

Groton Daily Independent

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Today's Calendar

- Junior High Girls Basketball hosts Warner (7th Grade @ 5pm, 8th Grade @ 6pm)
- Senior Menu: Goulash, Corn, Apple Crisp, Whole Wheat Bread
- School Breakfast: Apple Pie In A Cup
- School Lunch: Garlic Cheese Bread , Cooked Carrots
- The Pantry at the Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 7:

- SoDak 16 Volleyball: Groton vs. Lennox (6:30pm at Watertown High School)
- Senior Menu: Roast Pork, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Steamed Cabbage, Peaches, Whole Wheat Bread.
- School Breakfast: Monty Cristo Sandwich
- School Lunch: Hot Dogs, Baked Beans
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- The Pantry at the Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Nominations Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.
- St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.

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



2024 DOG LICENSES DUE BY 12/29/2023

Fines start January 1, 2024



Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog
Proof of rabies shot information is **REQUIRED!!**

Email proof to city. kellie@nvc.net, fax to (605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!!
Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that were previously licensed!

Questions call (605) 397-8422

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

World in Brief

— The Cincinnati Bengals beat the Buffalo Bills 24-18 on Sunday Night Football. It was the first time the two teams met since Damar Hamlin suffered a cardiac arrest during their matchup in January.

— South Korea said it plans to launch its first domestically built spy satellite on November 30 to better monitor its neighbor North Korea.

— In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has denied a suggestion from General Valerii Zaluzhny, Ukraine's military commander, that the war with Russia has reached a stalemate.

A U.S. guided-missile submarine arrived in the Middle East in a show of deterrence to its regional adversaries after Washington announced the move on social media earlier on Sunday. Read more on the Israel-Hamas conflict below.

Florida's chief financial officer Jimmy Patronis has floated a taxpayer-funded plan to set up a legal defense fund that could cover Donald Trump's legal fees, sparking backlash on social media.

Australian PM Anthony Albanese met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing — the first visit by an Australian leader since 2016 — to discuss trade and other topics to boost cooperation amid increased tension between the two nations.

Tyson Foods recalled about 30,000 pounds of its "fun nuggets" after consumers found metal pieces in the dinosaur-shaped chicken patties.

Staff at Moscow's embassies and diplomatic missions in the West expelled due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine have written a letter to Vladimir Putin about their inability to find work since returning to Russia.

GHS Interns Series

Fjedheim interns with Hendrickson in fourth grade

by Dorene Nelson

Anna Fjedheim, a senior at Groton Area High School, is interning with Shelby Hendrickson, in the fourth grade. "I chose the fourth grade because I love working with kids and watching them as they grow and learn," Fjedheim explained.

"I'm in several activities this year, with volleyball being my main one right now," she admitted. "I am also on the track team, the president of FCCLA, FCS (Fellowship of Christian Students), the yearbook, and National Honor Society. I also participate in the Carnival of Silver Skates."

"I like being around little kids, helping them, and encouraging them," Fjedheim stated. "This presents me with a dilemma. I'd like to get a business major, but teaching elementary children is also very appealing. Regardless of what I decide for my major, I plan to attend Northern State University."

"The hardest part of this job has been adjusting to the different abilities of the students," she said. "Even though they are all about the same age, some kids learn faster or differently than others."

"I really like seeing these little kids every day as I watch them learn and grow as people," Fjedheim smiled. "They also look up to me as if I really were a teacher right now."

Anna is the daughter of Ryan and Sue Fjedheim.



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ALL OVER ROOFING

RAISING THE ROOFING STANDARDS,
ALL OVER YOUR TOWN!
FREE HAIL STORM ESTIMATES!

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Frosty is Back!!!

Please check the Groton Daily Independent for daily clues as to who the Groton Area Mystery Frosty is. The unveiling of Frosty will take place at the Groton Area Snow Queen and Talent Contest on Sunday, November 26th at 4:00pm. The Groton Chamber voted to gift Snow Queen \$100 in Chamber Bucks for the winner of the Mystery Frosty competition.



2023 Frosty Clues

I....

5.) MUCH prefer hot weather over cold weather

Groton Post No. 39 American Legion

Annual Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

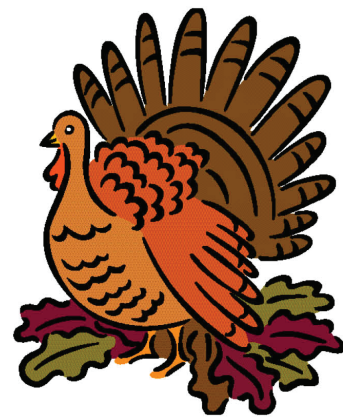
Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary



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Weekly Vikings Recap - Vikings vs. Falcons

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Minnesota Vikings came into their week 9 matchup against the Atlanta Falcons without many of their best players, including quarterback Kirk Cousins, who is out for the season due to an Achilles injury (the first game he's missed due to injury in his career). Also missing were Justin Jefferson and Christian Darrisaw, while K.J. Osborn, rookie quarterback Jaren Hall (who got the first start of his career Sunday), and running back Cam Akers all left the game with injuries. With their top 3 QBs out (Cousins, Hall, and Mullens who is on IR), the Vikings were forced to turn to newly acquired Joshua Dobbs, who just arrived on Tuesday after General Manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah made a trade deadline deal with the Arizona Cardinals.

The first couple of drives were extremely rough for Dobbs. On his first drive, Dobbs was sacked for a safety by 16-year NFL veteran Calais Campbell, the first safety given up by the Vikings since 2020. And on his second drive, Dobbs was stripped from behind while trying to elude pressure outside the pocket. After those two disasters, which found the Vikings down 11-3 midway through the second quarter, Dobbs quickly settled down and started to play very good football.

Although Kirk Cousins was playing at an MVP level before his injury, there is one thing that Dobbs has that Cousins never had - mobility. Throughout Sunday's game, Dobbs showed off his athleticism by rushing for 66 yards. On multiple plays, Dobbs eluded pressure from the Falcons' defensive line to take off for huge gains. What was impressive about some of these runs by Dobbs was his ability to withstand sacks by either spinning out of them or just straight-up fighting through them. It appears Dobbs possesses both the speed and strength to be a great running quarterback for the Vikings' offense.

However, it wasn't just Dobbs' running performance that was impressive today. Dobbs also threw for two touchdowns despite being on the Vikings roster for less than a week. There was a lot of talk about how Dobbs studied aerospace engineering in college but it goes to show how intelligent he is that he could come into this Vikings' offense and lead them down the field for multiple scoring touchdowns.

No other scoring drive was bigger than the final one of the game for Dobbs. Down 28-24 with a little over two minutes remaining, Dobbs drove the Vikings 75 yards down the field for a game-winning touchdown throw to Brandon Powell. It was an impressive drive for Dobbs, especially given the fact that one of his main wide receivers, KJ Osborn, left the game earlier with a concussion. Despite all the odds against him, Dobbs put the Vikings on his back to give them a much-needed victory in terms of the NFC playoff picture.

It was not all the Joshua Dobbs show Sunday for the Vikings. The Vikings' defense had a solid game, forcing two turnovers, one on a Bijan Robinson fumble and the other on a Taylor Heinicke interception.

Vikings 31 - Falcons 28

Looking ahead, the Vikings will likely name Joshua Dobbs the starting quarterback going forward. With the team currently 5-4 and in the 7th wild card spot, the Vikings will need Dobbs to continue his solid play if they want to continue to make a playoff push.

Next week, the Vikings will face the 5-4 New Orleans Saints. Like the Falcons, the Saints have a very underrated defense that might give the Vikings fits. For the Vikings, the key for the team will be getting healthy. The Vikings might be missing four of its key offensive players next week Kirk Cousins, Justin Jefferson, KJ Osborn, and Christian Darrisaw, and cannot afford to lose any more. Hopefully, the Vikings can stay healthy enough the next few weeks before the team enters the bye week in week 13.

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All State Choir Participants

The 71st All-State Choir that was held in Rapid City on October 28th. Groton Area students participating were Axel Warrington, Natalia Warrington, Kira Clocksene, Ashlyn Feser, Anna Bisbee, Camryn Kurtz, Rebecca Poor, Gavin Kroll and Director Amy Warrington. Guest Chorus Conductor was Dr. Ryan Person from Morningside University in Sioux City, IA. (Courtesy photo)

Bloodless Joints?

How much blood flows through your joints? Would you be surprised if I told you "None"?

That's right! Inside the joint there is a clear, viscous, slippery fluid that lubricates the joint surface, but no red blood flows inside the joint. Doctors do not want to see blood in a joint. When there is blood inside a joint it is usually because of trauma. That means tissue has been injured and blood vessels have been broken, bleeding into the clear cavity.

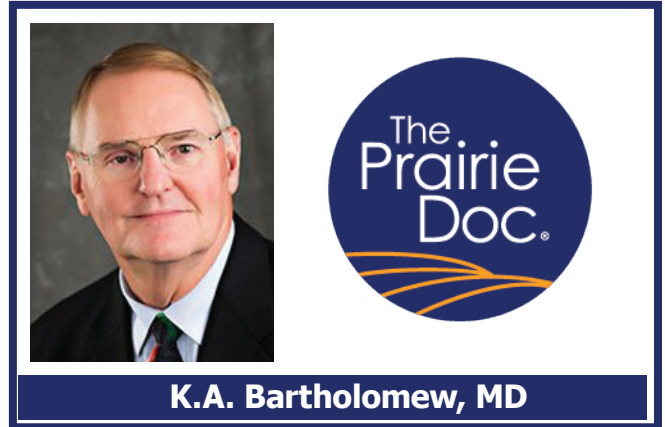
"How," you may ask, "can a joint get oxygen and nutrition if there is no blood in the joint?"

Articular (joint) cartilage has no direct blood supply. There is plenty of blood flowing "around" a joint, bringing oxygen, glucose, vitamins and minerals to the area and clearing out waste products, but these must diffuse through tissue membranes to get in to and out of the joint space. The cartilage receives its nutrition and oxygen from the clear joint fluid. When the joint is "loaded" with pressure, some fluid is squeezed out of the cartilage, and when the pressure is released, fluid flows back in carrying oxygen and nutrients with it.

The interesting thing is that this diffusion goes very slowly if that joint is not moving and pumping on tissue. This is why exercise is so crucial to joint health, just like it is crucial to all tissue health. It becomes even more so when that joint is injured. There must be good circulation and activity to absorb old, clotted blood inside an injured joint, "draining" the waste products and replacing them with the clear lubricating fluid. Additionally, damaged tissue heals but leaves scar tissue behind. If that scar tissue is not stretched and exercised, that joint will never regain its mobility.

Likewise, an injured or arthritic joint may hurt when you exercise, but without exercise it cannot maintain its internal health. As scar tissue forms from the arthritic damage to the cartilage, the joint moves less freely, like a rusty hinge. But exercise "oils" the joint, so to speak, creating lubrication while maintaining range of motion. This is not unlike that old car behind the barn that has not been driven for decades. It will have an engine that is frozen with rust, yet the antique Model A that your friend drives every Sunday still purrs along because it has been used - moved, maintained, and lubricated. Your joints need the same.

Kenneth A. Bartholomew, M.D. is a contributing Prairie Doc® columnist. He lives in Fort Pierre, South Dakota and serves on the Healing Words Foundation Board of Directors, a 501c3 which provides funding for Prairie Doc® programs. He specializes in family medicine with more than 40 years of experience. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What are some apps that help individuals save the planet? – Robert E., via email

Most of us spend upwards of three hours on our smartphones every day. Much of our phone time is spent messaging friends and family, scrolling through social media feeds, watching video shorts and playing mindless games—but what if we could use it more productively to help save the planet? Not surprisingly, there are dozens of apps out there designed to solve environmental issues. Whether you want to cut your carbon footprint, reduce food waste, or save water, there's an app (or two) out there for it.

One of the hottest sustainability-oriented apps out there these days is Too Good to Go, which connects customers to restaurants and stores that have surplus unsold food that can be procured for significantly discounted prices. The Olio app works along similar lines—connecting neighbors with each other and with local businesses to share surplus food. Olio can be used to find new owners for your old non-food items as well, keeping more stuff in use and out of landfills.

Eco-conscious fashionistas can rejoice over how the Good On You app allows them to check on the sustainability records and ethical stances of more than 3,000 different fashion brands. The app is a great companion on clothes shopping excursions; you can look up different brands as you browse and make purchasing decisions accordingly. Over a million users worldwide also use the app to discover alternative ethical and sustainable fashion brands that they might not have ever heard about otherwise. Another app focused on the intersection of sustainability and fashion, ThreadUp, offers users the ability to quickly list used clothing items for sale so others can appreciate them. Who knew thrifting was actually eco-friendly?

If you're worried about pollutants and irritants in your personal care and beauty products, Think Dirty might just be the app for you. Scan the barcode from any health and beauty product on the store shelf through the app and find out what ingredients are in it so you can determine whether or not to buy/use it.

