozen Iowa conservative activists. While curbing abortion has for decades energized Christian conservatives like no other issue, the attack by Hamas and Israel's response have put new pressure on Republican candidates to hew not just to traditional Republican support for Israel but to beliefs rooted in the Bible.

Some Christians support Israel due to Old Testament writings that Jews are God's chosen people and that Israel is their rightful homeland. Some evangelicals believe Israel is key to an end-times prophecy that will bring about the return of the Christian messiah.

Since the Oct. 7 attack, Iowa's evangelical pastors, faith leaders and rank-and-file caucus participants have been looking more closely at candidates' statements, while ministers urge their congregations to keep those positions top-of-mind when weighing their options. Several GOP contenders have discussed the conflict in black-and-white terms and accused President Joe Biden of not being tough enough on Hamas or Iran, which has long provided the group with money and training.

"We've got a true war between good and evil, and we have to have a leader that has the moral clarity to know the difference," said Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina governor and United Nations ambassador, in an interview between Iowa stops this month.

Former President Donald Trump remains dominant in Iowa polls and gets by far the largest crowds at his campaign stops. He attracts many fervent Christian conservatives, some of who have described him as divinely chosen even as critics note that he has been married three times and supported abortion rights in the past.

During one recent Trump event at a downtown Cedar Rapids hotel, a man in an audience of 2,000 shouted from the hotel ballroom floor, "God gave me to you!"

Several activists interviewed by The Associated Press were rankled by Trump's criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the immediate aftermath of the Hamas attack, and by his suggestion that Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militant group fighting with Israel on the country's northern border, was "very smart."

Others said they felt Trump deserved credit for his record while in the White House of completing conservative priorities on Israel, notably moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognizing Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.

It's a similar dynamic to Trump's handling of abortion. Trump has refused to endorse a national abortion ban, which has led to criticism from some state and national anti-abortion leaders. But others point to his record as president, notably his appointment of three Supreme Court justices who were part of the

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decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

Daniel Hummel, author of "Covenant Brothers: Evangelicals, Jews, and U.S.-Israeli Relations," said that Republican support for Israel has become a proxy for other conservative priorities, particularly on immigration.

Trump and several other Republicans have alleged Hamas sympathizers could cross the southern U.S. border, despite there being almost no known examples of unauthorized border crossers staging mass attacks. And Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis — who are battling for second place in many national polls — have argued over who is tougher on refugee issues after the Hamas attack.

"The Arab-Israeli conflict has become part of the culture-war framework," Hummel said. "That's part of the Trump and post-Trump Republican Party, that terrorism and immigration are really deeply linked."

Some of Trump's rivals have directly tied U.S. relations with Israel to Christian tradition. South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, who has invested heavily in Iowa, often speaks of Israel's importance by referencing the Bible.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," Scott told an audience during a campaign stop in Newton this month, quoting from the Book of Psalms. For Israel's enemies, Scott said, "the wrath of God, let them feel it," paraphrasing the Book of Romans.

DeSantis has aggressively tried to win the support of evangelical clergy. One Iowa pastor leaning toward supporting DeSantis, Joseph Brown, called Trump's criticism of Netanyahu "a huge turnoff" and questioned his true beliefs on Israel.

"Even though Donald Trump has done amazing things when it comes to Israel, we need some assurances now," said Brown, who leads Marion Avenue Baptist Church in Washington, Iowa. "I don't think he understands the biblical foundation of why we stand with Israel."

Several pastors also have criticized biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, a political newcomer who has lined up with Trump's foreign policy ideas and at times criticized U.S. aid to Israel. Some evangelicals have long questioned whether they could vote for Ramaswamy, who is Hindu but often talks about his affinity for Judeo-Christian beliefs.

"I think he's trying to figure out what conservatives want to hear," said Brad Cranston, the former pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Burlington, Iowa. "And I think he thinks conservatives want a less interventionist foreign policy. But that does not work when it comes to Israel."

Iowa's evangelical voters are not monolithic. One point of debate is whether the U.S. should accept refugees from Gaza, where many of its roughly 2 million residents have been displaced by Israeli airstrikes and face acute shortages of food and water.

Trump and DeSantis have argued the U.S. should not take in any Gaza refugees, with DeSantis saying in one television interview that all people from Gaza were "antisemitic," even though Palestinians and other Arabs are also semitic peoples.

Haley, meanwhile, said in a recent CNN interview that the U.S. could determine which Palestinians "want to be free from this terrorist rule."

Ann Trimble Ray, a conservative from Early, Iowa, said she sided with Haley and was leaning toward supporting her due to her experience and demeanor, but also for what she sees as compassion in her openness to some Palestinian refugees.

"There are victims on both sides now," she said. "The terrorists who want to rid the world of Jews struck first and killed innocents, and now Israel is retaliating and there is innocent loss of life on both sides."

Rowland, the pastor who admonished his congregation recently to support Israel, said that for many in his church, a key reason for supporting Israel was biblical prophecy about the return of the Messiah.

"At some point along their way, along their journey, they've heard the end of the world is going to happen," he said. "There's fear that comes into play for a lot of these people. And whatever it is you fear, you pay attention to."



## Mike Johnson is the latest GOP nominee for House speaker as Republican infighting shows no end

By LISA MASCARO, STEPHEN GROVES, FARNOUSH AMIRI and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans chose Rep. Mike Johnson as their latest nominee for House speaker desperate to unite their fractious majority and end the chaos, just hours after an earlier pick abruptly withdrew in the face of opposition from Donald Trump.

Johnson of Louisiana, a lower-ranked member of the House GOP leadership team, becomes the fourth Republican nominee in what has become an almost absurd cycle of political infighting since Kevin McCarthy's ouster as GOP factions jockey for power.

When the House convenes at noon Wednesday ahead of a floor vote, Johnson, who won the majority behind closed doors, will need almost all Republicans in the public roll call to win the gavel.

"Mike! Mike! Mike!" lawmakers chanted at a press conference late Tuesday night, surrounding Johnson and posing for selfies in a show of support.

Three weeks on, the Republicans have been frittering away their majority status — a maddening embarrassment to some, democracy in action to others, but not at all how the House is expected to function.

Refusing to unify, far-right members won't accept a more traditional speaker and moderate conservatives don't want a hardliner. While Johnson had no opponents during the private roll call, some two dozen Republicans did not vote, more than enough to sink his nomination.

Anxious and exhausted, Republican lawmakers are desperately trying to move on. "Pretty sad commentary on governance right now," said Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark. "Maybe on the fourth or fifth or sixth or 10th try, we'll get this thing right."

After he withdrew Tuesday afternoon, Rep. Tom Emmer briskly left the building where he had been meeting privately with Republicans. He said later at the Capitol that Trump's opposition did not affect his decision to bow out.

"I made my decision based on my relationship with the conference," he said, referring to the GOP majority. Emmer said he would support whomever emerges as the new nominee. "We'll get it done."

Trump, speaking as he left the courtroom in New York where he faces business fraud charges, said his "un-endorsement" must have had an impact on Emmer's bid.

"He wasn't MAGA," said Trump, the party's front-runner for the 2024 presidential election, referring to his Make America Great Again campaign slogan.

House Republicans returned behind closed doors, where they spend much of their time, desperately searching for a leader who can unite the factions, reopen the House and get the U.S. Congress working again.

Attention quickly turned to Johnson, 51, who was the second highest vote-getter on Tuesday morning's internal ballots.

A lawyer specializing in constitutional issues, Johnson had rallied Republicans around Trump's legal effort to overturn the 2020 election results.

Elevating Johnson to speaker would give Louisianans two high-ranking GOP leaders, putting him above Majority Leader Steve Scalise, who was rejected by hardliners in his own bid as speaker.

But hardliners swiftly resisted Johnson's bid and a new list of candidates emerged. Among them was Rep. Byron Donalds of Florida, a Trump ally who ran third on the morning ballot, and a few others.

In the end, Johnson won 128 votes on the evening ballot, more than any other candidate. McCarthy, who was not on the ballot, won a surprising 43 votes.

"Democracy is messy sometimes, but it is our system," Johnson said afterward, Scalise standing behind him. "We're going to restore your trust in what we do here."

One idea circulating, first reported by NBC News, was to reinstall McCarthy as speaker with hardline Rep. Jim Jordan in a new leadership role.

It was being pitched as a way to unite the conference, lawmakers said, but many said it would not fly.

"I think sometimes it's good to have fresh ideas and fresh people," said Rep. Victoria Spartz, R-Ind.

While Emmer won a simple majority in a morning roll call behind closed doors — 117 votes — he lost more than two dozen Republicans, leaving him far short of what will be needed during a House floor tally ahead.

With Republicans controlling the House 221-212 over Democrats, any GOP nominee can afford just a few detractors to win the gavel.

Trump allies, including the influential hard-right instigator Steve Bannon, have been critical of Emmer. Some point to his support of a same-sex marriage initiative and perceived criticisms of the former president. Among the far-right groups pressuring lawmakers over the speaker's vote, some quickly attacked Emmer.

Having rejected the top replacements, Scalise and the Trump-backed Jordan, there is no longer any obvious choice for the job.

"We're in the same cul-de-sac," said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the chairman of the far-right House Freedom Caucus.

Yet Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., one of the hardliners, said, "This is what democracy looks like."

Republicans have been flailing all month, unable to conduct routine business as they fight amongst themselves with daunting challenges ahead.

The federal government risks a shutdown in a matter of weeks if Congress fails to pass funding legislation by a Nov. 17 deadline to keep services and offices running. More immediately, President Joe Biden has asked Congress to provide \$105 billion in aid — to help Israel and Ukraine amid their wars and to shore up the U.S. border with Mexico. Federal aviation and farming programs face expiration without action.

Many hardliners have been resisting a leader who voted for the budget deal that McCarthy struck with Biden earlier this year, which set federal spending levels that far-right Republicans don't agree with and now want to undo. They are pursuing steeper cuts to federal programs and services with next month's funding deadline.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia said she wanted assurances the candidates would pursue impeachment inquiries into Biden and other top Cabinet officials.

During the turmoil, the House is now led by a nominal interim speaker pro tempore, Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., the bow tie-wearing chairman of the Financial Services Committee. His main job is to elect a more permanent speaker.

Some Republicans — and Democrats — would like to simply give McHenry more power to get on with the routine business of governing. But McHenry, the first person to be in the position that was created in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks as an emergency measure, has declined to back those overtures.

## **Russia maneuvers carefully over the Israel-Hamas war as it seeks to expand its global clout**

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia has issued carefully calibrated criticism of both sides in the war between Israel and Hamas. But the conflict also is giving Moscow bold new opportunities — to advance its role as a global power broker and challenge Western efforts to isolate it over Ukraine.

While Moscow lacks leverage to mediate a settlement in the Middle East, it could try to play on some perceived credibility problems with the West's response to the crisis.

It also expects the Israel-Hamas war to distract attention from the fighting in Ukraine and erode support for Kyiv.

There are risks for Moscow, however. It could damage its relationship with Israel, which until now has kept it from sending weapons to Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has condemned the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas militants on towns in southern Israel. At the same time, he warned Israel against blockading the Gaza Strip, likening it to Nazi Germany's siege of Leningrad during World War II.