Of course, there are lots of apps out there to help you reduce your carbon footprint. One of the most engaging is Oroeco. Use this app to track your life activities, such as what you eat, how you get around, etc. and see how much climate impact you have. You can also compete with other users—and earn badges—in friendly competitions to “gamify” your impact reduction efforts. Another favorite is Giki Zero, which provides users with a free and personalized guide—based on answers you provide about your lifestyle—on how to reduce your carbon footprint.

Saving water is becoming increasingly important in this warming-fueled drought-stricken age we are in now. The Waterprint app allows users to conveniently track their water usage and compete with friends. Users list the products they buy, and the water footprint of each product is then used to calculate their water usage. Competing with friends provides a strong incentive to reduce unnecessary water usage, which helps to improve water sustainability around the world.

Who knew that our smartphones could be such important tools for saving the planet?

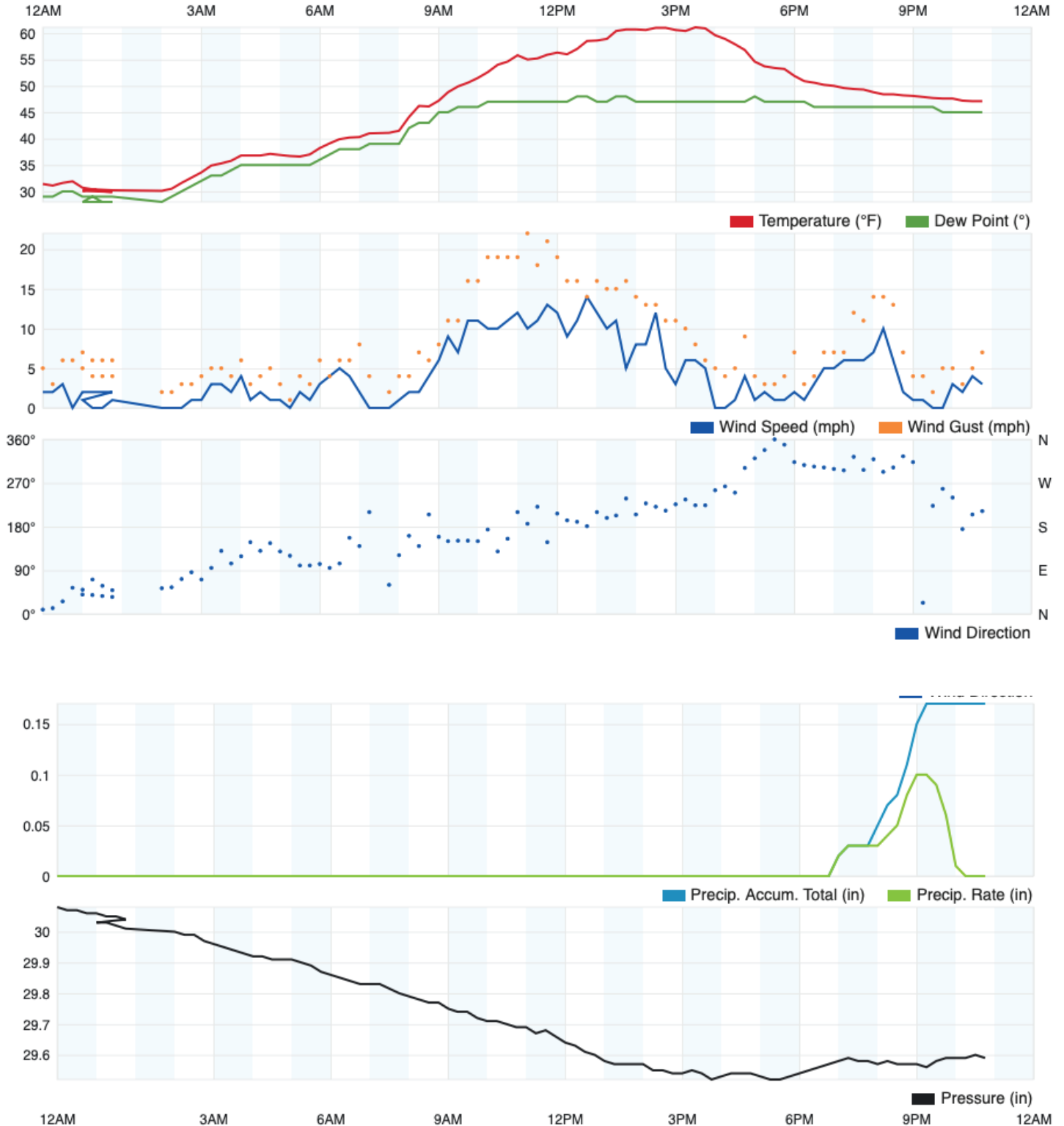


With the Too Good To Go app, you can help save the world's food waste problem and eat like a king for a pittance. Credit: Pexels.com.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Mon Nov 6	Tue Nov 7	Wed Nov 8	Thu Nov 9	Fri Nov 10	Sat Nov 11	Sun Nov 12
50°F 33°F	51°F 35°F	53°F 30°F	48°F 25°F	41°F 25°F	44°F 26°F	49°F 34°F
WNW 15 MPH	E 15 MPH	SW 22 MPH	W 16 MPH	NW 11 MPH	SE 12 MPH	S 13 MPH

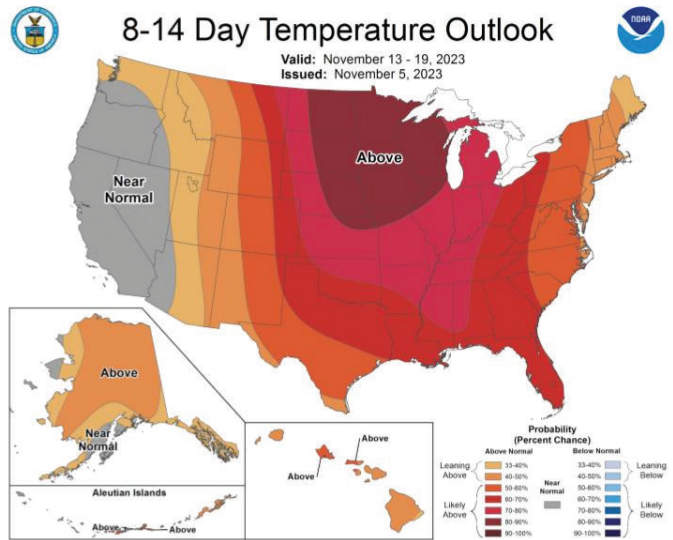


Dry and Average Temperatures For the Rest of the Week

November 6, 2023

4:26 AM

Today/Tonight	Tuesday	Wednesday
Highs: 45 to 60° Lows: 28 to 40°	Highs: 42 to 59° Lows: 32 to 40°	Highs: 45 to 55° Lows: 27 to 32°
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15-30% chance of rain/drizzle tonight 5-15% chance of freezing rain/freezing drizzle tonight on the Coteau 		<p>WINDY</p>



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A low pressure system is set to move across the northern plains later tonight into Tuesday. While any precipitation amounts should be light, and fall mainly as rain or drizzle tonight, the slightly (cooler) higher elevation of the Prairie Coteau introduces a slight chance (5 to 15%) that some of the precipitation could end up being rather light freezing rain or freezing drizzle. Otherwise, the warm and dry narrative continues through, at least, Thursday.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 62 °F at 1:40 PM

Low Temp: 30 °F at 1:40 AM

Wind: 24 mph at 11:50 AM

Precip: : 0.17

Day length: 9 hours, 57 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 79 in 1904

Record Low: -8 in 1991

Average High: 47

Average Low: 24

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.20

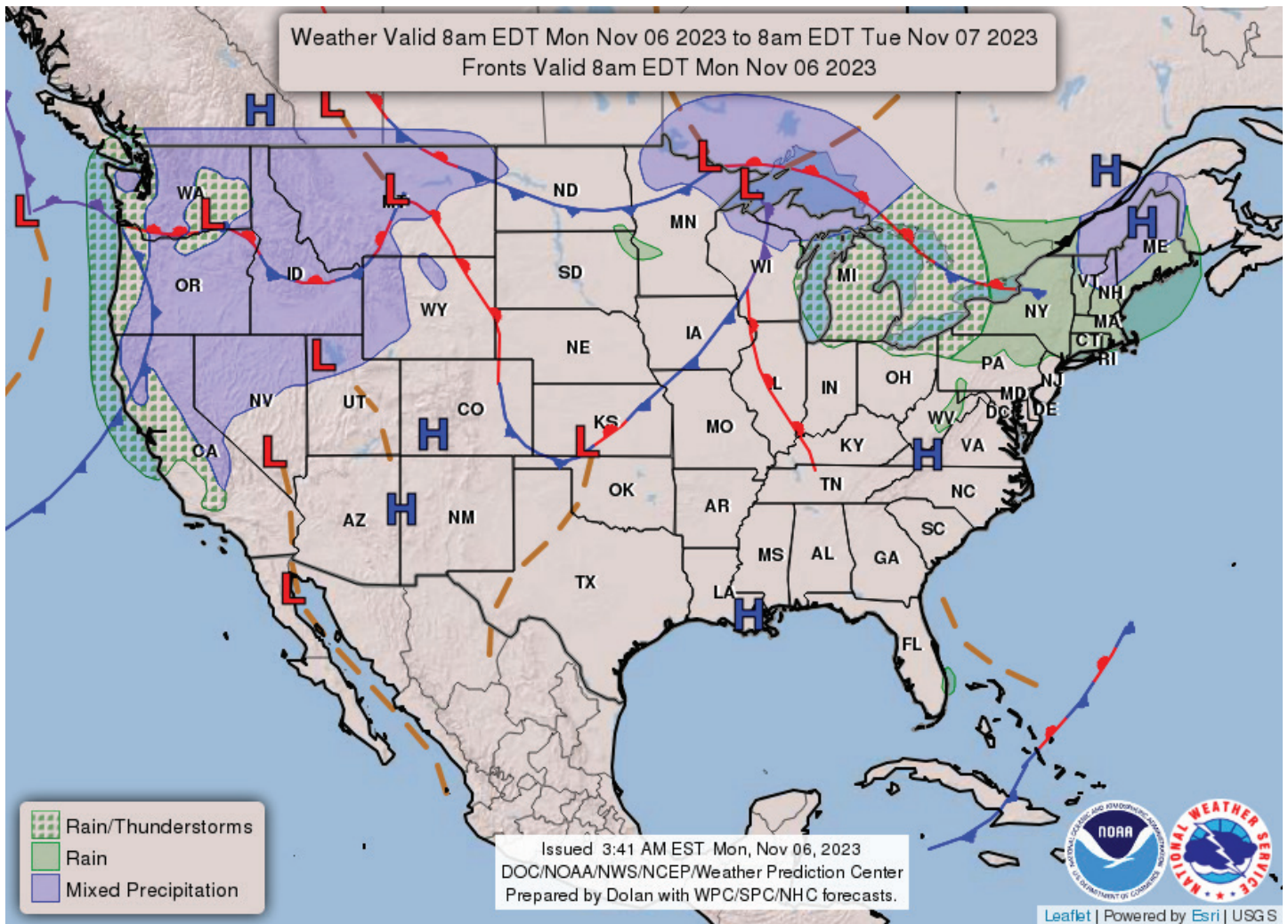
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.17

Average Precip to date: 20.67

Precip Year to Date: 23.15

Sunset Tonight: 5:14:47 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:18:38 AM



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Today in Weather History

November 6th, 1959: A strong cold front that brought near blizzard conditions and freezing temperatures on the 5th continued to bring record or near-record lows during the morning hours on this day. Some low temperatures include; -13 in Murdo; -12 in Eureka; -11 in Britton; -10 in Castlewood; -9 near McIntosh and Redfield; -8 in Andover; -7 in Clear Lake and Kennebec; -6 degrees in Aberdeen; -5 in Watertown; and -4 in Pierre.

November 6th, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across South Dakota and into Minnesota brought widespread rain, freezing rain, and snow to central, north-central, and northeast South Dakota. Much of the freezing fell across central and north-central South Dakota west of the Missouri River. As the freezing rain changed over to snow and the winds increased, the ice and snow buildup on the power lines and poles caused hundreds of power poles to break across Jones, Stanley, Dewey, and Corson counties. East of the Missouri River, the colder air and stronger winds moved in, changing the rain over to snow. High winds of 30 to 45 mph with gusts near 60 mph brought widespread blizzard conditions to all areas.

Ice buildup ranged from a tenth to an inch for counties west of the Missouri River. Snowfall amounts across the entire area ranged from 2 to 8 inches, with a 15-inch amount recorded in southwest Corson County. Other snowfall amounts include 3 inches in Eagle Butte, Blunt, Kennebec, Mission Ridge, and Onida; 4 inches in Pollock, Gettysburg, and Bowdle; 5 inches south of Harrold, Iona, and near McIntosh; 6 inches in Mobridge; 7 inches in Murdo; 8 inches in McLaughlin, and 15 inches southwest of Keldron.

All 4,600 customers of the Moreau-Grand Electric Company lost power due to the storm. The last time this occurred was during the winter of 1967-68. The monetary loss to this cooperative and other electric cooperatives for Jones, Stanley, Corson, and Dewey counties was hundreds of thousands of dollars. Over 100 line workers worked countless hours with crews coming as far away as Nebraska and Iowa to assist in the power recovery. Over 1,000 customers were without power for an extended period.

The blizzard resulted in numerous school, business, and road closures along with flight cancellations. Interstate 90 was shut down from Mitchell, South Dakota, to the Wyoming border from Thursday the 6th until Friday evening of the 7th. In the early afternoon hours of Friday, the 7th, slippery roads, high winds, and low visibilities contributed to the rollover of a passenger van carrying seven students. The passenger van rolled several times, causing severe injuries to three of the students. The Governor declared a state of emergency on the 7th, and President Bush declared South Dakota a disaster area.

1951 - Snow fell from the Texas panhandle to the Lower Great Lakes, leaving record totals of 12.5 inches at Saint Louis MO, and 14.1 inches at Springfield MO. Other heavier snowfall totals included 20 inches at Nevada MO, 13.5 inches at Sedan KS, 13 inches at Decatur IL, and 10 inches at Alva OK. In the Saint Louis area, up to 20 inches was reported in Washington County. (5th- 6th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1961: Santa Ana winds in southern California downed trees, utility lines and blew 10 to 50 percent of the avocado crop from trees. Dust from the winds lowered the visibility, which led to a 16 car pileup, injuring 23 people. In addition, the winds brought the lowest relative humidity of record to Burbank, 3 percent, and contributed to disastrous fires in the hills of the Los Angeles area.

1977: Several possible causes lead to the collapse of the Kelly Barnes Dam in Georgia to give way. The failure allowed a 40-acre lake to flood the Toccoa Falls College, killing 39 people and injuring 60 more.

1987 - High winds in the northeastern U.S., turning a recent warm spell into a distant memory, gusted to 63 mph at Rhode Island. Squalls resulting from the high winds produced five inches of snow at Marquette MI and seven inches at Rome NY. A storm in the southwestern U.S. brought heavy snow to some of the higher elevations of Arizona, Colorado and Utah. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2005: The deadliest tornado to strike Indiana since April 3rd, 1974, occurred around 2 am. A single F3 tornado inflicted 24 fatalities, 238 injuries, and nearly 90 million dollars in damage with a path length of 41 miles. This storm moved in a northeasterly direction from just north of Smith Mills, Kentucky, to Gentryville, Indiana, and crossed the Ohio River three times. Most of the damage occurred as the tornado passed southeast of the city of Evansville, Indiana.

2016: An EF2 tornado hit Cesano, Rome, Italy, along its 25-mile path. Two people were killed.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

GOD AND THE ISSUES OF LIFE

Years ago a luxury ocean liner was making its way from England to America. Shortly after dark, it encountered a massive thunderstorm and heavy seas. The ship began to heave, first one way and then the other, because of the enormous waves. One of the passengers sought out the captain and shouted in a loud voice, "Do something!"

"Madam, we are doing our very best," he said calmly, "and we are trusting in the providence of God."

"Is it that serious?" she asked.

The word "providence" comes from two Latin words, "care" and "preparation beforehand." For the Christian, this means that before we encounter problems or pain, trials or troubles, God has already made His preparation for us to be safe and secure no matter what He brings into our lives. Remember: If He planned it, He will protect us in it and through it!

We must realize that God sees "things" beforehand and knows what happens to us before it actually happens. Because of His sovereignty, knowledge, and power, He will arrange the outcome of these "things" to fulfill His plan and purpose for our lives.

Paul certainly believed in the providence of God. In his letter to the Romans, he assures us that "God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called by Him." If it comes into our life, it is because God has a purpose and plan for it.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to trust You when days are dark and nights seem long. May we realize and accept Your "providence" for us in everything! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28



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

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/08/2023 Family Fun Fest 3:30-5:30pm
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/09-10/2023 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/10/2023 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Sunday School Rally 9:00am
- 09/10/2023 7th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 4-6pm
- 09/15/2023 Homecoming Parade
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/05/2023 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Fall Dinner, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- 11/11/2023 Groton American Legion Annual Turkey Party 6:30 pm.
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 11/26/2023 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
- 12/02/2023 Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.03.23

15 32 38 47 65 12

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$196,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 21
DRAW: Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.23

8 11 23 47 48 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 36 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.05.23

1 13 32 45 48 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 51 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.23

3 18 20 22 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$44,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 51
DRAW: Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.23

5 15 22 47 66 26

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 20 Mins 33
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.23

1 28 30 34 52 6

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$179,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 20 Mins 32
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Blinken wraps up frantic Mideast tour with tepid, if any, support for pauses in Gaza fighting

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was wrapping up a grueling Middle East diplomatic tour on Monday in Turkey after only limited success in his furious efforts to forge a regional consensus on how best to ease civilian suffering in Gaza as Israel intensifies its war against Hamas.

Blinken met in the Turkish capital of Ankara with Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan after a frantic weekend of travel that took him from Israel to Jordan, the occupied West Bank, Cyprus and Iraq to build support for the Biden administration's proposal for "humanitarian pauses" to Israel's relentless military campaign in Gaza.

Blinken's shuttle diplomacy came as Israeli troops surrounded Gaza City and cut off the northern part of the besieged Hamas-ruled territory. Troops are expected to enter the city Monday or Tuesday, and are likely to face militants fighting street by street using a vast network of tunnels. Casualties will likely rise on both sides in the month-old war, which has already killed more than 9,700 Palestinians.

The top U.S. diplomat hopes that pauses in the war would allow for a surge of humanitarian aid to Gaza and the release of hostages captured by Hamas during the militants' deadly Oct. 7 incursion into southern Israel that killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians — while also preventing the conflict from spreading regionally.

Neither Blinken nor Fidan spoke as they posed for photographers ahead of their formal talks in Ankara. The top U.S. diplomat was not going to meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who has been highly critical of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and an outlier among NATO allies in not expressing full support for Israel's right to defend itself.

Outside the Foreign Ministry, dozens of protesters from an Islamist group carried Turkish and Palestinian flags and held up anti-U.S. and anti-Israel placards as the Blinken-Fidan meeting got underway. Earlier Monday, police dispersed a group of students marching toward the ministry chanting "murderer Blinken, get out of Turkey!"

It was the second day of protests denouncing Blinken's visit. On Sunday, pro-Palestinian protesters clashed with Turkish riot police outside the U.S.-Turkish Incirlik military air base in the southern city of Adana. Police fired tear gas and water cannon as the demonstrators tried to cross fields to enter the base.

Several hundreds also marched to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara on Sunday, chanting "God is great."

Blinken's mission, his second to the region since the war began, has found only tepid, if any, support for his efforts to contain the fallout from the conflict. Israel has rejected the idea of pauses while Arab and Muslim nations are instead demanding an immediate cease-fire as the casualty toll soars among Palestinian civilians under Israeli bombardments of Gaza.

U.S. officials are seeking to convince Israel of the strategic importance of respecting the laws of war by protecting non-combatants and significantly boosting deliveries of humanitarian aid to Gaza's beleaguered civilian population.

It remained unclear, however, if Netanyahu would agree to temporary, rolling pauses in the massive operation to eradicate Hamas — or whether outrage among Palestinians and their supporters could be assuaged if he did.

Already Jordan and Turkey have recalled their ambassadors to Israel to protest its tactics and the tide of international opinion appears to be turning from sympathy toward Israel in the aftermath of Oct. 7 to revulsion as images of death and destruction in Gaza spread around the world.

On Saturday in the Jordanian capital of Amman, both the Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers appeared at a joint news conference with Blinken. The two said Israel's war had gone beyond self-defense and could no longer be justified as it now amounted to collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

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That sentiment was echoed by tens of thousands of demonstrators who marched in the streets of world capitals over the weekend to protest Israel and condemn U.S. support for Israel.

After finishing his talks in Turkey, Blinken will head to Asia where the Gaza conflict will likely share top billing with other international crises at a series of events in Japan, South Korea and India, including Russia's war on Ukraine and North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

On Sunday, Blinken flew from the occupied West Bank, where he held talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

When word spread of Blinken's arrival in the West Bank city of Ramallah, dozens of Palestinians turned out to protest, holding signs showing dripping blood and with messages that included, "Blinken blood is on your hands." The meeting with Abbas ended without any public comment.

The Palestinian Authority administers semiautonomous areas of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It has not been a factor in the Gaza Strip since 2007, when Hamas seized control after winning in elections there a year earlier. Abbas himself is unpopular among Palestinians.

American forces in the region face a surge of attacks by Iranian-allied militias in Iraq and elsewhere. U.S. forces shot down another one-way attack drone Sunday that was targeting American and coalition troops near their base in neighboring Syria, a U.S. official said. From Baghdad Blinken traveled to Turkey.

The Biden administration, while remaining the strongest backer of Israel's military response to Hamas' attacks on Oct. 7, is increasingly seeking to use its influence with Israel to try to temper the effect of Israel's weeks of complete siege and near round-the-clock air, ground and sea assaults in Gaza, home to 2.3 million civilians.

Arab states are resisting American suggestions that they play a larger role in resolving the crisis, expressing outrage at the civilian toll of the Israeli military operations and believing Gaza to be a problem largely of Israel's own making.

Australian and Chinese leaders meet in Beijing while their countries try to mend ties

By KEN MORITSUGU and HUIZONG WU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese met Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday on the first visit by an Australian leader to China in seven years as the two countries try to mend their tattered ties.

Chinese state media reported the meeting but did not provide details. The talks were expected to focus on trade as China has eased some but not all of the restrictive steps it took as relations deteriorated.

Albanese struck an optimistic tone ahead of his meeting, calling for cooperation while emphasizing that the two countries will continue to have differences.

"What I've said is that we need to co-operate with China where we can, disagree where we must and engage in our national interest," he said in Beijing. "I think there are promising signs we've already seen, a number of the impediments to trade between our two nations removed and an uplift already, substantial uplift in the trade between our two nations."

His visit comes near the 50th anniversary of the first trip by an Australian prime minister to the People's Republic of China.

China and Australia's relations nosedived in recent years as suspicions of Chinese interference in Australian politics increased. China, in turn, was angered by Australia's call for an inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 virus.

China levied official tariffs and unofficial trade barriers that are estimated to have cost Australian exporters up to 20 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) a year for commodities such as coal, wine, beef, barley and lobsters.

In the past few months, China and Australia have publicly signaled that resolutions were in sight for the trade issues.

Further, Australian journalist Cheng Lei was released in October after three years in detention under

charges of espionage, a case that had come to be a focal point in the tensions.

Even as Albanese has largely sounded upbeat during his visit, Australia is still actively pursuing a security partnership with the United Kingdom and the United States that China views as an attempt to counter its influence in the region.

Live updates | Israeli troops surround Gaza City. Communications being restored to territory

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli troops divided the northern and southern parts of Gaza, as communications across the besieged territory were temporarily cut Monday for a third time since the war started. The troops are expected to enter Gaza City on Monday or Tuesday, Israeli media reported.

The developments came after Israeli airstrikes hit two refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip on Sunday, killing scores of people, health officials said. Israel has so far rejected U.S. suggestions that it take a humanitarian pause from its relentless bombardment of Gaza amid rising civilian deaths.

The Palestinian death toll in the Israel-Hamas war surpassed 9,700 with more than 4,000 of them children and minors, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza. In the occupied West Bank, more than 140 Palestinians have been killed in violence and Israeli raids.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, most of them in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that started the fighting, and 242 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by the militant group.

Roughly 1,100 people have left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing since Wednesday under an apparent agreement among the United States, Egypt, Israel and Qatar, which mediates with Hamas.

Currently:

— Gaza has lost telecom contact again, while Israel's military announces it has surrounded Gaza City.

— Families of Israel hostages fear the world will forget their loved ones.

— These numbers show the staggering toll of the Israel-Hamas war.

— A U.N. official says the average Palestinian in Gaza is living on two pieces of bread a day.

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

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

TURKISH PROTESTERS ACCUSE US OF COMPLICITY IN CIVILIAN DEATHS IN GAZA

ANKARA, Turkey -- Dozens of protesters gathered in front of Turkey's Foreign Ministry where the top Turkish and U.S. diplomats were holding talks on Monday, accusing the United States of complicity in the deaths of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

The protesters, members of an Islamist group, carried Turkish and Palestinian flags and held anti-U.S. and Israel signs as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

Earlier, police dispersed a group of students who marched toward the ministry chanting "Murderer Blinken, get out of Turkey!"

It was the second day of protests denouncing Blinken's visit to Turkey.

On Sunday, police fired tear gas and a water cannon as thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters tried to enter an air base used by U.S. troops in southern Turkey. Several hundred protesters marched to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, chanting "God is great."

NATO-member Turkey, which recently normalized ties with Israel, recalled its ambassador to Israel as anger rises over the civilian deaths in Gaza. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying that he could no longer speak to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

BLINKEN RECEIVES TEPID RESPONSE TO PROPOSAL FOR 'HUMANITARIAN PAUSES'

ANKARA, Turkey -- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is wrapping up a grueling Middle East diplomatic tour in Turkey after only limited success in his efforts to forge a regional consensus on how to ease civilian suffering in Gaza as Israel intensifies its war against Hamas.