He has cast the war as a failure of U.S. diplomacy, charging that Washington has opted for economic

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"handouts" to the Palestinians and abandoned efforts to help create a Palestinian state.

Putin declared earlier this month that Moscow could play the role of mediator, thanks to its friendly ties with both Israel and the Palestinians, adding that "no one could suspect us of playing up to one party."

Despite that claim of even-handedness, a U.N. Security Council resolution that Russia submitted last week condemning violence against civilians made no mention of Hamas. It was rejected by the council.

China was among a few countries that backed the Russian draft, reflecting a shared stance by Moscow and Beijing. Chinese and Russian Middle East envoys met last week to discuss working together to help cool the situation, noting their adherence to a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians.

While U.S. President Joe Biden, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and other Western leaders visited Israel to show support, Putin waited for nine days before calling Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, even though they previously had developed warm personal ties. Putin also discussed the war in calls with the leaders of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the head of the Palestinian Authority.

Putin offered Netanyahu condolences to the families of Israelis killed by Hamas and emphasized "his strong rejection and condemnation of any actions that victimize the civilian population, including women and children," according to a Kremlin readout of the call. He also emphasized the need for a "peaceful settlement through political and diplomatic means," it added. Netanyahu's office said he told Putin that Israel would not stop until it had eliminated Hamas.

Unlike Putin, who carefully balanced his statements, other Russian officials were more blunt in their criticism of Israeli strikes on Gaza.

Konstantin Kosachev, deputy speaker of the upper house of Russian parliament, said that while Hamas unleashed the war, Israel's response was "disproportionate" and "inhumane."

The Kremlin's maneuvering may reflect domestic politics, with Muslims making up about 15% of the population. The Moscow-backed leader of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, spoke strongly in support of the Palestinians, assailing Israel for capturing their lands and establishing blockades.

Moscow's stance won quick praise from Hamas, which said it appreciates Russia's call for a cease-fire. Russia's statements also play well in the Arab world, where many have accused the U.S. and its allies of squarely supporting Israel while turning a blind eye to the rising civilian death toll in Gaza.

But this position also threatens Russia's friendly ties with Israel, which hasn't joined Western sanctions against Moscow or given weapons to Ukraine.

"There is a real threat of exacerbation of our ties with Israel in the current situation," said Andrei Kortunov, academic director of the Russian International Affairs Council.

The Times of Israel reported Tuesday an Israeli diplomat expressed "displeasure with the role Russia is playing" to Moscow's diplomatic officials, voicing hope the Kremlin will take "more balanced" positions.

Amir Weitmann, a leading member of Netanyahu's Likud party, accused Russia of supporting Hamas. Speaking on Kremlin-funded broadcaster RT, he warned that after Israel defeats Hamas, "we will make sure that Ukraine wins, we will make sure that you pay the price for what you have done."

Asked about Israeli criticism of Moscow's stance on the war, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov emphasized Russia's condemnation of terrorism and reaffirmed its push for a quick cease-fire and the need for a Palestinian state.

Amid what Israel sees as Moscow's pro-Palestinian stance, some prominent Russian voices have backed Israel.

In a sign of the split sympathies, the head of the most popular political talk show on Russian state TV, Vladimir Solovyov, fired one expert on his televised panel who alleged in an online interview that two of Moscow's top diplomats have anti-Israeli sentiments.

Yevgeny Satanovsky, a pro-Kremlin foreign policy expert, described Russia's Middle East envoy, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, as leaning toward Arab countries and alleged that Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova detests Israel. He later apologized.

Some commentators described the anti-Israeli sentiments as a throwback to Soviet times.

"Friendship with the Arabs against Israel and the West is an important part of that legacy," Alexander Baunov of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center said in an analysis. "A global rebellion against the Western

order to a certain extent makes Russia and Hamas natural allies and certainly prevents them from being enemies.”

Kortunov of the Russian International Affairs Council argued that Russia could use its strong contacts with Iran and Syria to help negotiate a settlement.

“Russia could be part of a multilateral coalition that would offer security guarantees,” he said. “It’s very important to maintain a well-balanced, delicate approach that wouldn’t alienate either party.”

Izabella Tabarovsky, senior adviser at the Kennan Institute, noted that for Putin, Hamas’ “attack and the anticipated ground invasion of the Gaza Strip present an opportunity to shed his pariah status and elevate his profile as the Middle East faces its most dangerous crisis in years.”

## Republicans nominate Mike Johnson for House speaker after Emmer’s withdrawal, desperate to end chaos

By LISA MASCARO, STEPHEN GROVES, FARNOUSH AMIRI and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans chose Rep. Mike Johnson as their latest nominee for House speaker late Tuesday, hours after an earlier pick, Rep. Tom Emmer, abruptly withdrew in the face of opposition from Donald Trump and hardline GOP lawmakers.

Johnson of Louisiana, a lower-ranked member of the House GOP leadership team, becomes the fourth Republican nominee after Emmer and the others fell short in what has become an almost absurd cycle of political infighting since Kevin McCarthy’s ouster as GOP factions jockey for power.

Refusing to unify, far-right members won’t accept a more traditional speaker and moderate conservatives don’t want a hardliner. During private balloting, Johnson won a majority, but ahead of an expected House floor vote Wednesday the nominee will need almost all Republicans to win the gavel.

“Mike! Mike! Mike!” lawmakers chanted at a press conference afterward, surrounding Johnson and posing for selfies in a show of support.

Three weeks on, the Republicans have been frittering away their majority status — a maddening embarrassment to some, democracy in action to others, but not at all how the House is expected to function.

Anxious and exhausted, Republican lawmakers are desperately trying to move on. “Pretty sad commentary on governance right now,” said Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark. “Maybe on the fourth or fifth or sixth or 10th try we’ll get this thing right.”

After he withdrew Tuesday afternoon, Emmer briskly left the building where he had been meeting privately with Republicans. He said later at the Capitol that Trump’s opposition did not affect his decision to bow out.

“I made my decision based on my relationship with the conference,” he said, referring to the GOP majority. He said he would support whomever emerges as the new nominee. “We’ll get it done.”

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Reps. Byron Donalds of Florida, a Trump ally who ran third on the morning ballot, and a few others.

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Coming in a steady second in the morning balloting, Johnson offered his full support to Emmer. Others were eliminated during multiple rounds of voting, including Donalds and Rep. Kevin Hern of Oklahoma, a conservative leader and former McDonald's franchise owner who plied his colleagues with hamburgers seeking their support. Reps. Austin Scott of Georgia, Jack Bergman of Michigan, Pete Sessions of Texas, Gary Palmer of Alabama and Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania also dropped out.

Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, the hard-right leader who engineered McCarthy's ouster, has said several of those who were running — Hern, Donalds or Johnson — would make a "phenomenal" choice for speaker.

Nevertheless, Gaetz voted for Emmer, though others who joined in ousting McCarthy did not.

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## China said the US is a disruptor of peace in response to Pentagon report on China's military buildup

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — China said the United States is the “biggest disruptor of regional peace and stability” in the world in a scathing response Wednesday to a Pentagon report on China’s growing military buildup.

The annual report that is required by Congress is one way the Pentagon measures the military capabilities of China, which the U.S. government sees as its key threat in the Asia-Pacific region and America’s primary long-term security challenge.

The statement China’s Ministry of Defense issued in response called the Pentagon report’s findings false and used it in turn to hit back at the U.S.’ recent actions in helping Israel and Ukraine, as well as its buildup of military installations worldwide.

“The U.S. has sent depleted uranium munitions and cluster bombs to Ukraine, sent its carrier battle groups to the Mediterranean and weapons and munitions to Israel, is this the so-called ‘gospel’ the ‘human rights defender is bringing to the area?’” said Wu Qian, the spokesperson for China’s defense ministry.

The Pentagon report builds on a warning last year that China was expanding its nuclear force rapidly, in line with a general buildup of its military. The earlier warning said Beijing was on track to nearly quadruple the number of warheads it has to 1,500 by 2035.

China’s top diplomat Wang Yi will visit the United States on Thursday ahead of a possible meetup between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in November. U.S.-China relations have deteriorated since 2018, initially over a trade dispute but expanding to the pandemic, China’s actions in Xinjiang and over Taiwan.

China also made sure to address Taiwan in its response. The Pentagon report said China is intensifying military, diplomatic and economic pressure toward the self-ruled island.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has become more overt with this claim in recent years. This claim has become one of the main points of tension between China and the U.S. as U.S. support for Taiwan has grown. The U.S. has also sold billions of dollars in weapons to Taiwan, which the island’s government has said is for self-defense and deterrence.

“We urge the U.S. to stop using any excuse, any method to strengthen U.S.-Taiwan military links and illegally arm Taiwan in any way,” the spokesperson said.

The U.S. provides Taiwan sales under the Taiwan Relations Act, passed by Congress in 1979 to ensure the island is able to defend itself.

## Off-duty pilot said ‘I’m not OK’ before trying to cut engines midflight, charging documents say

By CLAIRE RUSH and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — An off-duty airline pilot riding in an extra cockpit seat on a Horizon Air flight said “I’m not OK” just before trying to cut the engines midflight and later told police he had been struggling with depression, according to charging documents made public Tuesday.

State prosecutors in Oregon filed 83 counts of attempted murder against Alaska Airlines pilot Joseph David Emerson, 44, on Tuesday just before he appeared in court, with his attorney, Noah Horst, entering not guilty pleas on his behalf. Federal prosecutors meanwhile charged Emerson with interfering with a flight crew, which can carry up to 20 years in prison.

According to a probable cause statement filed in Multnomah County Circuit Court, Emerson told Port of Portland police following his arrest that he had been struggling with depression, that a friend had recently died and that he had taken psychedelic mushrooms about 48 hours before he attempted to cut the engines. He also said he had not slept in more than 40 hours, according to the document.

Police reported that Emerson did not appear to be intoxicated at the time of the interview, and in a statement Tuesday, Alaska Airlines, which owns Horizon, said neither the gate agents nor flight crew noticed any signs of impairment that might have barred him from the flight. An FBI agent wrote in a probable

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cause affidavit in support of the federal charge that Emerson "said it was his first-time taking mushrooms."

While psilocybin is illegal in most of the country — Oregon legalized it for adults this year — the Food and Drug Administration in 2018 designated it a "breakthrough therapy" that might be used for mental health conditions or substance use disorders.

Emerson, an Alaska Airlines pilot from Pleasant Hill, California, was arrested Sunday night after the flight crew reported that he attempted to shut down the engines on a Horizon Air flight from Everett, Washington, to San Francisco while riding in the extra seat in the cockpit. The plane was diverted to Portland, where it landed safely with more than 80 people on board.

The FBI affidavit said Emerson, who as an off-duty pilot was authorized to ride in the cockpit's jump seat, made casual conversation with the captain and first officer when the plane was between Astoria, Oregon, and Portland, before trying to grab two red handles that would have activated the plane's fire suppression system and cut off fuel to its engines.

After what the flight crew described as a brief struggle, lasting only about 30 seconds, Emerson left the cockpit, the FBI said.