Blinken was meeting Monday in Ankara with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan after a weekend of travel that took him from Israel to Jordan, the West Bank, Cyprus and Iraq to build support for the Biden

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administration's proposal for "humanitarian pauses" in Israel's relentless military campaign in Gaza, the release of hostages held by Hamas and the prevention of an expansion of the conflict.

Neither Blinken nor Fidan spoke publicly as they began their talks.

On his mission, his second to the region since the war began, Blinken has found only tepid, if any, support for the pauses concept. Israel has rejected it outright while Arab and Muslim nations are instead demanding an immediate cease-fire as the Palestinian casualty toll soars from Israeli bombardments in response to Hamas' bloody Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

U.S. officials are seeking to convince Israel of the strategic importance of respecting the laws of war by protecting non-combatants and significantly boosting deliveries of humanitarian aid to Gaza's beleaguered civilian population.

COMMUNICATIONS IN GAZA ARE GRADUALLY RESTORED

CAIRO — Communication services have been gradually restored across Gaza, a main telecoms provider and an advocacy group said Monday, 15 hours after the territory experienced its third communication blackout since the war began on Oct. 7.

Palestinian communications company Paltel announced that its services, including fixed, mobile and internet communications, have been gradually restored.

Alp Toker, director of the internet advocacy group NetBlocks.org, confirmed that internet connectivity has been restored to levels prior to Sunday's disruption. Overall service, however, remained significantly below prewar levels, he said.

The blackouts disrupted the activities of aid groups working in Gaza as humanitarian needs grow.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL SETS CLOSED MEETING ON ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

UNITED NATIONS — The U.N. Security Council scheduled closed consultations on the Israel-Hamas war on Monday afternoon at the request of China, which holds the council presidency this month, and the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council.

EMOTIONAL SCENES AS AUSTRALIANS WHO LEFT GAZA ARRIVE AT SYDNEY AIRPORT

SYDNEY — A dozen Australians who fled the war in Gaza arrived in Sydney on Sunday after traveling last week through the Rafah border crossing into Egypt.

Elated evacuee Sara El-Masry told Nine News on arrival at Sydney Airport: "It means the world to me that we were able to leave safely and we were able to come here and see their (family) faces one more time. I honestly didn't think I would make it."

Another seven evacuees returned to other Australian cities on Saturday. The Australian government continues to press for more Australians to be allowed to leave Gaza. There are about 67 citizens, permanent residents and their family members that the Australian government says it is trying to help leave Gaza.

US MILITARY ACKNOWLEDGES POSITIONING SUBMARINE IN MIDEAST

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The U.S. military has acknowledged positioning a nuclear-capable submarine in the Middle East.

It provided no other details in its online statement Sunday, though it posted an image that appeared to show a submarine in Egypt's Suez Canal near its Suez Canal Bridge.

U.S. acknowledgment of an Ohio-class submarine location is incredibly rare as they represent part of America's so-called "nuclear triad" of atomic weapons — which also includes land-based ballistic missiles and nuclear bombs aboard strategic bombers.

Several Ohio-class submarines instead carry cruise missiles and the capability to deploy with special operations forces, so it's unclear if the submarine operating now in the Mideast carries nuclear ballistic missiles.

The U.S. has deployed submarines into the region before and announced its recent presence as tensions were high with Iran.

Central Command separately released an image of a nuclear-capable B-1 bomber also operating in the Mideast on Sunday.

UN AGENCIES AND HUMANITARIAN ORGS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE CEASE-FIRE

UNITED NATIONS — The heads of 11 U.N. agencies and six humanitarian organizations issued a joint

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plea for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza, the protection of civilians, and the swift entry to Gaza of food, water, medicine and fuel.

In a statement issued Sunday night, they called Hamas' surprise Oct. 7 attacks in Israel "horrific."

"However, the horrific killings of even more civilians in Gaza is an outrage, as is cutting off 2.2 million Palestinians from food, water, medicine, electricity and fuel," the heads of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory said.

The U.N. and humanitarian organizations said more than 23,000 injured people need immediate treatment and hospitals are overstretched.

"An entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship," the joint statement said.

The U.N. and aid organization leaders said over a hundred attacks against health care operations have been reported and 88 staff members from the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, have been reported killed – "the highest number of United Nations fatalities ever recorded in a single conflict."

JORDAN AIR-DROPS AID TO HOSPITAL IN GAZA

AMMAN, Jordan — Medical aid was airdropped into Gaza by a Jordanian military cargo aircraft, the kingdom's leader announced on social media on Monday.

A trickle of humanitarian aid has entered Gaza via its land border with Egypt, but this appeared to be the first time aid was delivered by Jordan, a key U.S. ally that has a peace deal with Israel.

King Abdullah II said the aid reached the Jordanian field hospital in the northern Gaza Strip. "This is our duty to aid our brothers and sisters injured in the war on Gaza," he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

King Abdullah II has recalled its ambassador to Israel and told Israel's envoy not to return to Jordan until the Gaza crisis was over.

ISRAEL AMBASSADOR TO US CALLS GAZA THE WORLD'S "BIGGEST TERROR COMPLEX"

Michael Hertzog, the Israeli ambassador to the U.S., says Gaza is "the biggest terror complex in the world," with tens of thousands of fighters and rockets, among other weaponry — and 310 miles (500 kilometers) of underground tunnels.

"This is what we're up against. And we have to uproot it, because if we do not, they will strike again and again," Hertzog told CBS' "Face the Nation" in an interview aired Sunday.

He also said Israel was making every effort to distinguish between "terrorists and the civilian population" in its war with the Hamas militant group that rules Gaza.

"This is a very complicated military operation in a densely populated area, and we're trying to move the population away from that war zone," he said.

FORMER PRESIDENT OBAMA SAYS ALL SIDES OF CONFLICT ARE "COMPLICIT TO SOME DEGREE"

Former President Barack Obama says "nobody's hands are clean" in the Israel-Hamas war and acknowledged that he's questioned in recent days whether his administration could have done more to push for a durable peace when he was in power.

"If you want to solve the problem, then you have to take in the whole truth," Obama said in an interview on "Pod Save America." "And you then have to admit nobody's hands are clean. That all of us are complicit to some degree."

The former president did make an attempt at peace between Israel and Palestinians during his second term, but months of talks collapsed in 2014 amid disagreements on Israeli settlements, the release of Palestinian prisoners and other issues.

"I look at this and I think back what could I have done during my presidency to move this forward — as hard as I tried, I've got the scars to prove it," Obama said in an excerpt released on X.

The entire interview is scheduled to be released on Tuesday.

Aid trickles in to Nepal villages struck by earthquake as survivors salvage belongings from rubble

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Aid trickled in to villages Monday in Nepal's northwest mountains flattened by a strong earthquake over the weekend as villagers searched through the rubble of their collapsed homes to salvage what was left of their belongings.

The magnitude 5.6 temblor struck just minutes before midnight Friday, killing 157 people, injuring scores and leaving thousands homeless. The U.S. Geological Survey said that the quake occurred at a depth of 11 miles (18 kilometers). Nepal's National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Center confirmed that the epicenter was in Jajarkot, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) northeast of the capital, Kathmandu.

Authorities on Monday pressed on with efforts to bring food and other supplies, tents and medicines to the remote villages, many only reachable by foot. Roads were also blocked by landslides triggered by the earthquake. Soldiers could be seen trying to clear blocked roads.

Rescue and search teams said Monday that the first part of their mission — to rescue survivors, get the injured to treatment and search for bodies — was over.

"Now we are working on the second phase of our work to distribute relief material, get aid to the villagers, and at the same time we are collecting details about the damages," said government official Harish Chandra Sharma.

The National Emergency Operation Center in Kathmandu said that along with the 157 killed, at least 256 people were injured and 3,891 houses were damaged.

In Chepare, villagers were going through piles of rocks and logs that used to be their homes on Monday, looking for anything they could salvage.

"Most of what belonged to us is under the rubble, all our beds, clothes, whatever jewelry and money we had, it's all under there," said Nirmala Sharma, pointing to her wrecked home.

She said they got a tent and some food on Sunday night. Authorities distributed rice, oil, instant noodles and salt in the village, to last them for a few days.

Tarpaulin and plastic sheets made for temporary shelters for a lucky few while thousands of others spent a third night in the cold.

Mina Bika said her family was sleeping on Friday night when the ceiling fell and buried them. A relative rescued them. Her husband was badly injured and taken to hospital in the town of Surkhet while she and the couple's two sons were only lightly hurt.

"It felt like the world had collapsed and I was not sure if anyone had even survived and would be able to help," she said.

Most of the homes in the villages in the districts of Jajarkot and Rukum — where houses are traditionally built by stacking rocks and logs — either collapsed or were severely damaged but even the few buildings made out of concrete were also damaged.

After a Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Communications Minister Rekha Sharma told reporters that supplying food and setting up temporary shelters were the main focus of government efforts for the moment while also working on plans to reconstruct damaged houses.

Friday night's quake was also felt in India's capital, New Delhi, more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) away.

Earthquakes are common in mountainous Nepal. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 killed around 9,000 people and damaged about 1 million structures.

Israeli troops surround Gaza City and cut off northern part of the besieged Hamas-ruled territory

By WAFAA SHURAFa and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli troops early Monday had surrounded Gaza City and cut off the northern part of the besieged Hamas-ruled territory as communications lost for several hours across Gaza overnight were being restored.

Troops are expected to enter the city Monday or Tuesday, Israeli media reported, and militants who have prepared for years are expected to fight street by street using a vast network of tunnels. Casualties will likely rise on both sides in the month-old war, which has already killed more than 9,700 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Some 1.5 million Palestinians, or around 70% of the population, have fled their homes since the war began with a bloody Hamas incursion into Israel that killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians. Food, medicine, fuel and water are running low, and U.N.-run schools-turned-shelters are beyond capacity, with many sleeping on the streets outside.

Israel has so far rejected U.S. suggestions for a pause in fighting to facilitate humanitarian aid deliveries and the release of some of the estimated 240 captives seized by Hamas in its Oct. 7 raid. Israel has also dismissed calls for a broader cease-fire from increasingly alarmed Arab countries — including Jordan and Egypt, which made peace with it decades ago.

In another sign of widening unrest, a Palestinian man stabbed and wounded two members of Israel's paramilitary Border Police in east Jerusalem before being shot dead, according to police and an Associated Press reporter at the scene.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, along with Gaza and the West Bank, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state. Israel annexed east Jerusalem in a move not recognized by most of the international community and considers the entire city its capital.

A Jordanian military cargo plane air-dropped medical aid to a field hospital in northern Gaza, King Abdullah II said early Monday. It appeared to be the first such airdrop of the war, raising the possibility of another avenue for aid delivery besides Egypt's Rafah crossing with Gaza.

The situation remains dire in the north. Some 800,000 people have heeded Israeli military orders to flee to southern Gaza, even though Israel had continued airstrikes in the area. Strikes in central and southern Gaza — the purported safe zone — killed at least 53 people on Sunday.

Hundreds of thousands remain in Gaza City and other parts of the north. Some 2,000 people, many carrying only what they could hold in their arms, walked down Gaza's main north-south highway on Sunday during an hourslong window in which the military had encouraged them to flee.

One man said they walked 500 meters (yards) with their hands raised while passing Israeli troops. Another described seeing bodies along the road. "The children saw tanks for the first time. Oh world, have mercy on us," said one Palestinian man, who declined to give his name.

A majority of Gaza's population are the descendants of Palestinian refugees who fled or were driven out of Israel during the 1948 war surrounding its creation. Palestinians refer to their exodus as the Nakba, or catastrophe, and many fear a repeat as hundreds of thousands are displaced by the latest war.

The Israeli military said late Sunday that it had severed northern Gaza from the south, calling it a "significant stage" in the war. It said a one-way corridor for residents to flee south would remain available.

The military says 30 troops have been killed since the ground offensive began over a week ago. Palestinian militants have continued firing rockets into Israel, disrupting daily life even as most are intercepted or fall in open areas. Tens of thousands of Israelis have evacuated from communities near the volatile borders with Gaza and Lebanon.

The military said Monday that aircraft struck 450 targets overnight and took over a Hamas compound. It also said it had killed a senior Hamas militant, identified as Jamal Mussa, who had allegedly carried out a shooting attack against Israeli soldiers in Gaza in 1993.

Communications in Gaza went down late Sunday for the third time in the war, according to the internet

access advocacy group NetBlocks.org and the Palestinian telecom company Paltel. Aid workers say the outages make it even harder for civilians to seek safety or even call ambulances.

The first Gaza outage lasted 36 hours, coinciding with the ground invasion, and the second one for a few hours. Paltel and NetBlocks said mobile phone and internet service was restored on Monday.

Food, water and the fuel needed for generators that power hospitals are running low. Gaza's sole power station was forced to shut down shortly after the war broke out and Israel has allowed no fuel to enter, saying Hamas would steal it for military purposes.

Northern Gaza is facing a severe water shortage, as there is no fuel to pump from municipal wells and Israel shut off the region's main line. The U.N. office for humanitarian affairs said seven water facilities across Gaza were struck over the last two days and sustained "major damage," raising the risk of sewage flooding. Israel has restored two water pipelines in central and southern Gaza, the U.N. said.

Over 450 trucks carrying food, water, medicine and other basic aid have been allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt since Oct. 21, but aid workers say it's insufficient to meet mounting needs in the territory, which is home to some 2.3 million Palestinians.

The war has stoked wider tensions, with Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group trading fire along the border.

Four civilians were killed by an Israeli airstrike in south Lebanon late Sunday, including three children, a local civil defense official and state-run media reported. The Israeli military said it had attacked Hezbollah targets in response to anti-tank fire that killed an Israeli civilian. Hezbollah said it fired Grad rockets from southern Lebanon into Israel in response.

Inspired by online dating, AI tool for adoption matchmaking falls short for vulnerable foster kids

By SALLY HO and GARANCE BURKE Associated Press

Some are orphans, others seized from their parents. Many are older and have overwhelming needs or disabilities. Most bear the scars of trauma from being hauled between foster homes, torn from siblings or sexually and physically abused.

Child protective services agencies have wrestled for decades with how to find lasting homes for such vulnerable children and teens – a challenge so enormous that social workers can never guarantee a perfect fit.

Into this morass stepped Thea Ramirez with what she touted as a technological solution – an artificial intelligence-powered tool that ultimately can predict which adoptive families will stay together. Ramirez claimed this algorithm, designed by former researchers at an online dating service, could boost successful adoptions across the U.S. and promote efficiency at cash-strapped child welfare agencies.

"We're using science – not merely preferences – to establish a score capable of predicting long-term success," Ramirez said in an April 2021 YouTube video about her ambitions to flip "the script on the way America matches children and families" using the Family-Match algorithm.

An Associated Press investigation, however, found that the AI tool – among the few adoption algorithms on the market – has produced limited results in the states where it has been used, according to Family-Match's self-reported data that AP obtained through public records requests from state and local agencies.

Ramirez also has overstated the capabilities of the proprietary algorithm to government officials as she has sought to expand its reach, even as social workers told AP that the tool wasn't useful and often led them to unwilling families.

Virginia and Georgia dropped the algorithm after trial runs, noting its inability to produce adoptions, though both states have resumed business with Ramirez's nonprofit called Adoption-Share, according to AP's review of hundreds of pages of documents.

Tennessee scrapped the program before rolling it out, saying it didn't work with their internal system even after state officials spent more than two years trying to set it up, and social workers reported mixed experiences with Family-Match in Florida, where its use has been expanding.

State officials told AP that the organization that Ramirez runs as CEO owns some of the sensitive data

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Family-Match collects. They also noted that the nonprofit provided little transparency about how the algorithm works.

Those experiences, the AP found, provide lessons for social service agencies seeking to deploy predictive analytics without a full grasp of the technologies' limitations, especially when trying to address such enduring human challenges as finding homes for children described by judges as the "least adoptable."

"There's never going to be a foolproof way for us to be able to predict human behavior," said Bonni Goodwin, a University of Oklahoma child welfare data expert. "There's nothing more unpredictable than adolescence."

Ramirez, of Brunswick, Georgia, where her nonprofit is also based, refused to provide details about the algorithm's inner workings and declined interview requests. By email, she said the tool was a starting point for social workers and did not determine whether a child would be adopted. She also disputed child welfare leaders' accounts of Family-Match's performance.

"User satisfaction surveys and check-ins with our agency end users indicate that Family-Match is a valuable tool and helpful to users actively using it to support their recruitment + matching efforts," Ramirez wrote.

INSPIRED BY ONLINE DATING

Ramirez, a former social worker and wife of a Georgia pastor, has long sought to promote adoption as a way to reduce abortions, according to her public statements, newsletters and a blog post.

More than a decade ago, she launched a website to connect pregnant women with potential adoptive parents. She marketed it as "the ONLY online community exclusively for networking crisis pregnancy centers" and pledged to donate 10% of membership fees to such anti-abortion counseling centers, whose aim is to persuade women to bring their pregnancies to term. Ramirez said in an email that Family-Match is not associated with such centers.

She next turned her focus to helping children living in foster care who don't have family members to raise them. Most of the 50,000 children adopted nationwide in 2021 landed with relatives, federal statistics show, while about 5,000 ended up with people they didn't previously know. Such recruitment-based adoptions are the most difficult to carry out, social workers say.

Ramirez has said she called Gian Gonzaga, a research scientist who had managed the algorithms at eharmony, a dating site with Christian roots that promises users "real love" for those seeking marriage. She asked Gonzaga if he would team up with her to create an adoption matchmaking tool.

Gonzaga, who worked with his wife Heather Setrakian at eharmony and then on the Family-Match algorithm, referred questions to Ramirez. Setrakian said she was very proud of her years of work developing the Family-Match model.

An eharmony spokesperson, Kristen Berry, said the dating site was "not affiliated with Family-Match." Berry described Gonzaga and Setrakian as "simply former employees."

NOT 'PARTICULARLY USEFUL'

Later, Ramirez began crisscrossing the country promoting Family-Match to state officials. Her work and her religious convictions drew support primarily from conservatives, including first lady Melania Trump, who spotlighted Ramirez's efforts at a foster care event in the White House Situation Room. Ramirez has co-written reports and given a high-profile presentation at the American Enterprise Institute, benefitted from attention-getting fundraisers and used connections to win over state officials to pilot her tool.

Social workers say Family-Match works like this: Adults seeking to adopt submit survey responses via the algorithm's online platform, and foster parents or social workers input each child's information.

After the algorithm generates a score measuring the "relational fit," Family-Match displays a list of the top prospective parents for each child. Social workers then vet the candidates.

In a best-case scenario, a child is matched and placed in a home for a trial stay; parents then submit the legal paperwork to formalize the adoption.

Family-Match first started matching families in Florida and Virginia in 2018. Virginia's then-governor Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat, ordered a pilot at the urging of a campaign donor he appointed as the state's "adoption champion." In Florida, which has a privatized child welfare system, regional care organizations

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soon signed up for the algorithm for free – thanks to a grant from a foundation founded by the then-CEO of the company that makes Patrón tequila and his wife.

Once philanthropic dollars dried up in Florida, the state government picked up the tab, awarding Adoption-Share a \$350,000 contract last month for its services.

Pilot efforts in Tennessee and Georgia followed.

Adoption-Share has generated \$4.2 million in revenue since 2016; it reported about \$1.2 million in 2022, according to its tax returns.

In Virginia's two-year test of Family-Match, the algorithm produced only one known adoption, officials said.

"The local staff reported that they did not find the tool particularly useful," the Virginia Department of Social Services said in a statement, noting that Family-Match "had not proven effective" in the state.

Virginia social workers were also perplexed that the algorithm seemed to match all the children with the same group of parents, said Traci Jones, an assistant director at the state's social services agency.

"We did not have access to the algorithm even after it was requested," Jones said.

By 2022, Virginia had awarded Adoption-Share an even larger contract for a different foster care initiative that the nonprofit says "leverages" the Family-Match application.

Georgia officials said they ended their initial pilot in October 2022 because the tool didn't work as intended, ultimately only leading to two adoptions during their year-long experiment.

Social workers said the tool's matching recommendations often led them to unwilling parents, leading them to question whether the algorithm was properly assessing the adults' capacity to adopt those kids.

Ramirez met with the governor's office and also lobbied a statehouse committee for a direct appropriation, saying the tool was "an incredible feat." By July, the Georgia Department of Human Services signed a new agreement with Adoption-Share to use Family-Match again – this time for free, said Kylie Winton, an agency spokesperson.

Florida's privatized child welfare system operates with more than a dozen regional agencies providing foster care and adoption services. When AP requested public records about their Family-Match cases, many of those agencies gave the tool mixed reviews and couldn't explain Family-Match's self-reported data, making it difficult to assess the algorithm's purported success rate.

Statewide in Florida, Family-Match claimed credit for 603 placements that resulted in 431 adoptions over a five-year period, according to Adoption-Share's third-quarter report for the 2023 fiscal year that AP obtained from a Pensacola-based child welfare organization.

Scott Stevens, an attorney representing the FamiliesFirst Network, told AP in June that only three trial placements recommended by Family-Match failed since the agency started using the algorithm in 2019. But Adoption-Share's records that Stevens provided to the AP indicate that his agency made 76 other Family-Match placements that didn't show the children had been formally adopted. Asked by AP for clarification, Stevens couldn't say what happened in those 76 cases and referred further questions to Family-Match.

Ramirez declined to discuss the discrepancy but acknowledged in an email that not all matches work out.

"Transitions can take time in the journey to adoption," Ramirez said in an email, adding that the "decision to finalize the adoption is ultimately the responsibility" of agencies with input from the children and judges. On Sunday, Adoption-Share posted on its Facebook page that the organization had "reached 500 adoptions in Florida!"

Jenn Petion, the president and CEO of the organization that handles adoptions in Jacksonville, said she likes how the algorithm lets her team tap into a statewide pool of potential parents. Petion has also endorsed Family-Match for helping her find her adoptive daughter, whom she described as a "100% match" in an Adoption-Share annual report.

Family-Match assists social workers in making "better decisions, better matches," Petion said, but her agency, Family Support Services declined to provide statistics about Family-Match.

The Fort Myers-based Children's Network of Southwest Florida said in the past five years the Family-Match tool has led to 22 matches and eight adoptions, as compared to the hundreds of matches and hundreds of adoptions that its social workers did without the tool.

Bree Bofill, adoption program manager for Miami-based Citrus Family Care Network, said social workers

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found the tool didn't work very well, often suggesting potential families that weren't the right fit.

"It's frustrating that it's saying that the kids are matched but in reality, when you get down to it, the families aren't interested in them," Bofill said of the algorithm.

Bofill also said it was difficult to assess the tool's utility because social workers who found potential parents were sometimes asked by Family-Match officials to tell the adults to register with the tool even if it played no role in the adoption, allowing the algorithm to claim credit for the match.

Winton, the Georgia agency spokesperson, told AP about a similar issue — Family-Match could claim credit for pairings if the child and parent already were in its system, even if the program didn't generate the match. Family-Match, in an April 2023 "confidential" user guide posted on the internet, instructed social workers not to delete cases that were matched outside the tool. Instead, they were told to document the match in the system so that Adoption-Share could refine its algorithm and follow up with the families.

Ramirez didn't address Bofill's claim but said in an email that Family-Match's reports reflect what social workers input into the system.

'KIDS AS GUINEA PIGS'

Officials in Virginia, Georgia and Florida said they weren't sure how the tool scored families based on the highly sensitive variables powering the algorithm.

In Georgia, Family-Match continues to gather data about whether foster youth have been sexually abused, the gender of their abuser, and whether they have a criminal record or "identify as LGBTQIA." That kind of information is typically restricted to tightly secured child protective services case files.

In Tennessee, a version of the algorithm's questionnaire for prospective parents asked for their specific household income and for them to rate how "conventional" or "uncreative" they were. They were also asked if they agreed – or disagreed – with a statement about whether they seek God's help, according to records AP obtained.

When Tennessee Department of Children's Services reviewed the proposed Family-Match assessment, they questioned some of the information Family-Match wanted to collect. Tennessee officials asked why Family-Match needed certain sensitive data points and how that data influenced the match score, according to an internal document in which state workers noted questions and feedback about the algorithm. Ramirez said the agency didn't challenge the survey's validity, and said the discussions were part of the streamlining process.

Virginia officials said once families' data was entered into the tool, "Adoption Share owned the data."

In Florida, two agencies acknowledged that they used Family-Match informally without a contract, but would not say how children's data was secured.

Ramirez wouldn't say if Family-Match has deleted pilot data from its servers, but said her organization maintains a compliance audit and abides by contract terms.

Social welfare advocates and data security experts have been raising alarms about government agencies' increasing reliance on predictive analytics to assist them on the job. Those researchers and advocates say such tools can exacerbate racial disparities and discriminate against families based on characteristics they cannot change.

Adoption-Share is part of a small cadre of organizations that say their algorithms can help social workers place children with foster or adoptive families.

"We're using, essentially, kids as guinea pigs for these tools. They are the crash test dummies," said Suresh Venkatasubramanian, a former assistant director of the Biden White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy now at Brown University. "That's a big problem right there."

SEEKING TO EXPAND

Adoption-Share continues to try to expand, seeking business in places like New York City, Delaware and Missouri, where child welfare agency officials were reviewing its pitch. Ramirez said she also saw an opportunity last year to present Family-Match to the U.S. Health and Human Services Department "to demonstrate our tool and how it can be a helpful resource."

This year, Adoption-Share landed a deal with the Florida Department of Health for Family-Match to build

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an algorithm intended "to increase the pool of families willing to foster and/or adopt medically complex children," according to state contracts. Health department officials didn't respond to repeated requests for comment.

Connie Going, a longtime Florida social worker whose own viral adoption story Ramirez has described as her inspiration for Family-Match, said she didn't believe the tool would help such vulnerable children. Going said the algorithm gives false hope to waiting parents by failing to deliver successful matches, and ultimately makes her job harder.