Flight attendants placed Emerson in wrist restraints and seated him in the rear of the aircraft, but as the plane descended, he tried to grab the handle of an emergency exit, according to the document. A flight attendant stopped him by placing her hands on top of his, it said.

Alaska Airlines said Tuesday that Emerson had been relieved of all duties.

Horst did not immediately speak with reporters following the hearing or respond to phone and email messages seeking comment.

The captain and first officer told police after the plane landed that Emerson said "I'm not OK" just before he reached up to pull the handles. They were able to stop him before he pulled the handles all the way down, the affidavit said.

Emerson walked calmly to the back of the plane after being told to leave the cockpit and told a flight attendant, "You need to cuff me right now or it's going to be bad," the affidavit said. Another flight attendant heard him saying, "I messed everything up" and "tried to kill everybody."

According to the affidavit, he asked police if he could waive his right to an attorney: "I'm admitting to what I did. I'm not fighting any charges you want to bring against me, guys."

He also told them he thought he was having a nervous breakdown and said: "I pulled both emergency shut off handles because I thought I was dreaming and I just wanna wake up," according to the affidavit.

Pilots are required to undergo psychological screening as part of their regularly scheduled medical exams. There have been crashes that investigators believe were deliberately caused by pilots. Authorities said the copilot of a Germanwings jet that crashed in the French Alps in 2015 had practiced putting the plane into a dive.

Emerson took his most recent exam in September, Federal Aviation Administration records show — but according to the charging documents, he had long been struggling with depression.

Emerson was to remain in state custody pending an initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Portland, the U.S. attorney's office said in a statement.

Mark Angelos, a senior flight instructor at the NRI Flying Club in Concord, California, has known Emerson for more than 10 years. Emerson used to be president of the club and designed its safety program, meaning he was in charge of making sure instructors followed standard operating procedures, Angelos said.

Angelos said that when he and other club members initially heard the news, they thought Horizon Air must have been conducting an emergency drill to test its crew. They couldn't believe that a person they saw as a family man who loved his children could be accused of such a thing.

"It just couldn't have been our Joe," he said.

## The US is sharing hard lessons from urban combat in Iraq and Syria as Israel prepares to invade Gaza

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The prospect of Israeli forces launching an assault into Gaza's dense urban neighborhoods, where militants use civilians as human shields, brings back searing memories of the deadly battles the U.S.-led coalition fought against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria.

For U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his military leaders, that intense combat and the thousands of civilians killed in airstrikes and neighborhood gunfights in Mosul and Raqqa are lessons to be shared as Israel prepares for a possible ground invasion against Hamas.

"In our conversations with the Israelis, and as we've made very clear, we're continuing to highlight, the importance of mitigating civilian casualties and ensuring that ... things like safety corridors are thought through," Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon spokesman, said Tuesday.

The U.S. can paint a vivid picture of civilian slaughter. During the eight-month siege to liberate Mosul from Islamic insurgents, as many as 10,000 people were killed, including at least 3,200 civilians from airstrikes, artillery fire or mortar rounds between October 2016 and the fall of the Islamic State group in July 2017, according to an Associated Press investigation. About the same number of civilians were killed or taken hostage by militants and used as human shields as they fled the city.

Austin, Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Eric Kurilla, head of U.S. Central Command, and other senior military commanders all spent time in the region around then and watched the violence unfold. They were keenly aware of efforts to set up humanitarian corridors and decisions to pause operations while civilians were warned to move away. So as they are speaking to their Israeli counterparts on an almost daily basis, they are sharing advice on the challenges of urban warfare, the threats of booby traps and roadside bombs and the drive to protect the innocent while rooting out insurgents hidden in schools, mosques and homes.

"Sharing our 20 years of lessons learned is occurring up and down the chain," said Navy Capt. Jereal Dorsey, the spokesman for Brown.

Underscoring that priority, the U.S. has sent a team of military advisers to Israel, including Marine Corps Lt. Gen. James Glynn, who helped lead special operations forces against the Islamic State group. Glynn, who also served in Fallujah during some of the most heated urban combat there at the height of the Iraq War, will be able to advise the Israelis on how to mitigate civilian casualties in urban warfare.

"These officials, to include Gen. Glynn, have experience when it comes to urban combat," Ryder told reporters Tuesday. "They're in there temporarily with their military expertise to just go through and discuss some of the hard questions that the IDF should consider as they plan various scenarios."

In discussions last week with Israeli defense and government leaders in Tel Aviv, Austin recalled his experiences heading U.S. Central Command during the first two years of the campaign to defeat the Islamic State group. He talked about lessons learned, including the realization that the world is watching, officials familiar with the talks said.

Austin was blunt both publicly and privately that as Israelis plan their military operations, including any ground assault into Gaza, they must take into account the safety of civilians.

"There are some lessons learned that we will be more than happy to share with our allies here in terms of operating effectively in dense urban terrain, creating safe humanitarian corridors, making sure that we're thoughtful about how we shape the battle and making sure that our objectives are well defined," Austin told reporters.

A RAND report released last year found that while the U.S. emphasized the need to minimize civilian harm in the devastating 2017 siege to liberate Raqqa, Syria, there were thousands of casualties. It recommended that the U.S. military adjust its planning, training, targeting and use of weapons in order to better avoid widespread civilian deaths and damage.

Retired Army Gen. Joseph Votel, who took over U.S. Central Command in 2016 when Austin retired and oversaw the operations, said the most important message for the Israelis — which has been delivered by



Austin, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and President Joe Biden — is that it's not what Israel does in its pledge to destroy Hamas, but how the military does it.

"How you orchestrate this campaign really matters," said Votel. "And they have to do this in a way that reflects values and the concern for innocent Palestinians who themselves are being held hostage by Hamas."

He added that there are many similarities and some key differences between those missions and a potential assault into Gaza. Hamas, he said, is better armed, with more sophisticated explosives and other weapons supplied by Iran. And the labyrinth of tunnels under Gaza is far more developed and lengthy than those seen in Raqqa.

Militarily, he said, Israel is seeing a more sophisticated and better armed opponent than the Islamic State was in Syria and Iraq.

"There's a difference between being dug in, going to ground and what we are seeing in Gaza, which is an underground architecture that connects different parts of Gaza and allows people to move supplies, people and other things, and enhance critical functions underground," said Votel. "I don't think ISIS got to that particular level of sophistication."

He said the U.S. and coalition allies had more time to prepare for the battle to retake Mosul. And he said that as the coalition moved down the Euphrates River, it stopped and paused operations a number of times in order to meet with local tribal leaders and try to get innocent civilians out of the line of fire.

The brutality of it all is another element Austin recalls, as well as the need to stop militants even as they are embedded deeply into urban civilian areas.

"In countering ISIS I felt as if we were staring evil in the eye," Austin said. "It was truly evil. And what we've seen from Hamas, it takes that evil to another level. And so that's the first thing that we need to remember and consider."

## **Jenna Ellis becomes latest Trump lawyer to plead guilty over efforts to overturn Georgia's election**

By WILL WEISSERT and KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Attorney and prominent conservative media figure Jenna Ellis pleaded guilty Tuesday to a felony charge over efforts to overturn Donald Trump's 2020 election loss in Georgia, tearfully telling the judge she looks back on that time with "deep remorse."

Ellis, the fourth defendant in the case to enter into a plea deal with prosecutors, was a vocal part of Trump's reelection campaign in the last presidential cycle and was charged alongside the Republican former president and 17 others with violating the state's anti-racketeering law.

Ellis pleaded guilty to one felony count of aiding and abetting false statements and writings. She had been facing charges of violating Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO, and soliciting the violation of oath by a public officer, both felonies.

She rose to speak after pleading guilty, fighting back tears as she said she would not have represented Trump after the 2020 election if she knew then what she knows now, claiming that she relied on lawyers with much more experience than her and failed to verify the things they told her.

"What I did not do but should have done, Your Honor, was to make sure that the facts the other lawyers alleged to be true were in fact true," the 38-year-old Ellis said.

The guilty plea from Ellis comes just days after two other defendants, fellow attorneys Sidney Powell and Kenneth Chesebro, entered guilty pleas. That means three high-profile people responsible for pushing baseless legal challenges to Democrat Joe Biden's 2020 election victory have agreed to accept responsibility for their roles rather than take their chances before a jury. A lower-profile defendant pleaded guilty last month.

Responding to a reporter's shouted question in the hallway of a New York City courthouse, where a civil case accusing him of inflating the value of his assets is being held, Trump said he didn't know anything about Ellis' plea deal but called it "too bad" and said he wasn't worried by it.

"Don't know anything, we're totally innocent of everything, that's political persecution is all it is," he said.

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Steve Sadow, Trump's lead attorney in the Georgia case, used Ellis' plea to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the racketeering charges Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis brought against all 19 defendants.

"For the fourth time, Fani Willis and her prosecution team have dismissed the RICO charge in return for a plea to probation," he said. "What that shows is this so-called RICO case is nothing more than a bargaining chip for DA Willis."

He also noted that Ellis pleaded guilty to a charge that wasn't in the original indictment and doesn't include Trump.

She was sentenced to five years of probation along with \$5,000 in restitution, 100 hours of community service, writing an apology letter to the people of Georgia and testifying truthfully in trials related to this case.

The early pleas and the favorable punishment — probation rather than prison — could foreshadow similar outcomes for additional defendants who may see an admission of guilt and cooperation as their best hope for leniency. Even so, their value as witnesses against Trump is unclear given that their direct participation in unfounded schemes will no doubt expose them to attacks on their credibility and bruising cross-examinations should they testify.

The indictment in the sweeping case details a number of accusations against Ellis, including that she helped author plans on how to disrupt and delay congressional certification of the 2020 election's results on Jan. 6, 2021, the day a mob of Trump supporters eventually overran the U.S. Capitol.

Ellis is also accused of urging state legislators to unlawfully appoint a set of presidential electors loyal to Trump at a hearing in Pennsylvania, and she later appeared with some of those lawmakers and Trump at a meeting on the topic at the White House. The indictment further says she similarly pushed state lawmakers to back false, pro-Trump electors in Georgia as well as Arizona and Michigan.

Prosecutor Daysha Young said in court Tuesday that Ellis attended a December 2020 meeting of Georgia state senators with Trump attorney and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and with Georgia-based attorney Ray Smith. Ellis "intentionally aided and abetted" the other two as they made false statements to the lawmakers, including that more than 2,500 people convicted of felonies, more than 66,000 people who were under 18 and more than 10,000 dead people voted in the 2020 election in Georgia, Young said.

Before her plea, Ellis, who lives in Florida, was defiant, posting in August on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, "The Democrats and the Fulton County DA are criminalizing the practice of law. I am resolved to trust the Lord."

But she has been more critical of Trump since then, saying on conservative radio in September that she wouldn't vote for him again, citing his "malignant, narcissistic tendency to simply say that he's never done anything wrong."

Along with Giuliani, Ellis was a leading voice in the Trump campaign's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, appearing frequently on television and conservative media to tell lies about widespread fraud that did not occur and spread misinformation and conspiracy theories.

She was censured in Colorado in March after admitting she made repeated false statements about the 2020 election.

That punishment was due in part to a Nov. 20, 2020, appearance on Newsmax, during which she said, "With all those states (Nevada, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Georgia) combined we know that the election was stolen from President Trump, and we can prove that."

Powell pleaded guilty to six misdemeanors and was sentenced to serve six years of probation and was ordered to pay a fine of \$6,000. Chesebro pleaded guilty to one felony and was ordered to serve five years of probation, pay \$5,000 in restitution and do 100 hours of community service. Bail bondsman Scott Graham Hall pleaded guilty to five misdemeanor charges and got five years of probation. All of them were ordered to write apology letters to the people of Georgia and to testify truthfully in any other trial in the case.

Ellis and the other three pleaded guilty under Georgia's first offender law. That means that if they complete their probation without violating the terms or committing another crime, their records will be wiped clean.

Trump and the other defendants, including his White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, have pleaded not guilty.

## Toll rises to 8 dead, 63 hurt from Louisiana interstate pileup blamed on dense fog, marsh fire smoke

By KEVIN MCGILL and SARA CLINE Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The toll from a series of crashes on a Louisiana interstate rose to eight dead and 63 injured Tuesday evening, a day after a “super fog” of marsh fire smoke and dense fog snared more than 160 vehicles in the fiery pileup, authorities said.

Lance Scott was among the many drivers caught in the wreckage on Interstate 55 west of New Orleans. The 51-year-old had been driving his daughter to the airport Monday morning when the fog thickened like a “white-out on a ski slope.” He slammed on his brakes, narrowly avoiding the cars in front of him while hearing “the most horrendous clank of metal” behind him.

“It was, ‘Bang. Bang. Bang.’ It just went on... for probably 45 seconds,” Scott said. “As every second went by the clanking of the metal got a little bit fainter, which told me it was backing up — so I knew there was layers and layers of collisions.”

Scott turned to his 24-year-old daughter, an intensive care unit nurse, and said to her, “There’s going to be a lot of people who need help and I need you to go out and do what you do.”

Amid the ominous crackling of flames in the wreckage, the fog slowly lifted afterward to reveal the extent of the pileup. Scott and his daughter helped people out of their cars, some with noticeably broken collarbones. One had to wait for first responders to bring the Jaws of Life.

An estimated 168 vehicles were involved in the crashes, Louisiana State Police said. By Tuesday evening the number of fatalities had increased from seven to eight and the number of reported injured more than doubled, Louisiana State Police said in a news release.

At least 63 people were injured, with injuries ranging from minor to critical, others sought medical aid on their own, authorities said in the update.

It is unclear whether it was the most significant crash ever handled by Louisiana State Police, given the number of vehicles and fatalities involved, state police Sgt. Kate Stegall told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

“However, I can tell you that this is an extensive and devastating incident, resulting in loss of lives and profound repercussions for both the community and first responders,” Stegall said.

The crashes began before 9 a.m. Monday along a one-mile (1.6-kilometer) stretch of the elevated interstate, which passes over swamp and open water between Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas, State Police Sgt. Kate Stegall said in a news briefing.

The crashes left a long stretch of mangled and scorched cars, trucks and tractor-trailers. Crushed vehicles were piled atop each other, blackened by flames. Some people got out of their vehicles and stood on the side of the road or on the roofs of their cars looking on in disbelief at the disaster. Others cried out for help.

Scott said there was “great camaraderie” as people sprang into action, helping others. With drivers warning others about a nearby fire from the crash, people moved away from the wreckage. They waited for 45 minutes for paramedics to reach them and for transportation off the bridge.

Clarencia Patterson Reed, 46, was driving to Manchac with her wife and niece and saw people waving for her to stop, but once she stopped, two other vehicles hit her car from behind and the side, she told The Associated Press. Patterson Reed escaped from her side of the car, but her wife was pinned inside, her side and a leg injured. Others stepped in to help, she said.

“I just thank God,” she said. “There was a casualty a few cars ahead of us.”

Another driver Christopher Coll, said he was already braking when a pickup truck “drove up on top of my work trailer and took me for a ride.”

Coll could smell smoke as he heard cars crashing and tires popping. He was able to kick open his passenger door to escape and then helped others — pulling one person out a car window.

School buses were summoned to transport stranded motorists from the accident sites.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards asked for prayers “for those hurt and killed” Monday and issued a call for blood donors.

Crews removed the last vehicles Tuesday afternoon and began a cleanup of debris, diesel and other chemicals littering the area, authorities said. Additionally, the state's transportation department identified multiple areas requiring bridge repairs as inspections continued.

The National Weather Service said there were multiple wetland fires in the region Monday and smoke from the fires mixed with fog to create a "super fog."

Parts of the highway reopened Tuesday afternoon. But hazardous driving conditions Tuesday morning prompted several schools in the area to close or delay openings as tow trucks continued to haul debris off of the interstate.

## **UAW strikes at General Motors plant in Texas as union goes after automakers' cash cows**

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — First it was Ford, then Stellantis, and now a General Motors factory has been added to the growing list of highly profitable plants where the United Auto Workers union is on strike.

On Tuesday, about 5,000 workers walked out at GM's factory in Arlington, Texas, that makes big, high margin SUVs such as the Chevrolet Tahoe and Cadillac Escalade.

The strikes in Texas, as well as at the largest Ford factory in the world in Louisville, Kentucky, and a Stellantis plant that makes lucrative Ram pickups in Michigan, are aimed at getting the companies to capitulate to union demands for richer wages and benefits than the automakers so far have offered.

But judging from statements out of Detroit, the companies are at or near the limit on how much they're willing to budge to end a series of targeted strikes now involving 46,000 workers that began on Sept. 15. About 32% of the union's 146,000 members at the companies are on strike, and the automakers are laying off workers at other plants as parts shortages cascade through their systems.

In announcing the Arlington strike, UAW President Shawn Fain noted that GM posted big earnings on Tuesday, yet its offer to the union lags behind Ford, preserving a two-tier wage structure and offering the weakest 401(k) contribution of all three automakers.

"It's time GM workers, and the whole working class, get their fair share," Fain said.

But GM CEO Mary Barra told investors on the company's earnings conference call that the automaker already has made a record offer and won't sign a contract that jeopardizes the company's future.

"We will not agree to a contract that isn't responsible for our employees and for our shareholders," she said. "We need to make sure we have a contract that is going to allow us to compete and win in what is a challenging market for EVs and also allows us to support the business that we have with strong margins in our (internal combustion engine) business."

Last week, Ford told reporters that it had reached the limit of what it was willing to pay to end the nearly 6-week-old strike, bringing out Executive Chairman Bill Ford to urge strikers to return to work. On Monday, after the union took down the pickup plant in Sterling Heights, Michigan, north of Detroit, Stellantis said it was "outraged" by the escalation because it improved its offer to include a 23% wage increase over four years.

All three automakers have said they won't stick themselves with high labor costs that would make their vehicles more costly than nonunion competitors.

Talks continued Tuesday with Stellantis and Ford, with new offers from the union either coming or delivered at both companies. The status of talks with GM wasn't clear.

Early on, the union struck at plants that didn't make the companies' most expensive and profitable vehicles. But as the strikes dragged on, Fain has targeted truck and SUV plants in an effort to empty the companies' wallets.

At the same time, workers are getting by on \$500 per week of strike pay, hardly enough to pay the monthly bills. The payments also are making a dent in the union's strike fund, which was \$825 million when the strikes began. Fain said it was still healthy.

Thomas Kochan, a professor of work and employment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,

said adding the GM SUV plant means the negotiations are at a pivotal point.

"The pressures for reaching an agreement that everybody can live with are immense on both the company and the union," he said. "The effects of an expanded strike across the three companies and prolonged over time would be profound, and would have very serious negative effects on the companies and on the workforce."

The companies, he said, are close to the limits on their offers and the union is close to what it legitimately can expect to get.

"There comes a time where the parties have to have very private conversations in negotiations," Kochan said. "It's time for the public rhetoric to stop."

On the picket line in Texas, Ethan Pierce, a material handler with more than 23 years at GM, said workers sacrificed, making concessions to help save GM when it was in dire financial trouble around the 2008 financial crisis. "We started asking for some of our stuff back. They didn't want to give it to us," Pierce said.

Now, with inflation driving up prices, workers are struggling, he said. Among the sticking points is GM's refusal to let workers go on strike over plans to close factories, Pierce said.

"If you're being treated unfairly, sooner or later you have to stand up," he said. "When we get treated better, everybody else gets treated better."

The addition of the Arlington plant came just after GM announced strong third-quarter financial results. The SUVs are among GM's most profitable vehicles.

The company on Tuesday posted a net profit of just over \$3 billion for the quarter, down 7% from a year ago. But the company reported strong demand and prices for its vehicles.

GM later said that it's disappointed in the escalation at Arlington, calling the strike "unnecessary and irresponsible" and said it will have negative ripple effects on dealers, suppliers and communities.

Because the striking plants supply or get parts from other factories, the automakers say they've been forced to lay off another 7,672 workers. And shares of General Motors Co. are down more than 14% this year, touching lows Tuesday that haven't been seen since 2020 during the pandemic, when the company's sales growth tumbled almost 11%.

Last week GM made an offer that increased its previous one by about 25% in total value, the company said.

Barra said GM has made a record offer to the union that will raise top factory pay to \$40.39 per hour, or roughly \$84,000 per year in four years.

The company also said the strike is expected to cut pretax earnings by \$800 million this year, and another \$200 million per week after that. And those estimates were made prior to the Arlington strike, GM said.

## **US developing contingency plans to evacuate Americans from Mideast in case Israel-Hamas war spreads**

By AAMER MADHANI, LOLITA C. BALDOR, and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Tuesday that "prudent contingency planning" is underway to evacuate Americans from the Middle East in case the Israel-Hamas war spreads into a broad regional conflict.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby stressed there are currently no "active efforts" to evacuate Americans from the region beyond charter flights the U.S. government began operating earlier this month out of Israel.

"It would be imprudent and irresponsible if we didn't have folks thinking through a broad range of contingencies and possibilities," Kirby said. "And certainly evacuations are one of those things."

The White House addressed the contingency plans amid growing concerns that the 18-day-old Israel-Hamas war could further escalate. The U.S. has advised Israel that postponing a possible ground invasion of Gaza could be helpful as the U.S. and other partners in the region try to secure the release of more than 200 hostages who were captured in the Oct. 7 attack on Hamas soil. The contingency planning was first reported by The Washington Post.

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"The Israelis are making their own decisions," Biden said Tuesday night when asked whether he has asked Israel to hold off on its expected ground offensive.

President Joe Biden and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman spoke by phone on Tuesday about the deteriorating situation. It was the two leaders' first interaction since before the Hamas attack on Israel.

Biden and the crown prince spoke about "efforts to deter state and non-state actors from widening the conflict between Israel and Hamas," according to the White House. Biden administration officials have repeatedly warned Iran not to become involved in the conflict. U.S. forces in the region over the last few days have come under repeated attacks that the Pentagon has said were likely endorsed by Iran, which is the chief sponsor of Hamas, the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, as well as militant groups in Iraq and Yemen.