"We've put our trust in something that is not 100% useful," Going said. "It's wasted time for social workers and wasted emotional experiences for children."

Abortion debate has dominated this election year. Here are Tuesday's races to watch

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The most-watched races in Tuesday's off-year general election have all been dominated by the ongoing debate over abortion rights.

From a re-election bid for governor in Kentucky to a statewide ballot measure in Ohio to state legislative elections in Virginia, access to abortion has been a frequent topic in campaign debates and advertising, as it has since the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in June last year overturning Roe vs. Wade.

Here's a look at three major races and how abortion has shaped each contest.

Kentucky governor

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear seeks a second term in a heavily Republican state Donald Trump carried twice. The GOP nominee is Daniel Cameron, who succeeded Beshear as state attorney general.

Beshear has called the state's restrictive abortion law "extremist" for not allowing exceptions in cases of rape and incest. He also vetoed a proposal banning abortions after 15 weeks. Cameron says he supports the state law and that as governor he would sign a bill amending it to allow rape and incest exceptions. But at times he has had difficulty clarifying what exceptions he favors.

Beshear, the son of former two-term Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear, was first elected in 2019 when he defeated GOP incumbent Matt Bevin by less than half a percentage point. Cameron is a former aide to U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and endorsed by Trump. If elected, he would become the first Black Republican governor since Reconstruction.

Ohio constitutional amendment on abortion

Ohio voters will decide whether to amend the state Constitution to protect access to abortion services.

The measure would establish the right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions" on matters including abortion, contraception and fertility treatment. It would also allow for abortions to be banned once it has been established that the fetus can survive outside of the womb, unless a physician determines that continuing with the pregnancy would endanger the patient's "life or health."

In August, voters rejected a measure that would have made it more difficult to approve Tuesday's abortion proposal. That contest was seen as a proxy fight on reproductive rights and received national attention.

Virginia General Assembly

Control of both chambers of Virginia's state legislature is up for grabs, with Republicans holding a narrow majority in the state House and Democrats leading the state Senate. Either or both chambers could flip and possibly give Republicans full control of state government. That would clear the way for Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin to implement a ban on abortions after 15 weeks with exceptions for rape, incest and when the mother's life is endangered. Democratic candidates have campaigned heavily on the issue.

In addition to the three marquee races in Kentucky, Ohio and Virginia, the Associated Press will report vote totals and winners in 346 contested races in 12 states. Here are some other notable races to watch:

Mississippi governor

Republican Gov. Tate Reeves is running for a second term against Democrat Brandon Presley, a state

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utility regulator and cousin of rock 'n' roll legend Elvis Presley. Democrats held the Mississippi governorship for almost all of the 20th century, but Republicans have controlled the office for the last 20 years. With help from a sizable cash infusion from the national party, Presley outraised Reeves this year and essentially matched him in spending, but the incumbent entered the final stretch of the campaign with more money.

Reeves was first elected in 2019 with 52% of the vote. Both chambers of the state legislature are also up for election.

Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Republican Carolyn Carluccio and Democrat Daniel McCaffery are the nominees to fill a vacant state Supreme Court seat that could play a significant role on voting-related cases during the 2024 presidential campaign.

Rhode Island U.S. House District 1

Democrat Gabe Amo and Republican Gerry Leonard face off in a special election to complete the term of former Democratic U.S. Rep. David Cicilline, who resigned in May after seven terms. The district has voted reliably for Democrats. Cicilline was first elected in 2010 and won his last five re-election bids with 60% of the vote or higher. Democrat Patrick Kennedy previously held the seat for 16 years.

Mayors

In Houston, 17 candidates are vying to replace term-limited Mayor Sylvester Turner. Notable hopefuls include U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee and state Sen. John Whitmire, both Democrats.

In Uvalde, Texas, where a gunman killed 19 students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School last year, the candidates for mayor are former news reporter Kimberly Mata-Rubio, whose daughter was killed in the shooting, former mayor Cody Smith and elementary school teacher Veronica Martinez.

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, Mayor Joe Ganim is seeking an eighth term, but on Wednesday, a state judge made the unusual move of ordering a re-do of the September Democratic primary after evidence surfaced of possible ballot stuffing. The date for the new primary has not been set but will take place after Tuesday's general election. AP will tabulate vote results of the Tuesday election but will not declare a winner until the legal challenges have been resolved.

In Derby, Connecticut, incumbent Mayor Richard Dziekan is running as an independent for a fourth term after losing the Republican primary to alderman Gino DiGiovanni, Jr., who was charged by federal prosecutors in August with illegally entering the U.S. Capitol during the riot on Jan. 6, 2021.

New York City Council District 9

Criminal justice reform activist Yusef Salaam, who was one of five men convicted and later exonerated in the "Central Park Jogger" rape case, is running unopposed.

Man accused of Antarctic assault was then sent to remote icefield with young graduate students

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — A man accused of physically assaulting a woman at a U.S. research station in Antarctica was then sent to a remote icefield where he was tasked with protecting the safety of a professor and three young graduate students, and he remained there for a full week after a warrant for his arrest was issued, documents obtained by The Associated Press show.

Stephen Tyler Bieneman has pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor assault over the incident last November at McMurdo Station, which his lawyer said was nothing more than "horseplay." The case is due to go to trial Monday in Honolulu.

The National Science Foundation declined to answer AP questions about why Bieneman was sent out into the field in a critical safety role while under investigation. The case raises further questions about decision-making in the U.S. Antarctic Program, which is already under scrutiny.

An AP investigation in August uncovered a pattern of women at McMurdo who said their claims of sexual harassment or assault were minimized by their employers, often leading to them or others being put in

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further danger.

And on Friday, the watchdog office overseeing the NSF said it was sending investigators to McMurdo this month as it expands its investigative mission to include crimes such as sexual assault and stalking.

In their indictment, prosecutors say that late on Nov. 24 or early Nov. 25 last year, a woman was sitting in a dormitory lounge waiting for her laundry when Bieneman, who had been celebrating his birthday with lots of drinks, walked in.

When he went to the bathroom, the woman took his name tag from his jacket as a prank and then refused to give it back, running around the end of a sofa, prosecutors say.

Bieneman then took her to the floor, put her on her back and put his left shin over her throat as he rummaged through her pocket looking for the tag, prosecutors say. The woman desperately tried to communicate she couldn't breathe, signaling a choking motion and tapping on his leg as a minute passed before Bieneman finally found the tag and removed his shin from her airway, according to the indictment.

Prosecutors say the woman visited a medical clinic.

"During a follow-up visit a week later, Victim A reported improvements with respect to muscle tightness, however she was suffering from lack of sleep and appetite, anxiousness, and depression as a result of the assault," prosecutors said in the indictment. "Soon thereafter, Victim A left her employment at McMurdo Station."

Bieneman's lawyer Birney Bervar said in an August email to the AP that eyewitnesses didn't back the woman's story and a doctor who examined her soon after the incident found no evidence of "an assault of the nature and degree she described."

Marc Tunstall, the NSF station manager who is also a sworn Deputy U.S. Marshal, heard about the incident on Nov. 29 and began investigating, according to prosecutors.

On Dec. 10, two weeks after the incident, Bieneman and the scientific team flew by Twin Otter plane to set up camp at the remote Allan Hills icefield, more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) from McMurdo. The team, which studies ice cores, was there to collect radar data to help select a site for future ice-core drilling.

In his role as mountaineer, Bieneman was responsible for the safety of the group in the unforgiving environment. The man initially assigned the role had suffered from a mini-stroke two days before his deployment, according to documents obtained by the AP.

Bieneman, who goes by his middle name Tyler, initially worked well with the team setting up camp.

"However, soon after, it became clear that something was amiss with Tyler," University of Washington Professor Howard Conway wrote on behalf of the COLDEX field team in a complaint to the NSF that was obtained by the AP.

Conway and the graduate students did not respond to AP requests for comment.

In the complaint, Conway described Bieneman as initially being "domineering and critical" of the two female graduate students at the camp.

"One evening in the kitchen tent during the first week, he told the graduate students that earlier in the season in McMurdo he had a fight with a woman, during which he wrestled with her, and she subsequently had trouble breathing, and needed medical attention," Conway wrote.

The professor said Bieneman portrayed himself as the victim in the incident for being under scrutiny. He said the graduate students, fearing possible retaliation if they disclosed the story, felt they had to tiptoe around Bieneman.

"It was uncomfortable and stressful to be around him because it was not possible to feel physically or emotionally safe," Conway wrote.

Court documents show an arrest warrant was issued for Bieneman on Dec. 12.

The professor wrote that Bieneman was finally replaced at the camp on Dec. 19. He said they were never told Bieneman was under investigation or given a reason for him being pulled from his assignment. They pieced it together later when the case became public.

"We were astounded to find (1) Tyler was assigned to our team when it was already known that he was under investigation, and (2) that he remained in the field with us for a full week after he had been

charged with assault," Conway wrote in the complaint.

The NSF said the questions about Bieneman's camp assignment were part of an active law enforcement matter and should be directed to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Hawaii. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Hawaii did not respond to a request for comment.

According to court records, when Bieneman returned to McMurdo after the camp, he was fired, given a plane ticket back to the U.S. and arrested when he landed in Hawaii. He was then released on \$25,000 bail pending Monday's trial.

Why one survivor of domestic violence wants the Supreme Court to uphold a gun control law

By MARK SHERMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ruth Glenn knows from harrowing personal experience the danger of putting a gun in the hands of a violent spouse or partner, the issue at the heart of a case before the Supreme Court.

On a beautiful June evening in 1992, Glenn was shot three times, twice in the head, and left for dead outside a Denver car wash.

The shooter was her estranged husband, Cedric, who was under a court order to stay away from Glenn. But there was no federal law on the books at the time that prohibited him from having a gun.

Two years later, Congress put such a law in place, prohibiting people facing domestic violence restraining orders from having guns. "He would not have been able to access that gun if we had these current laws in place," Glenn said in an interview with The Associated Press that took place outside the Supreme Court.

The high court is hearing arguments Tuesday in a challenge to the 1994 law. The closely watched case is the first one involving guns to reach the justices since their landmark Bruen decision last year expanded gun rights and changed the way courts evaluate whether restrictions on firearms violate the constitutional right to "keep and bear arms."

Glenn, the president of Survivor Justice Action, is allied with gun control groups that are backing the Biden administration's defense of the law.

Gun rights organizations are supporting Zackey Rahimi, the Texas man whose challenge to the law led to the Supreme Court case.

The law has blocked nearly 77,800 firearm sales over the last 25 years, said Shira Feldman, director of constitutional litigation at the gun-violence prevention group Brady.

"At stake here is a law that works and that has been supported by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress," Feldman said.

Firearms are the most common weapon used in homicides of spouses, intimate partners, children or relatives in recent years, according to data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guns were used in more than half, 57%, of those killings in 2020, a year that saw an overall increase in domestic violence during the coronavirus pandemic.

Seventy women a month, on average, are shot and killed by intimate partners, according to the gun control group Everytown for Gun Safety.

A gun, though, is more than just a potential source of violence, Glenn said, recalling how her husband threatened her and her then-teenage son, David, repeatedly.

"I think sometimes we forget and we look at the firearm as this tool of lethality, which it is absolutely. But it's also even more powerful as a tool of control," Glenn said.

Rahimi's case reached the Supreme Court after prosecutors appealed a ruling that threw out his conviction for possessing guns while subject to a restraining order.

Rahimi was involved in five shootings over two months in and around Arlington, Texas, U.S. Circuit Judge Cory Wilson noted. When police identified Rahimi as a suspect in the shootings and showed up at his home with a search warrant, Rahimi admitted both to having guns in the house and being subject to a domestic violence restraining order that prohibited gun possession, Wilson wrote.

But even though Rahimi was hardly "a model citizen," Wilson wrote, the law at issue could not be justified

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by looking to history. That's the test Justice Clarence Thomas laid out in his opinion for the court in Bruen.

The appeals court initially upheld the conviction under a balancing test that included whether the restriction enhances public safety. But the panel reversed course after Bruen. At least one district court has upheld the law since the Bruen decision.

Rahimi's case, and the subject of domestic violence may offer the government the optimal situation for defending gun restrictions, said Hashim Mooppan, a former Justice Department official in the Trump administration.

"If the government could have picked a case to be the first post-Bruen case, I think they would have picked this case and this statute," Mooppan said at a Georgetown Law School preview of the year's big cases.

But supporters of Rahimi said the appeals court got it right when it looked at American history and found no restriction close enough to justify the gun ban.

They also object to the hearing process under which restraining orders can be issued as insufficiently protective of the rights of people like Rahimi.

"It is sort of a truism that our commitment to due process and the rule of law means very little if we don't assure that everybody gets due process," said Clark Neily, a vice president at the libertarian Cato Institute who authored a brief on Rahimi's side.

The Bruen decision has led to upheaval in the legal landscape with rulings striking down more than a dozen laws, said Jacob Charles, a law professor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. Those include age restrictions, bans on homemade "ghost guns" and prohibitions on gun ownership for people convicted of nonviolent felonies or using illegal drugs.