"The two leaders agreed on pursuing broader diplomatic efforts to maintain stability across the region and prevent the conflict from expanding," the White House added.

At the Pentagon, Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said the U.S. is preparing for an increase in violence, noting that there have already been at least 13 attacks against troops and installations in Iraq and Syria.

"What we are seeing is the prospect for more significant escalation against U.S. forces and personnel across the region in the very near term coming from Iranian proxy forces and ultimately from Iran," said Ryder, the Pentagon's press secretary.

He added that the U.S. won't hesitate to take action if needed to protect its forces and interests in the region.

Biden said last week he believed that Hamas was motivated to attack Israel in part by a desire to stop that country from normalizing relations with Saudi Arabia.

"One of the reasons ... why Hamas moved on Israel, is because they knew I was about to sit down with the Saudis," Biden said at a campaign fundraiser. The U.S. president said he thinks Hamas militants launched their deadly assault on Oct. 7 because "guess what? The Saudis wanted to recognize Israel" and were near being able to formally do so.

An agreement, which the White House says it continues to pursue, would be a feat of diplomacy that could have enabled broader recognition of Israel by other Arab and Muslim-majority nations that have largely opposed Israel since its creation 75 years ago in a territory where Palestinians have long resided.

But talks were interrupted after Hamas militants stormed from the blockaded Gaza Strip where Palestinians live into nearby Israeli towns.

Israel sealed off Gaza in response, and Biden told reporters in Washington on Tuesday that humanitarian aid into the territory wasn't arriving fast enough.

Gaza's 2.3 million people have been running out of food, water, fuel and medicine. The aid convoys allowed into Gaza so far have carried a fraction of what's needed.

The president made his comments to reporters about the speed of aid flowing into Gaza after presenting science and technology awards to several Americans for exemplary achievements that have had a positive impact on the United States.

One of the recipients, Sheldon Weinbaum of the City College of New York, wore a "Stop War" button on his suit coat lapel as he received his medal from Biden.

Biden suggested the ceremony was a welcome break from the grim news coming out of the Middle East.

"This is a happy occasion," Biden said at the start of the White House ceremony. "We need some more happy occasions."

The war is the deadliest of five Gaza wars for both sides. The Hamas-run Health Ministry said at least 5,791 Palestinians have been killed and 16,297 wounded. In the occupied West Bank, 96 Palestinians have been killed and 1,650 wounded in violence and Israeli raids since Oct. 7.

"This is war. It is combat. It is bloody, it is ugly, and it's going to be messy," Kirby said. "I wish I could tell you something different. I wish that that wasn't going to happen."

Ryder said several new force protection measures are now underway, including the deployment of air defense systems. He said a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery and additional Patriot

missile battalions have begun to move to undisclosed locations in the Middle East.

The THAAD is being sent from Fort Bliss, Texas, and the Patriot battalions are from Fort Liberty in North Carolina and Fort Sill in Oklahoma.

Ryder also said that additional forces have moved into the Middle East. He said the New Jersey Air National Guard's 119 Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, with its F-16 fighter jets, arrived Tuesday, but officials would not say where exactly it went.

## **In court faceoff, Michael Cohen testifies against Trump in fraud trial. Trump shrugs: 'Proven liar'**

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In a courtroom showdown five years in the making, Donald Trump's fixer-turned-foe Michael Cohen testified Tuesday that he worked to boost the supposed value of the former president's assets to "whatever number Trump told us to."

Trump's lawyers — and outside court, Trump himself — by turn sought to portray Cohen as a serial deceiver who pleaded guilty to crimes that include tax evasion and telling falsehoods to Congress and a bank. During a fractious cross-examination, Cohen, a disbarred attorney, even floated his own lawyerly objections, responding to some queries with "asked and answered!"

It was a fraught face-to-face encounter between Trump and a man who once pledged to "take a bullet" for him. Cohen eventually ended up in prison and became a prominent witness against his former boss in venues from courthouses to Congress.

Now, Cohen is a key figure in New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit alleging that Trump and his company duped banks, insurers and others by giving them financial statements that inflated his wealth.

"I was tasked by Mr. Trump to increase the total assets, based upon a number that he arbitrarily elected," Cohen testified, saying that he and former Trump finance chief Allen Weisselberg labored "to reverse-engineer the various different asset classes, increase those assets, in order to achieve a number that Mr. Trump had tasked us."

Asked what that number was, Cohen replied: "Whatever number Trump told us to."

Trump denies James' allegations. Outside court, Trump dismissed Cohen's account as the words of "a proven liar."

"The witness is totally discredited," Trump said. "He's a disgraced felon, and that's the way it's coming out."

The former president and Republican 2024 front-runner voluntarily came to court for a sixth day this month. Cohen has said he hadn't seen Trump for five years until now.

"Heck of a reunion," Cohen said outside court. He insisted that "this is not about Donald Trump vs. Michael Cohen or Michael Cohen vs. Donald Trump. This is about accountability, plain and simple."

Cohen testified that Trump would summon him and Weisselberg and say, for example: "I'm actually not worth four and a half billion dollars. I'm really worth more like six."

Cohen said he and the finance chief would then inflate the value of Trump properties by pegging them to "comparable" real estate that was actually different — brand-new developments with higher ceilings, more sweeping views and no rent regulation, for instance.

Insurance company executives were shown the exaggerated statements, where the combination of extremely high values and low liabilities could net Trump more favorable premiums, Cohen testified. Plus, he said, Trump would deliberately show up about three-quarters of the way through his deputies' meetings with insurers and spark a conversation to the effect that he was rich enough to self-insure if he couldn't get a good premium.

As Cohen testified, Trump at times whispered to his lawyers or shook his head. At other points, the former president hunched forward in his seat, watching intently, or leaned back with crossed arms. He took a keen interest in Cohen's cross-examination, gesturing to his attorneys and craning his neck to get a better view.

Trump lawyer Alina Habba hammered at Cohen's 2018 federal guilty pleas and his effort now to distance

himself from some of them. Although he pleaded guilty to tax evasion and to making false statements to a bank on a loan application, he said Tuesday he'd lied when he made those admissions. He suggested he'd only engaged in "tax omission" and failed to correct inaccuracies on the loan paperwork.

"You're not going to lie to me, as well?" Habba asked pointedly. And when Cohen objected to certain questions and rattled off cases he said allowed him to do so, Habba snapped back that he was mistaken.

"If you still had your law license, you'd understand that," she said. Another Trump lawyer, Christopher Kise, complained that Cohen was a "serial liar" who was "out of control" and seeking to "play judge."

The actual judge, Arthur Engoron, told Cohen to answer most of the questions.

Engoron already has ruled that Trump and his company committed fraud. The trial involves remaining claims of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records.

Trump says his assets were actually undervalued, and he maintains that disclaimers on his financial statements essentially told recipients to check the numbers out for themselves.

He has derided the case as a "sham," a "scam" and part of an effort by James and other Democrats to drag down his campaign.

Cohen spent a decade as Trump's fiercely loyal personal lawyer before famously breaking with him in 2018 amid a federal investigation that sent Cohen to federal prison. He is also a major prosecution witness in Trump's separate Manhattan hush-money criminal case, scheduled for trial next spring.

James has credited Cohen as the impetus for her civil investigation, which led to the fraud lawsuit and trial. She cited Cohen's testimony to Congress in 2019 that Trump had a history of misrepresenting the value of assets to gain favorable loan terms and tax benefits.

Earlier this month, Trump dropped a \$500 million lawsuit that accused Cohen of "spreading falsehoods" and breaking a confidentiality agreement. A Trump spokesperson said the former president was only pausing the lawsuit, while campaigning and fighting four criminal cases.

In one of those criminal cases, co-defendant Jenna Ellis, an attorney, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to a felony charge over efforts to overturn Trump's 2020 election loss in Georgia. She's the fourth defendant to take a plea deal in the case.

Trump's attorneys sought to delay the New York trial Tuesday, arguing that coronavirus cases among James' staff put the former president's health at risk. The attorney general's office, in a statement, said it had taken all steps to notify the relevant parties and had followed health guidance.

Trump later complained outside court that "what they did with COVID in the courtroom was a disgrace," but he and the attorneys beside him didn't don masks.

## **NHL rescinds ban on rainbow-colored Pride tape, allowing players to use it on the ice this season**

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

NHL players will be allowed to use Pride tape this season after all with the reversal of a ban that sparked a backlash around hockey and among LGBTQ+ advocates in sports.

The league, players' union and a committee on inclusion agreed to give players the option to represent social causes with stick tape during warmups, practices and games. The move announced Tuesday rescinds a ban on rainbow-colored Pride tape for on-ice activities that was provided to teams earlier this fall as guidance for theme nights.

"We are so very grateful to everyone who believes hockey should be a safe, inclusive and welcoming space for all," the makers of Pride Tape said on social media. "We are extremely happy that NHL players will now have the option to voluntarily represent important social causes with their stick tape throughout season."

The NHL Players' Association said it was "pleased to see the league's policy has been revised so that players are free to support causes they believe in."

Pride nights became a hot-button issue in hockey after six players chose not to participate in pregame



warmups last season when their team wore rainbow-themed jerseys. Teams this season are not allowed to wear any kind of theme jerseys, including military appreciation and Hockey Fights Cancer, for warmups.

The tape ban drew criticism from players around the league, longtime executive Brian Burke and others. Philadelphia's Scott Laughton told reporters he'd probably use it anyway, and Arizona's Travis Dermott defied the ban over the weekend by putting rainbow-colored tape on his stick for a game.

Asked earlier this month about the ban, longtime Pride tape user Trevor van Riemsdyk of the Washington Capitals said he hoped it would lead players to get creative about how they support social causes.

"There's still a lot we can do and a lot of ways we can make people feel welcome and included, so hopefully that doesn't deter guys," van Riemsdyk said. "A lot of guys, maybe this will just spur them forward to maybe make it more of a point to do things, whether it's away from the rink or whatever it may be."

Burke, a longtime advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, sharply criticized the ban he said removed meaningful support, calling it "not inclusion or progress" and a surprising and serious setback.

The You Can Play Project, an organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ participation in sports and has partnered with the NHL for a decade, called the reversal "a win for us all."

"Actively welcoming communities into hockey is imperative to keep the sport strong now and into the future," You Can Play said in a statement. "We appreciate every person, team and organization that made their voice heard to support this change and appreciate the NHL's willingness to listen and make the right choice."

## **Stranded at a closed border as bombs fall, foreign nationals in besieged Gaza await evacuation**

By ISABEL DEBRE and NAJIB JOBAIN Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — For more than a week, Talaat Ghabayen, a citizen of Norway who spent his whole life in Oslo, has waited days and nights at the Gaza Strip's land crossing with Egypt as his embassy advised, hoping to flee Israel's bombardment and looming ground invasion and reunite with his wife and sons back home.

"Egypt is literally meters away, I can see it," Ghabayen, a 54-year-old insurance agent who traveled to Gaza before the war erupted for his mother's funeral, said Tuesday from the Rafah crossing.

Under intense Western pressure, the gates at Rafah opened over the weekend for the first time since the war broke out, letting a trickle of humanitarian aid into the besieged strip and stoking hopes that hundreds of foreign nationals trapped in Gaza would be able to cross into safety.

But with each passing hour, Ghabayen loses hope. And each day that Rafah remains shut, he said, is another day that he could die.

"They tell us to go south, then they bomb south. They tell us to go to hospitals, then they bomb hospitals. They tell us to go to shelters, then they bomb shelters," Ghabayen said of the Israeli army, his voice rising with emotion. "We are not Hamas, we are innocent civilians who don't even live here."

The Israeli military says it goes after only Hamas infrastructure in their war with the militant group. Palestinians reject that, pointing to airstrikes that have hit and damaged U.N. schools and hospitals in the densely populated strip.

Since the war broke out, the United States and other countries have scrambled to arrange charter flights — and even an evacuation ship — to ferry their citizens in Israel to various destinations in Europe.

But no such evacuation has materialized for foreign citizens stranded in Gaza, who are coping with the fiercest Israeli bombing campaign in the territory's memory and dire shortages of food, water and fuel since Israel severed its flow of supplies to the strip.

Ghabayen is among what Western diplomats estimate to be some 1,700 Palestinians in Gaza with European or U.S. citizenship, caught up in Israel's devastating air campaign that has killed thousands of Palestinians and crushed entire neighborhoods. Israel launched its counteroffensive after Hamas fighters surged into Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,400 people and abducting over 200 others in an unprecedented attack.

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On top of that, there are hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza holding other foreign passports. Many said their governments told them to fill out forms and wait at the Rafah crossing.

More than a week later, they're still waiting. In some cases, the bombs got to them first.

"We waited so long they'll have to evacuate us by ambulance," said Abdelaziz Shaaban, who said American authorities assured him that his whole family would be able to leave through Rafah because his son is a U.S. citizen.

An airstrike crashed outside his home in Gaza City last week, killing his 14-year-old daughter, Joud, and wounding everyone else in the house — just as they were preparing to try their luck at Rafah a third time. His 18-year-old son Youssef, born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, has a broken jaw and wrist. His other daughter broke her arm. Shaaban lost so much blood that he struggles to walk.

"We are studying the case, we are studying the case," they tell us over and over," Shaaban said of U.S. officials. "What are you studying? We are wounded and can't get painkillers. We are wounded and Shifa Hospital kicked us out because they needed room for more patients."

Shifa Hospital, Gaza's biggest, is struggling to handle a deluge of war-wounded patients as its resources dwindle. While some trucks of humanitarian aid gradually made their way into Gaza in recent days from Egypt, Palestinians say it's nowhere near enough to address the humanitarian disaster.

Egypt has refused to open its doors to those fleeing Gaza — in part because it doesn't want to be seen as aiding Israel's forced displacement of Palestinians but also because it doesn't want a massive refugee crisis within its borders.

As the days tick by, the desperation of foreign nationals trapped in Gaza is growing. Many are increasingly upset with what seems to them a double standard in Western policy. The same countries failing to respond to their plight, they say, have galvanized to evacuate their citizens from Israel and other war-zones around the world.

"It really makes us feel like second-class citizens," said Mahmoud Sarhan, a 48-year-old security guard from Essen, Germany, who made his first trip to Gaza in nearly three decades before the war to tend to his ailing mother in the northern Jabaliya refugee camp.

Sarhan said he is sleeping on the street in Rafah in case the crossing opens without warning. Others are staying with friends and relatives near the crossing or making the treacherous trip several times a week.

After an Israeli airstrike tore into his Sarhan's family house in the north, killing his sister, an English teacher, and her eight children, he said he had nowhere else to go. His mother came with him to Rafah and it's not clear if she'll be able to travel with him to Germany.

"They help their own in Ukraine, in every part of the world where their citizens are in danger. But not Gaza," he said of Western governments.

For Palestinian Americans stuck in Gaza, President Joe Biden's proclamations of staunch support for Israel during his wartime visit to the country following Hamas' unprecedented attack has added to resentments.

"Ridiculous," was how Hamdan Abu Speitan, a 76-year-old physician from Syracuse, New York, put it.

"He is so busy trying to give Israel weapons that he can't get water in or get Americans out," he said, referring to Biden.

The State Department said David Satterfield, recently appointed special envoy for humanitarian issues in the Mideast, was in Israel Tuesday engaged in negotiations with Israel, Egypt and the United Nations to get Rafah to open for U.S. citizens, other dual nationals and employees of international organizations.

Matthew Miller, the State Department spokesman, blamed Hamas for the hold-up in a briefing on Monday.

"We do believe that Egypt is ready to process American citizens if they can make it to Egyptian authorities," he told reporters. "Hamas just has to stop blocking their exit."

After days of subsisting on tea, bread and onions, Abu Speitan said he was feeling dehydrated and exhausted. His sister's house in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza had no generator — just a solar phone charger so he could keep in touch with his worried family back in New York and Boston.

Over the weekend an airstrike slammed into a house just 500 meters (yards) away, sending shrapnel into his room. He clutched his face — blood was gushing everywhere.

He left the hospital and headed straight to Rafah crossing on Tuesday for the fourth time in the past

week. There was no indication this time would be any different. But he said he had no other choice.

"We are stuck waiting, without any information," he said at the border crowded with Palestinians from America, Canada, Germany, Sweden and countless other countries, some of them wounded. "Let me know if you hear something."

## Strikes trim profit at GM in an otherwise strong quarter; more losses likely if picketing spreads

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — A strike by auto workers against General Motors is expected to cut pretax earnings by \$800 million this year, and another \$200 million per week after that, the company's chief financial officer said.

And those figures include only factories that are on strike now, so if more plants are added by the United Auto Workers union, the losses will pile up further, CFO Paul Jacobson told reporters.

The strike is already taking a toll, and shortly after the conference call the UAW expanded the strike to Arlington, Texas, one of GM's most profitable plants. Five thousand workers walked off their jobs at the factory which makes SUVs.

Shares of General Motors Co. are down more than 13% this year, touching lows Tuesday that haven't been seen since the pandemic when the company's sales growth tumbled almost 11% in 2020.

GM on Tuesday posted net income of more than \$3 billion from July through September, down 7% from the same period last year due to lost production from the strike, and also increased warranty costs, Jacobson said. The company also withdrew its previous full-year pretax earnings estimates, citing uncertainty over the length of the strike and how many factories would be shut down.

However, excluding one-time items, GM said made \$2.28 per share, handily beating Wall Street estimates of \$1.87. Revenue of \$44.13 billion rose 5.4% and also exceeded estimates of \$42.48 billion, according to data provider FactSet.

The UAW has been on strike since Sept. 15 — nearly six weeks — against GM and its Detroit competitors, Ford and Jeep maker Stellantis. The union had spared factories that make GM's most profitable vehicles, pickup trucks and large SUVs, from its targeted strikes. Yet the UAW is demonstrating this week that risks to those money-making facilities can rise the longer the strike goes on.

On Monday, the union shut down Stellantis' huge Ram pickup truck plant north of Detroit in Sterling Heights, Michigan. Two weeks ago workers walked off their jobs at Ford's largest and most profitable plant, one that makes pickups and big SUVs in Louisville, Kentucky. So far only 28% of the union's 146,000 members at the Detroit Three are on strike.

Jacobson said the third-quarter strike loss was \$200 million, since the walkouts were only in effect the final two weeks of the period. He predicted another \$600 million of losses from October through December.

In a note to shareholders, CEO Mary Barra said GM has made a record offer to the union that will raise top factory pay to \$40.39 per hour, or roughly \$84,000 per year in four years. She indicated that the company is nearing how much it's willing to pay.

"It's an offer that rewards our team members but does not put our company and their jobs at risk," Barra wrote. "Accepting unsustainably high costs would put our future and GM team member jobs at risk, and jeopardizing our future is something I will not do."

Union President Shawn Fain says the companies are making billions and paying millions to CEOs, so they can afford to pay workers more.

Edward Jones analyst Jeff Windau said investors are concerned about the financial hit from a longer strike, GM slowing electric vehicle production, and whether it can squeeze out more cost cuts to offset a deal with the union.

"Our concern is generally making sure the automakers have that flexibility to be able to navigate through a cyclical downturn," he said Tuesday.

Jacobson said many have expressed concerns about GM taking on higher labor costs, but the company has planned for it by cutting in other areas. For example, GM's annual fixed costs will be \$2 billion lower than 2022 by the end of 2024, Jacobson said. The company also is slowing electric vehicle production to adjust to slower short-term growth in demand.

Last week GM announced that it's postponing production at one Michigan electric pickup truck factory from this year until late 2025 to keep manufacturing in line with demand. That decision will save the company \$1.5 billion next year, Jacobson said.

Barra said the transition to EVs will be "a bit bumpy" at times, but GM is prepared to react with agility. As an example, she cited the company's plan to resurrect the Chevrolet Bolt small EV, which the company was to stop making at the end of this year. Now, the company will take the attributes of the current Bolt and add new battery and other technology to roll out a new vehicle in 2025. "It will require a lot less capital" to make the new version, she said, "while leveraging the strong customer enthusiasm we have for the Bolt EV."

GM is sticking with plans to increase manufacturing capacity to 1 million EVs per year in North America by the end of 2025, he said. But earlier guidance of building 400,000 EVs in North America through the middle of next year have been scrapped. Jacobson said GM still expects to start turning low-to-mid single-digit profit margins on electric vehicles in 2025.

Demand for vehicles and prices remained strong through the third quarter, which helped keep GM's profit high. The company's U.S. sales rose 21%, and Jacobson said the average U.S. selling price for GM vehicles was \$50,750, down only slightly from the previous quarter.

"So far the consumer has held up remarkably well for us, as evidenced by the average transaction prices," Jacobson said. "They continue to hang in and I think exceeded most expectations that were set at the beginning of the year."

Jessica Caldwell, head of insights for the Edmunds.com auto site, said GM's sales numbers looked good on the surface, but that could change in the next few months. As cold weather arrives, those in the market are usually looking for larger four-wheel-drive vehicles. But she said a lingering strike could close plants, cut production of those lucrative vehicles and "be harbingers of sales declines during an important stretch of the calendar ahead."

## **Georgia prosecutors are picking up cooperators in the Trump 2020 election case. Will it matter?**

By ERIC TUCKER and KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Sidney Powell was present for a now-infamous December 2020 meeting at the White House where participants hatched far-fetched schemes to keep Donald Trump in power and was so tied to the then-president that he once considered naming her a special counsel to probe claims of election fraud.

Kenneth Chesebro was part of a small coterie of advisers who prosecutors say prodded Republicans in battleground states to submit slates of fake electors who would falsely assert that Trump, not Democrat Joe Biden, was victorious.

Jenna Ellis authored legal memos that prosecutors say laid out strategies for disrupting the counting of electoral votes and advanced baseless voting fraud statements before state legislatures.

Yet rather than continue to stand behind Trump, the three lawyers have cut deals in the last week with prosecutors in Fulton County, Georgia, agreeing to plead guilty and cooperate in the indictment that charged them, the ex-president and 15 others with illegally plotting to overturn the 2020 election.