The court's decision in the Rahimi case could have widespread ripple effects, including in the high-profile prosecution of Hunter Biden. The president's son has been charged with buying a firearm while he was addicted to drugs, but his lawyers have indicated they will challenge the indictment as invalid following the Bruen decision.

"It has the potential to be pretty impactful," Charles said. While it's possible the high court could hand down a decision on the Rahimi case alone, it seems "the court is realizing that it's just going to keep having these cases if they decide this narrowly."

Glenn somehow survived the shooting with no damage to her brain and was released from the hospital after three days. But she and her son lived in fear for several months, before Cedric Glenn took his own life with the same gun.

She wrote in her book, "Everything I Never Dreamed," that the shooting transformed her life and motivated her to work to prevent other women from suffering similar abuse.

"We're saying that the one thing that can protect them is a protection order that says somebody must have their gun removed," Glenn said on the sidewalk outside the court. "We're just increasing the risk to them when we're not removing the very thing that is threatening to them."

Can a Floridian win the presidency? It hasn't happened yet as Trump and DeSantis vie to be first

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A Florida governor wins reelection by record numbers and later finds himself running as a party conservative in a crowded presidential primary. In New Hampshire, he tip-toes around the explosive abortions rights issue, discusses ongoing Israeli military operations, promises he'll secure the Mexican border and warns that the current administration's fiscal insanity will cause more inflation, not reduce it.

While it sounds like Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2023, this was former Florida Democratic Gov. Reubin Askew in 1984. Askew dropped out of the race after finishing eighth in New Hampshire. DeSantis is looking to avoid a similar fate as he prepares for the third GOP debate this week in his home state.

If DeSantis or former President Donald Trump eventually is elected president next year, it would be the

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first time Americans have chosen a Floridian to lead them. Trump was a New York snowbird with a second home in Palm Beach when he was first elected, but he later lost as a full-time Floridian.

So while Florida is home to Disney World's Hall of Presidents, that's not the place to look for representation from the nation's third largest state. And even if home court advantage gives DeSantis an opening to talk about his accomplishments in the Sunshine State, there's no historic evidence to suggest it will help him in the race itself.

"I really have no idea why this is the case," said former Gov. Jeb Bush, who was considered the front-runner for the 2016 Republican presidential primary before Donald Trump's ascent reshaped the party.

Florida has long been influential in national politics — never more so than in 2000 when there were five weeks of recounts and court challenges before George W. Bush carried the state and won the presidency, by 537 votes. And more and more Floridians have sought the presidency as its population has exploded and Republicans chased Democrats out of power in Tallahassee.

Early in the 2016 presidential cycle, many political observers thought former Gov. Bush or Sen. Marco Rubio would win the Republican nomination to challenge Democrat Hillary Clinton. Trump at first wasn't taken seriously by either campaign — until he blasted both of the Floridians with insults as he rose to the top of the GOP pile.

It wasn't the moment for either. Bush would have been the third member of his family to become president, and Trump's nickname of "Low Energy Jeb" seemed to stick at a time when voters were in no mood for an establishment candidate with a whiff of inevitability, maybe even entitlement.

Rubio brought youthful energy to the campaign, but he never found his footing against a brawling candidate who specialized in branding and dubbed him "Little Marco." Rubio tried to match Trump with branding of his own, taunting Trump about the size of his hands at one point, but the shift in strategy only seemed to diminish him further — and by then Trump was well on his way to the GOP nomination.

By 2020, Trump had become a Floridian himself, changing his residence and voter registration to Florida, a state he desperately needed to win to earn a second term in the White House. He did carry the state but lost to President Joe Biden in the Rust Belt, thus adding his name to the list of Floridians who lost a presidential bid. That list keeps growing but includes Askew, Bush, Rubio, and former Sen. Bob Graham.

There is another notable asterisk. President Andrew Jackson was the first territorial governor of Florida in 1821, but it was a short stint to keep him busy as he tried to retire. It's described as "a troublesome few months" before he returned home to Tennessee and eventually ran for the White House from the Volunteer State.

"If you track Jackson's progress towards being a presidential candidate, Florida has very, very little to do with it," said Daniel Feller, a Jackson historian and professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee. "Florida didn't do much damage to his national reputation, but it certainly didn't help it any."

Politics were decidedly different then anyway. Jackson basically took the job as a favor to President James Monroe after the U.S. took over the territory from Spain.

"It was understood from the very beginning between Jackson and Monroe that this was going to be a temporary appointment," said Feller, noting Jackson's wife wasn't a fan of the idea. "Jackson didn't think Rachel would like it very much and he was right about that. Rachel hated it."

Florida had a sparse population when it became a state in 1845. The federal census five years earlier counted fewer than 55,000 people, nearly half of which were African American slaves. It wasn't until air conditioning became more affordable and effective in the middle of the 20th century that the state's population started to grow.

That changed in a hurry, though. It more than doubled from fewer than 2 million in 1940 to more than 5 million in 1960 and hasn't stopped growing. And its demographics shifted from a Southern, agricultural state to a hodgepodge population more reflective of the nation as a whole.

While north Florida and the Panhandle remain largely Southern in their outlook, the rest of the state is an eclectic mix.

Immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, and other Latin American countries have a large presence in South Flor-

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ida, central Florida has a large Puerto Rican population, conservative Midwesterners have moved to the southwest Gulf coast in droves and liberal New Englanders have migrated to the southeast Atlantic Coast. There's plenty of intermingling between those groups, but a large majority of the state's population was born outside of Florida.

As the population has changed, the state's politics have shifted. What had been the key swing state in 2000 has been reliably Republican in the past two presidential contests.

Democrats dominated the state Legislature for decades, but Republicans' power has grown steadily this century. Democrats always had an advantage in voter registration until two years ago. Now Republicans have about 5.2 million registered voters compared to about 4.6 million Democrats.

The GOP has easily held the Legislature and governor's office since 1999. While Republicans continue to be unstoppable in state politics, the state has been less predictable in presidential years. Since the 2000 recount, it supported Bush for re-election, Barack Obama twice and Trump twice.

Trump is once again leading in Florida polls. While he won't participate in Wednesday's debate in Miami, he is holding a rally nearby in a city that's 95% Hispanic or Latino, a signal he's seeking to boost support with the state's Hispanic voters.

The one sure bet is that Floridians will keep trying to win the White House. If neither DeSantis nor Trump win in 2024, there's always 2028 and the possibility Rubio and DeSantis run again, perhaps joined by former governor and current Sen. Rick Scott, who has long been speculated to have presidential ambitions.

Former Republican strategist Rick Wilson of Florida, who worked on the presidential campaigns of both George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, said the state has been a political late bloomer on the national scene.

"Florida is a state that didn't really reach its political maturity as early as others," said Wilson, a founder of the Lincoln Project, which opposes both Trump and DeSantis. "We had a much longer puberty where we were a backwater."

That all could change soon enough.

"The money's here, the importance of the vote is here, the importance of the electoral college is here," he said. "Now we need somebody who actually has the skills."

Some houses are being built to stand up to hurricanes and sharply cut emissions, too

By ISABELLA O'MALLEY Associated Press

When Hurricane Michael hit the Florida Panhandle five years ago, it left boats, cars and trucks piled up to the windows of Bonny Paulson's home in the tiny coastal community of Mexico Beach, Florida, even though the house rests on pillars 14 feet above the ground. But Paulson's home, with a rounded shape that looks something like a ship, shrugged off Category 5 winds that might otherwise have collapsed it.

"I wasn't nervous at all," Paulson said, recalling the warning to evacuate. Her house lost only a few shingles, with photos taken after the storm showing it standing whole amid the wreckage of almost all the surrounding homes.

Some developers are building homes like Paulson's with an eye toward making them more resilient to the extreme weather that's increasing with climate change, and friendlier to the environment at the same time. Solar panels, for example, installed so snugly that high winds can't get underneath them, mean clean power that can survive a storm. Preserved wetlands and native vegetation that trap carbon in the ground and reduce flooding vulnerability, too. Recycled or advanced construction materials that reduce energy use as well as the need to make new material.

A person's home is one of the biggest ways they can reduce their individual carbon footprint. Buildings release about 38% of all energy-related greenhouse gas emissions each year. Some of the carbon pollution comes from powering things like lights and air conditioners and some of it from making the construction materials, like concrete and steel.

Deltec, the company that built Paulson's home, says that only one of the nearly 1,400 homes it's built over

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the last three decades has suffered structural damage from hurricane-force winds. But the company puts as much emphasis on building green, with higher-quality insulation that reduces the need for air conditioning, heat pumps for more efficient heating and cooling, energy-efficient appliances, and of course solar.

"The real magic here is that we're doing both," chief executive Steve Linton. "I think a lot of times resilience is sort of the afterthought when you talk about sustainable construction, where it's just kind of this is a feature on a list ... we believe that resilience is really a fundamental part of sustainability."

Other companies are developing entire neighborhoods that are both resistant to hurricanes and contribute less than average to climate change.

Pearl Homes' Hunters Point community in Cortez, Florida, consists of 26 completed houses and 30 to be built by the end of 2024 that are all LEED-certified platinum, the highest level of one of the most-used green building rating systems.

To reduce vulnerability to flooding, home sites are raised 16 feet (4.8 meters) above code. Roads are raised, too, and designed to direct accumulating rainfall away and onto ground where it may be absorbed. Steel roofs with seams allow solar panels to be attached so closely it's difficult for high winds to get under them, and the homes have batteries that kick in when power is knocked out.

Pearl Homes CEO Marshall Gobuty said his team approached the University of Central Florida with a plan to build a community that doesn't contribute to climate change. "I wanted them to be not just sustainable, but resilient, I wanted them to be so unlike everything else that goes on in Florida," Gobuty said. "I see homes that are newly built, half a mile away, that are underwater ... we are in a crisis with how the weather is changing."

That resonates with Paulson, in Mexico Beach, who said she didn't want to "live day to day worried about tracking something in the Atlantic." Besides greater peace of mind, she says, she's now enjoying energy costs of about \$32 per month, far below the roughly \$250 she said she paid in a previous home.

"I don't really feel that the population is taking into effect the environmental catastrophes, and adjusting for it," she said. "We're building the same old stuff that got blown away."

Babcock Ranch is another sustainable, hurricane-resilient community in South Florida. It calls itself the first solar-powered town in the U.S., generating 150 megawatts of electricity with 680,000 panels on 870 acres (350 hectares). The community was also one of the first in the country to have large batteries on site to store extra solar power to use at night or when the power is out.

Syd Kitson founded Babcock Ranch in 2006. The homes are better able to withstand hurricane winds because the roofs are strapped to a system that connects down to the foundation. Power lines are buried underground so they can't blow over. The doors swing outward in some homes so when pressure builds up from the wind, they don't blast open, and vents help balance the pressure in garages.

In 2022, Hurricane Ian churned over Babcock Ranch as a Category 4 storm. It left little to no damage, Kitson said.

"We set out to prove that a new town and the environment can work hand-in-hand, and I think we've proven that," said Kitson. "Unless you build in a very resilient way, you're just going to constantly be repairing or demolishing the home."

The development sold some 73,000 acres (29,500 hectares) of its site to the state for wetland preservation, and on the land where it built, a team studied how water naturally flows through the local environment and incorporated it into its water management system.

"That water is going to go where it wants to go, if you're going to try and challenge Mother Nature, you're going to lose every single time," Kitson said. The wetlands, retention ponds, and native vegetation are better able to manage water during extreme rainfall, reducing the risk of flooded homes.

In the Florida Keys, Natalia Padalino and her husband, Alan Klingler, plan to finish building a Deltec home by December. The couple was concerned about the future impacts global warming and hurricanes would have on the Florida Keys and researched homes that were both sustainable and designed to withstand these storms.

"We believe we're building something that's going to be a phenomenal investment and reduce our risk of any major catastrophic situation," Klingler said.

"People have been really open and receptive. They tell us if a hurricane comes, they're going to be staying in our place," Padalino said.

Another ex-player is alleging Blackhawks' former video coach sexually assaulted him in 2009-10

CHICAGO (AP) — A former hockey player in the Chicago Blackhawks organization has alleged in a lawsuit the team's former video coach sexually assaulted him during the 2009-10 season and the Blackhawks responded inadequately to his complaint because it didn't want a disruption during its Stanley Cup run.

The Chicago Tribune reported Sunday the law firm of Romanucci & Blandin filed the lawsuit Thursday on behalf of their client, listed as "John Doe," in Cook County Circuit Court. The Associated Press was unable to reach a representative from the law firm.

The newspaper reported the plaintiff was a member of the Blackhawks' "Black Aces" squad, which was made up of minor-league players who traveled with the NHL team during the playoffs to fill in in case of injuries.

One of the player's "Black Aces" teammates was Kyle Beach, who reached a settlement with the Blackhawks in December 2021 after alleging he was sexually assaulted by then-video coach Brad Aldrich.

The lawsuit filed last week raises similar allegations against Aldrich and said the Blackhawks showed "utter indifference and/or conscious disregard for the safety of its employees, including John Doe."