The deals ensure the cooperation of witnesses who could presumably offer insider accounts of the desperate scheming to help Trump remain president — a boon for prosecutors striving to develop incriminating evidence against higher-profile targets. Even so, it's hard to forecast how much their assistance heightens Trump's legal peril, especially since Powell's own history of outlandish, ill-supported claims of fraud could open her to attacks on her credibility and a bruising cross-examination.

"It's not a slam dunk that she is the knife to the heart of the former president, but it's not a good day

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for him when she pleads guilty," John Fishwick, a former U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia, said of Powell. "She's going to do something that hurts him. The level of the hurt, we don't know yet."

None of the agreements — Powell pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges, Chesebro and Ellis to a felony — required prison time. That's a generous resolution for defendants alleged to have played significant roles in what Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis has called a "criminal racketeering enterprise to overturn Georgia's presidential election result." But such an outcome could nonetheless signal to other defendants the benefits that await them if they, too, plead guilty while also helping prosecutors winnow down an unwieldy racketeering case so they can focus on even bigger names.

Ellis' guilty plea Tuesday came days after agreements with Powell and Chesebro. Another defendant, bail bondsman Scott Graham Hall, pleaded guilty last month.

"In terms of immediate things that might shake out of it, I think it's a question of what the people next down in the pecking order might do in order to free up the DA's office a little bit more," said Anthony Michael Kreis, a Georgia State University law professor. "I think that's really what the DA's office is trying to do now. They're trying to shake as many of these codefendants loose as they can and focus on the people they want to focus on and just step on the accelerator and get things moving."

Beyond the Georgia case, the cooperation could potentially aid Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith, who has charged Trump with conspiring to undo the election. Powell and Chesebro are referenced, though not by name, as unindicted co-conspirators in that case, making their statements to investigators in Georgia of potential interest to Smith in his prosecution of Trump, which is set for trial next March.

The plea deals ushered in a predictable pattern of once-close Trump allies turning against him in their own interests, followed by Trump trying to distance himself from them. That happened Sunday when Trump posted on social media, in capital letters, that Powell "was not my attorney, and never was."

The about-face was striking given that three years ago, Trump introduced Powell on the social media platform then-known as Twitter as part of his "great legal team" challenging election results.

In that role, she filed a since-dismissed lawsuit attacking Georgia's election results that was embraced by Trump and participated in a news conference with Ellis and another Fulton County defendant, Rudy Giuliani, where baseless claims of vast fraud were raised. Powell was also present for a raucous White House meeting with the then-president, where Trump allies discussed potentially invoking the Insurrection Act as a way to seize voting machines.

"That might be one small part of the picture that nobody else can paint and that is particularly damning for Donald Trump in terms of showing that this was not a good-faith effort to ensure the election's accuracy but rather was a bad-faith effort to overturn it," Kreis said.

Even so, he noted, she'd likely be an easy witness for the Trump team to attack, potentially lessening the impact of any testimony she'd give.

Smith's indictment notes Trump privately told others he thought her fraud ideas sounded "crazy." Giuliani and Ellis moved to separate themselves from her days after their news conference in which Powell incorrectly suggested that a server hosting evidence of voting irregularities was located in Germany, that voting software used by Georgia and other states was created at the direction of late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and that votes for Trump had probably been switched in favor of Biden.

"Not only is she easy to discredit, I think she'd be a very hostile witness," Kreis said.

Campaigning in New Hampshire on Monday, Trump appeared to refer to Powell and Chesebro as "good people" and said prosecutors worked to "hound" and "scare" them.

Steve Sadow, Trump's lead attorney in the Georgia case, expressed confidence Powell's plea wouldn't hurt Trump, saying last week that any truthful testimony offered would be "favorable to my overall defense strategy."

In Chesebro's case, though prosecutors don't say he communicated directly with Trump, he's alleged to have played a crucial role in a scheme underpinning both the Georgia and federal prosecutions — efforts to enlist fake electors in battleground states won by Biden.

Georgia prosecutors say had the case gone to trial, they would have shown Chesebro conspired with Trump, Giuliani, conservative law professor John Eastman and others to get several Georgia Republicans

to falsely present themselves as the state's "duly elected and qualified" electors to "disrupt and delay" the joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, 2021.

Chesebro's lawyer said last week he didn't foresee Chesebro's cooperation harming Trump, but nonetheless, the fake elector plot is being investigated in multiple states and is "a central part of the overall conspiracy," said George Washington University law professor Randall Eliason. That could make his cooperation important in implicating others.

"Anytime that you've got co-conspirators pleading guilty" and admitting to criminal activity, "that's pretty significant," he said.

## **Qatar becomes a key intermediary in Israel-Hamas war as fate of hostages hangs in the balance**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The gas-rich nation of Qatar has become a key intermediary over the fate of more than 200 hostages held by Hamas militants after their unprecedented attack on Israel, once again putting the small Arabian Peninsula country in the spotlight.

The negotiations have also thrust Qatar into a delicate international balancing act as it maintains a relationship with those viewed as militant groups by the West while trying to preserve its close security ties with the United States.

Under arrangements stemming from past Hamas cease-fire understandings with Israel, the gas-rich emirate of Qatar has paid the salaries of civil servants in the Gaza Strip, provided direct cash transfers to poor families and offered other kinds of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza.

Qatar has also hosted Hamas' political office in its capital of Doha for over a decade. Among officials based there is Khaled Mashaal, an exiled Hamas member who survived a 1997 Israeli assassination attempt in Jordan that threatened to derail that country's peace deal with Israel. Also there is Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' supreme leader.

The U.S. sanctioned Mashaal in 2003 for being "responsible for supervising assassination operations, bombings and the killing of Israeli settlers." Washington sanctioned Haniyeh in 2018, saying he had "close links with Hamas' military wing and has been a proponent of armed struggle, including against civilians."

Mashaal, in an interview with Sky News this week, said hostages taken during Hamas' attack on Oct. 7 could be released if Israel stops its airstrikes — something incredibly unlikely as Israel prepares for a ground offensive inside the Gaza Strip.

More than 200 people, including foreigners, were believed captured by Hamas during the incursion and taken into Gaza. Four of those have been released, a mother and daughter on Friday and two more on Monday.

"Let them stop this aggression and you will find the mediators like Qatar and Egypt and some Arab countries and others will find a way to have them released and we'll send them to their homes," Mashaal said of the hostages.

Hosting the Hamas leaders has brought scrutiny to Qatar, both in the past and since the attack over two weeks ago that killed more than 1,400 people in Israel.

However, the Biden administration has repeatedly praised Qatar for its efforts in working to free the hostages and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Doha during his recent shuttle diplomacy trip in the region.

"Qatar is a longtime partner of ours who is responding to our request, because I think they believe that innocent civilians ought to be freed," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said Monday.

Meanwhile, Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, channeled the wider anger in the Arab world over Israel's unrelenting airstrikes and siege of the Gaza Strip after the Oct. 7 attack. The Hamas-controlled Health Ministry says the strikes have killed over 5,000 Palestinians so far.

During Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup last year, Palestinian flags were prominently displayed and Israeli journalists sometimes harassed.

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"It is untenable for Israel to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill, nor it is tenable to continue ignoring the reality of occupation, siege and settlement," Sheikh Tamim said on Tuesday in a speech to the country's Shura Council, an advisory and legislative body.

He slammed Israel's siege, saying that it "should not be allowed in our time" to use as weapons the cutting off of water and preventing medicine and food supplies to an entire population.

Qatar, a peninsula sticking out like a thumb into the Persian Gulf with a small population and military, has always looked warily at its larger neighbors Saudi Arabia and Iran. It faced a yearslong boycott by four Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, over a political dispute, which Kuwait's ruler at the time warned could have sparked a war.

It also bore withering criticism from the U.S. and others over its pan-Arab satellite news network Al Jazeera. It aired statements from the late al-Qaida mastermind Osama bin Laden and has been providing nonstop coverage of the toll of Israel's punishing airstrikes in this war with Hamas, including images of the dead and dying that have fueled demonstrations across the Middle East and wider world.

But those concerns about larger powers have seen Qatar balance the risks through its diplomacy and hosting of the forward headquarters of the U.S. military's Central Command at its sprawling Al-Udeid Air Base. The U.S. considers Qatar as a major non-NATO ally and Doha has widening defense trade and security cooperation with America, including priority delivery for certain military sales.

The Al-Udeid base served as a key node in America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, while Qatar also hosted the Taliban officials with whom Washington earlier negotiated to end the longest U.S. war.

But Qatar's negotiations have led to headaches in the past.

Most recently, Qatar agreed to have just under \$6 billion in Iranian assets once frozen in South Korea transferred to Doha as part of a September prisoner swap between Tehran and the U.S. After the Hamas attack, Qatar and the U.S. agreed not to act on any request from Tehran to access those funds for humanitarian goods as initially planned — at least for now.

That enraged sanctions-choked Iran and left Qatar "walking the tightrope of international relations," said David B. Roberts, who has long studied Qatar as an associate professor at King's College London and recently published the book "Security Politics in the Gulf Monarchies."

"The reality is it is quite straight forward that so many senior government people in Israel and America want Qatar to have this role and ... Qatar ultimately will be seen in a broadly positive light in trying to free these hostages," Roberts said.

"If you do want this unique spot," he added, "then you're not signing yourself up for an easy life."

## Few transplant surgeons are Black. Giving medical students a rare peek at organ donation may help

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — It's long after midnight when the bustling operating room suddenly falls quiet — a moment of silence to honor the man lying on the table.

This is no ordinary surgery. Detrick Witherspoon died before ever being wheeled in, and now two wide-eyed medical students are about to get a hands-on introduction to organ donation.

They're part of a novel program to encourage more Black and other minority doctors-to-be to get involved in the transplant field, increasing the trust of patients of color.

"There are very few transplant surgeons who look like me," said Dr. James Hildreth, president of Meharry Medical College, which teamed with Tennessee Donor Services for the project — one of several by historically Black colleges and universities to tackle transplant inequity.

Fresh off their first year at Meharry, six students spent the summer shadowing the donor agency to learn the complex steps that make transplants possible: finding eligible donors, broaching donation with grieving families, recovering organs and matching them to recipients sometimes hundreds of miles away.

In the operating room, student Teresa Belledent worried she'd get emotional seeing a donor's face — especially this one, a Black father of six, just 44, who reminded her a bit of her own dad. Instead, calm

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descended as Dr. Marty Sellers, the organ agency's surgeon, began retrieving the kidneys and liver while teaching Belledent and classmate Emmanuel Kotey.

"I'm able to feel sad and honor this person ... and be able to focus on the act of helping other people," said Belledent as the tired team began the two-hour drive back to Nashville from the Jackson, Tennessee, hospital.

The night's tougher lesson: Hours into the surgery the room falls quiet again. The donor had died of a brain hemorrhage but now Sellers has found undiagnosed cancer in his lungs. The kidneys and liver, already carefully placed on ice, can't be used. Still, the corneas can be donated — and for the two students, the surgery offered a powerful teaching moment.

"I got to see so much and do so much — and trying is better than not," Belledent said.

## MISTRUST AND THE TRANSPLANT GAP

Despite record numbers of transplants in recent years, thousands die waiting because there aren't enough donated organs — and some don't get a fair chance. Black Americans are over three times more likely than white people to experience kidney failure. But they face delays in even being put on the transplant list and are far less likely than their white counterparts to get an organ from a living donor — the best kind.

Overall, Black patients make up 28% of the waiting list for all organs but account for just about 16% of deceased donors. Increasing donor diversity also helps improve the odds of finding a good match.

"How do we close that gap?" was the question Jill Grandas, Tennessee Donor Services' executive director, took to Hildreth.

The Meharry students know mistrust of the medical system — a legacy of abuses such as the infamous Tuskegee experiment that left Black men untreated for syphilis — is a barrier both to organ donation and seeking care, such as transplants, that people may not be familiar with.

Austin Brown of Memphis said his grandfather "absolutely despised medicine," and died of a heart attack after refusing an artery-clearing stent.

Belledent, of Miami, recalled her mother saying not to check the organ donor box when she got her driver's license — because of a widespread myth that doctors won't work as hard to save the life of a registered donor.

"Now that I've seen the process, it's crazy to even think about," Belledent said. "In the ICU, no one's looking through stuff and trying to find your license, look for the (organ donor) heart on there."

Stacey Scotton of Cleveland, Tennessee, said a cook in Meharry's cafeteria listed the reasons he's heard "that it's not a good idea to be an organ donor. And I'm able to now go in and comfort him and correct, you know, some of those disbeliefs."

## AWE IN THE OPERATING ROOM

Back at the Jackson, Tennessee, hospital, Kotey and Belledent are getting a very different anatomy lesson than medical students' introductory lab with cadavers.

Machines keep oxygen and blood flowing to Witherspoon's organs — and Kotey lets out a quiet "wow" upon touching a pulsating artery while assisting Sellers, the surgeon.

"It was the first time I've ever done anything like that. I didn't want to mess up," he said later.

Sellers gives precise instructions: Place your right hand here, pinch this spot, clamp that one. The students learn to trim fat from a kidney, stitch a biopsy wound and feel the lung nodule that proved cancerous — opportunities they normally wouldn't get until far later in training.

"I'm a firm believer that students can't get really excited about something they're not exposed to," said Hildreth, who thinks early experiences like this could help diversify the transplant field.

Only 5.5% of transplant surgeons and less than 7% of kidney specialists are Black.

The Meharry students were stunned to learn how rare donation opportunities are. Only about 1% of deaths occur in a way that qualifies someone to even be considered, and hospitals must alert agencies like Grandas' fast enough to evaluate candidates and approach families.

"It's not like you go to the hospital, you die and you automatically become a donor. There's a lot more moving parts," said Sam Ademisoye of Lawrenceville, Georgia.

## MATCHING ORGANS TO RECIPIENTS



In a Nashville ICU, Brown is learning bedside care for a deceased donor — an 18-year-old motorcycle crash victim — and how to match the organs on the national waiting list.

The heart is immediately claimed. But there's a hitch with the lungs: Hospitals have said no for 16 patients, primarily because a week-old scan in the donor's records suggested bruising.

Brown knows young donors' organs usually are in high demand, and these lungs are working well.

"The denial, that blows my mind," he said, helping nurses take the risky step of moving the body for another CT scan to prove the lungs really are fine.

The gamble pays off and the next transplant center in line grabs them.

The many steps to successful donation "are like gears in a machine and the entire machine breaks down if one gear fails. That's my biggest takeaway," said student Mikhail Thanawalla of Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

## WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE FOR FAMILIES

What the students may remember most were grieving families who shared their donation experience.

Daphne Myers, struggling with her son's death at 26, initially was ready to refuse.

"I remember my reaction: I don't want to talk about that," Myers said. "I wasn't educated on it. My generation wasn't raised to be organ donors."

But the donor representative didn't make that request, instead asking Myers all about her son — how Haston Stafford Myers Jr. always helped others and loved to sing. Only then did Myers learn her son was a registered organ donor and realized she supported his choice.

"She was caring," Myers recalled. "That changed my opinion, changed my mind. ... The impact you guys can have on families, the caring that comes along with doing your job, it makes all the difference."

It's far too soon to know if the program pointed students to new career paths. But next year, Grandas plans to also invite students from a historically Black nursing school.

Kotey thinks he'll become a general practitioner and pledges his patients "young to old, will know about organ donation."

Belledent, though, has long wanted to become a surgeon. She spent her childhood in Haiti and recalls family friends with kidney disease and no access to transplants. Specializing in transplant surgery "is definitely on the list because I like the idea of being able to give someone a second chance."

## Gaza has oil markets on edge. That could build more urgency to shift to renewables, IEA head says

By DAVID MCHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Tensions from the war in Gaza could help accelerate the move away from planet-warming fossil fuels like oil and gas and toward renewable energy, electric cars and heat pumps — similar to how sharp increases in the price of oil during the 1970s unleashed efforts to conserve fuel, the head of the International Energy Agency said.

"Today we are again facing a crisis in the Middle East that could once again shock oil markets," said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol. That comes on top of the stress on energy markets from Russia's cutoff of natural gas to Europe over its invasion of Ukraine, he said.

"Put these two things together, and no one can convince me that oil and gas are safe and secure energy choices for countries or consumers," Birol told The Associated Press in an interview ahead of the publication Tuesday of the IEA's annual world energy outlook, which analyzes the global picture of energy supply and demand.

"This could further accelerate the energy transition around the world," with renewable sources like wind or solar offering a "long lasting solution" to energy security issues as well as climate change, he said.

The attack on Israel by the militant organization Hamas and the ensuing Israel military operations have raised fears of a wider Mideast conflict. So far oil price rises have been relatively moderate. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$90.17 per barrel Tuesday, up from around \$84 on the eve of the Hamas attack. So far the fighting has not led to a supply interruption.

Fossil fuel prices are down from 2022 peaks, but "markets are tense and volatile," said the IEA in the

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report.

"Some of the immediate pressures from the global energy crisis have eased, but energy markets, geopolitics, and the global economy are unsettled and the risk of further disruption is ever present," it said.

Birol pointed out that there was "a major government response" to the energy supply concerns that arose 50 years ago from the Arab oil embargo imposed during the 1973 Yom Kippur war.

It sent oil prices nearly 300% higher and led to the founding of the IEA in 1974 to help shape a collective response to the disruption. That was followed by the 1978 Iranian revolution, which added another price shock. At the time, the solutions included the rollout of nuclear power plants and the imposition of mileage standards for cars.

"This time, we have all of the available technologies," Birol said. "We have solar, wind, nuclear power, electric cars. They will extend significantly around the world and it will be an additional boost to the energy transition."

He pointed to the rapid rollout of electric cars, saying that in 2020 only one in 25 cars was electric but in 2023 it was one in five. Meanwhile the share of fossil fuels in electricity generation has fallen from 70% ten years ago to 60% today and should reach 40% by 2030, he said.

Concerted international action at the upcoming United Nations climate conference is needed to expand use of clean technologies and find new ways of financing the massive investment that is needed, especially in the developing world, the IEA said.

The report also pointed to a shifting role for China, once a leading source of increased demand for energy due to rapid industrialization and growth. The report said energy demand there could peak as soon as 2025 amid slowing growth and "impressive" shifts to clean energy like solar and nuclear.

The IEA estimates that demand for fossil fuels will peak before 2030 under current policies but says governments will have to increase their efforts to speed up the transition if the world is to meet the global goal of keeping warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

## Today in History: October 25, George III takes the throne in Britain

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 25, the 298th day of 2023. There are 67 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 25, 1760, Britain's King George III succeeded his late grandfather, George II.

On this date:

In 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown went on trial in Charles Town, Virginia, for his failed raid at Harpers Ferry. (He was convicted and hanged.)

In 1881, artist Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain.

In 1910, "America the Beautiful," with words by Katharine Lee Bates and music by Samuel A. Ward, was first published.

In 1945, Taiwan became independent of Japanese colonial rule.

In 1960, the Bulova Watch Co. introduced its electronic "Accutron" model.

In 1962, during a meeting of the U.N. Security Council, U.S. Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson II demanded that Soviet Ambassador Valerian Zorin confirm or deny the existence of Soviet-built missile bases in Cuba; Stevenson then presented photographic evidence of the bases to the Council.

In 1971, the U.N. General Assembly voted to admit mainland China and expel Taiwan.

In 1983, a U.S.-led force invaded Grenada at the order of President Ronald Reagan, who said the action was needed to protect U.S. citizens there.

In 1986, in Game 6 of the World Series, the New York Mets rallied for three runs with two outs in the 10th inning, defeating the Boston Red Sox 6-5 and forcing a seventh game; the tie-breaking run scored on Boston first baseman Bill Buckner's error on Mookie Wilson's slow grounder. (The Mets went on to win

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the Series.)

In 1994, Susan Smith of Union, South Carolina, claimed that a Black carjacker had driven off with her two young sons (Smith later confessed to drowning the children and was convicted of murder).

In 1999, golfer Payne Stewart and five others were killed when their Learjet flew uncontrolled for four hours before crashing in South Dakota; Stewart was 42.

In 2002, Democratic U.S. Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota was killed in a plane crash in northern Minnesota along with his wife, daughter and five others, a week and a-half before the election.

In 2013, Emmy-winning comic actor Marsha Wallace, known for her roles on sitcoms including "The Bob Newhart Show" and as the voice of teacher Edna Krabappel on "The Simpsons," died at age 70.

In 2022, Rishi Sunak became Britain's first prime minister of color after being chosen to lead a governing Conservative Party.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Marion Ross is 95. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Knight is 83. Author Anne Tyler is 82. Rock singer Jon Anderson (Yes) is 79. Political strategist James Carville is 79. Singer Taffy Nivert (Starland Vocal Band) is 79. Rock musician Glenn Tipton (Judas Priest) is 76. Actor Brian Kerwin is 74. Actor Mark L. Taylor is 73. Movie director Julian Schnabel is 72. Rock musician Matthias Jabs is 67. Actor Nancy Cartwright (TV: "The Simpsons") is 66. Country singer Mark Miller (Sawyer Brown) is 65. Rock musician Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers; Chickenfoot) is 62. Actor Tracy Nelson is 60. Actor Michael Boatman is 59. Actor Kevin Michael Richardson is 59. Actor Mathieu Amalric is 58. Singer Speech is 55. Actor-comedian-TV host Samantha Bee is 54. Actor Adam Goldberg is 53. Actor-singer Adam Pascal is 53. Rock musician Ed Robertson (Barenaked Ladies) is 53. Actor Persia White is 53. Country singer Chely (SHEL'-ee) Wright is 53. Actor Leslie Grossman is 52. Violinist Midori is 52. Actor Craig Robinson is 52. Actor Michael Weston is 50. Actor Zachary Knighton is 45. Actor Mariana Klaveno is 44. Actor Mehcad (muh-KAD') Brooks is 43. Actor Josh Henderson is 42. Pop singer Katy Perry is 39. Rock singer Austin Winkler is 39. Singer Ciara is 38. Actor Krista Marie Yu is 35. Actor Rachel Matthews is 30. Actor Conchita Campbell is 28. Major League Baseball outfielder Juan Soto is 25.