The Blackhawks, in a statement to the Tribune, declined to comment on the specifics of the latest lawsuit. They said they take allegations of workplace misconduct seriously and noted that two years ago they initiated an independent investigation into the events of 2010.

"We've changed as a result of what happened and implemented numerous positive improvements throughout our organization to ensure the safety and well-being of our players and employees," the team said. "This includes completely rebuilding the leadership team with personnel who demonstrate our values and bring the right subject matter expertise in the critical areas of compliance and human resources, an expansive mental health program, and new reporting mechanisms and training for all employees."

Attorney Antonio Romanucci told the Tribune that the lawsuits seeks to ensure teams remain accountable.

"We have a specific mission in mind, certainly that the Blackhawks remain accountable for the changes that they have promised that they have put in place with regard to prevention of these sexual abuses," he said. "But we also want to make sure that all teams around the country are on notice that this is not acceptable behavior. Putting winning before the mental health or even physical health of players, that's over. Hard stop."

The lawsuit filed last week alleges Aldrich invited "Black Aces" players to his home under the guise of discussing hockey strategy but later attempted to make players watch pornographic movies with him. Aldrich is accused of offering to perform oral sex on "John Doe" and of approaching him from behind and pushing his penis against the back and buttocks of "Doe" through his clothes.

Aldrich allegedly used threats to dissuade the player from reporting Aldrich's alleged conduct.

Aldrich in December 2013 pleaded guilty to fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct in a case involving a 16-year-old high school hockey player in Michigan. Prosecutors dropped a felony count. Aldrich was released from jail in 2014.

Car crashes into pub's outdoor dining area in Australia, killing 5 and injuring 6

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — A car crashed into an Australian pub's outdoor dining area, killing five people and injuring six others including the driver, officials said on Monday.

The 66-year-old driver of the luxury BMW SUV was taken to a hospital after the crash at the crowded Royal Daylesford Hotel beer garden in the rural town of Daylesford, northwest of Melbourne, on Sunday

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evening, police said.

The driver suffered shock and minor injuries and remained under police guard, Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Shane Patton said.

Police investigators are trying to determine how the car came to mount a curb and crash into the roadside dining area. The driver tested negative for alcohol and his blood was being analyzed for other impairing substances, Patton said.

A boy, two men in their 30s and a woman in her 40s died at the scene, police said. A teenage girl was flown to a Melbourne hospital where she died on Sunday night.

Two boys, aged 11 months and around 6 years old, were taken to hospitals in stable conditions.

Three adults remained in a Melbourne hospital on Monday, including a 35-year-old woman who was in intensive care.

Police have yet to interview the driver, whose only prior record was for speeding offenses. Investigators did not yet know if excessive speed was a factor in the accident, Patton said.

Gaza has lost telecom contact again, while Israel's military says it has surrounded Gaza City

By WAFAA SHURAF, NAJIB JOBAIN and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Gaza lost communications Sunday in its third total outage of the Israel-Hamas war, while Israel's military said it encircled Gaza City and divided the besieged coastal strip into two.

"Today there is north Gaza and south Gaza," Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari told reporters, calling it a "significant stage" in Israel's war against the Hamas militant group ruling the enclave. Israeli media reported troops were expected to enter Gaza City within 48 hours. Strong explosions were seen in northern Gaza after nightfall.

The "collapse in connectivity" across Gaza, reported by internet access advocacy group NetBlocks.org and confirmed by Palestinian telecom company Paltel, made it even more complicated to convey details of the new stage of the military offensive.

"We have lost communication with the vast majority of the UNRWA team members," U.N. Palestinian refugee agency spokesperson Juliette Touma told The Associated Press. The first Gaza outage lasted 36 hours and the second one for a few hours.

Earlier Sunday, Israeli warplanes struck two refugee camps, killing at least 53 people and wounding dozens in central Gaza, the zone where Israel's military had urged Palestinian civilians to seek refuge, health officials said. Israel said it would press on with its offensive to crush Hamas, despite U.S. appeals for even brief pauses to get aid to desperate civilians.

Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry said more than 9,700 Palestinians have been killed in nearly a month of war in Gaza, more than 4,000 of them children and minors. That toll likely will rise as Israeli troops advance into dense, urban neighborhoods.

Airstrikes hit the Maghazi refugee camp, killing at least 40 people and wounding 34 others, the Health Ministry said. An AP reporter at a nearby hospital saw eight dead children, including a baby, brought in after the strike. A surviving child was led down the corridor, her clothes caked in dust.

Arafat Abu Mashaia, who lives in the camp, said the Israeli airstrike flattened several multistory homes where people forced out of other parts of Gaza were sheltering.

"It was a true massacre," he said. "All here are peaceful people. I challenge anyone who says there were resistance (fighters) here."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Another airstrike hit a house near a school at the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza. Staff at Al-Aqsa Hospital told the AP at least 13 people were killed. The camp was struck on Thursday as well.

Despite appeals and overseas protests, Israel has continued its bombardment across Gaza, saying it is targeting Hamas and accusing the militant of using civilians as human shields. Critics say Israel's strikes

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are often disproportionate, considering the large number of civilians killed.

On the ground, Israeli forces in Gaza have reported finding stashes of weapons, at times including explosives, suicide drones and missiles. The Israeli military said 29 of its soldiers have died during the ground operation.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the occupied West Bank on Sunday, a day after meeting Arab foreign ministers in Jordan.

Abbas, who has had no authority in Gaza since Hamas took over in 2007, said the Palestinian Authority would only assume control of Gaza as part of a "comprehensive political solution" establishing an independent state that includes the West Bank and east Jerusalem — lands Israel seized in the 1967 war.

His remarks seemed to further narrow the already slim options for who would govern Gaza if Israel topples Hamas. The last peace talks with Israel broke down more than a decade ago, and Israel's government is dominated by opponents of Palestinian statehood.

Blinken later visited Iraq to meet with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani about the need to prevent the conflict from spreading, and about efforts to increase the flow of aid to Gaza, which Blinken called "grossly insufficient" at about 100 truckloads a day.

A Jordanian military cargo plane air-dropped medical aid to a field hospital in northern Gaza, King Abdullah II said on social media early Monday. This appeared to be the first aid delivered by Jordan, a key U.S. ally that has a peace deal with Israel.

Earlier in his tour, Blinken met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who on Sunday reiterated that "there will be no cease-fire without the return of our abductees."

Arab leaders have called for an immediate cease-fire. But Blinken said that "would simply leave Hamas in place, able to regroup and repeat what it did on Oct. 7," when it stormed into southern Israel from Gaza, triggering the war.

Swaths of residential neighborhoods in northern Gaza have been leveled in airstrikes. The U.N. office for humanitarian affairs says more than half the remaining residents, estimated at around 300,000, are sheltering in U.N.-run facilities. The U.N. said Sunday that 88 staff members from its Palestinian refugees agency have been reported killed — "the highest number of United Nations fatalities ever recorded in a single conflict."

Israeli planes again dropped leaflets urging people to head south during a four-hour window Sunday. Crowds walked down Gaza's main north-south highway carrying baggage or pets and pushing wheelchairs. Others led donkey carts.

One man said they walked 500 meters (yards) with their hands raised while passing Israeli troops. Another described seeing bodies along the road. "The children saw tanks for the first time. Oh world, have mercy on us," said one Palestinian man who declined to give his name.

Israel's military said a one-way corridor would continue for residents to flee to southern Gaza.

The U.N. said about 1.5 million people in Gaza, or 70% of the population, have fled their homes. Food, water and the fuel needed for generators that power hospitals are running out. No fuel has come for nearly one month, the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency said.

The war has stoked wider tensions, with Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group trading fire along the border.

Four civilians were killed by an Israeli airstrike in south Lebanon on Sunday evening, including three children, a local civil defense official and state-run media reported. The Israeli military said it had attacked Hezbollah targets in response to anti-tank fire that killed an Israeli civilian. Hezbollah said it fired Grad rockets from southern Lebanon into Israel in response.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, at least two Palestinians were killed during an Israeli arrest raid in Abu Dis, just outside of Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. The military said a militant who had set up an armed cell and fired at Israeli forces was killed.

At least 150 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the war.

Many Israelis have called for Netanyahu to resign and for the return of roughly 240 hostages held by

Hamas. Some families are traveling abroad to try to make sure the hostages aren't forgotten.

Netanyahu has refused to take responsibility for the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that killed more than 1,400 people. Ongoing Palestinian rocket fire has forced tens of thousands of people in Israel to leave their homes.

In another reflection of widespread anger, a junior government minister, Amihai Eliyahu, suggested in a radio interview that Israel could drop an atomic bomb on Gaza. He later called the remarks "metaphorical." Netanyahu suspended Eliyahu from cabinet meetings, a move with no practical effect.

The U.S. military on Sunday acknowledged positioning a nuclear weapon-capable Ohio-class submarine in the Middle East, although it's unclear if it's armed with nuclear ballistic missiles. Several Ohio-class submarines instead carry cruise missiles and the capability to deploy with special operations forces.

Ryan Blaney earns 1st career NASCAR championship and gives Roger Penske back-to-back Cup titles

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

AVONDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Ryan Blaney only had to beat Kyle Larson and William Byron to win his first NASCAR championship.

He needlessly added Ross Chastain to his list, too, racing him pointlessly hard in an attempt to win the race Sunday at Phoenix Raceway. When he couldn't pass Chastain, Blaney angrily ran into the back of his car.

It was a side of Blaney his team and competitors know very well.

The public? Not so much.

The soft-spoken third generation racer from Ohio used a pugnacious second-place run at Phoenix to win the Cup title in a drive that showcased a fire that apparently blazes inside the typically mild-mannered Blaney.

"You can say his frustration level gets above the boiling point, I'd have to say," said team owner Roger Penske, who won back-to-back Cup titles with Blaney's effort.

The clash with Chastain followed an earlier deliberate collision by Blaney with Martin Truex Jr. Blaney also raced Larson extremely hard and he'd had it with Chastain, the leader and eventual race winner, with 53 laps remaining when Blaney ran into the back of Chastain.

"Not surprised by it because it's him and he does that," said Chastain, who believes Blaney also flashed him the middle finger. "Anger. He gets angry. It's OK. I've known him for a decade. I could see him moving around in the car. The car's going straight. I could see his colorful suit and gloves. When I checked the camera, I was like, 'Oh, he is angry.'"

Blaney's behavior was relayed to Byron, who dates Blaney's youngest sister, Erin.

"The 12 is melting down," Byron was told over the radio. Byron, who won a Cup Series high six races this year, started from the pole and led 96 laps early.

"He's always aggressive," smiled Byron. "He's always quick and aggressive. I don't think it was anything new."

Larson was watching and waiting to pounce in case Blaney made a mistake. The championship was guaranteed to the highest-finishing driver between Blaney, Larson, Byron and Christopher Bell, but Bell broke a brake rotor early and was eliminated with a last-place finish.

"He's a quiet guy, but I feel like he races really hard and he gets extremely fired up, too. I'm curious what his radio sounded like," Larson said. "He was mad at (Truex) at the end of the second stage, he ran into the back of him in a caution. He ran into the back of Ross. He earned it. He worked really hard."

Blaney became the first Ohio-born driver to win the Cup title and followed teammate Joey Logano, who won for Penske a year ago. It was an amazing finish for Ford Performance, which struggled most of the season but came on late with Blaney, who won two of the final six playoff races.

The title was the fourth in the Cup Series for Penske, but first time "The Captain" has consecutive Cups. His IndyCar program won back-to-back championships in 2016 and 2017 with Simon Pagenaud and Josef Newgarden and Penske has 44 total championships across motorsports.

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Blaney noted how important it was to win for Penske; the 86-year-old was recently hospitalized with shingles and missed Blaney's win at Martinsville Speedway last Sunday. Penske was in Phoenix and calmly watched the race from a suite, but made his way to the frontstretch to congratulate his 29-year-old driver.

"I thought the captain had to stay cool. He's the coolest guy on the ship," Penske said of watching the race with a headset he used frequently to calm Blaney over the radio. "I would say I probably was cool, but inside I was turning over. I told him before the race, 'Win, lose or draw, you're a champion.'"

Blaney for sure needed it on Sunday, and used an expletive to admit he deliberately ran into Chastain. "Yes I hit him on purpose. He blocked me on purpose 10 times," Blaney said. "So yeah I hit him on purpose. He backed me up to the other championship guy (Larson) and I gotta go."

Team Penske has won three Cup titles in the past six seasons, and Blaney has driven for Penske since 2013, when he was 19 years old. He said it was a goal this entire week to add consecutive NASCAR titles to Penske's legacy.

"It was definitely on my mind to give him consecutive titles, I mean, because he's done everything in motorsports and we had a chance to go back-to-back on the Cup side with him," Blaney said. "I mean, we couldn't pass up that opportunity. So everyone worked really hard to make it happen and I'm so proud of the effort."

Blaney is the son of former Cup driver Dave Blaney, who made 473 Cup starts over 17 seasons. Dave Blaney was a World of Outlaws champion, his brother, Dale, was a sprint car champion, and their father, Lou, was credited with multiple Midwest titles.

"Obviously I come from a family of racers, my grandfather, dad and uncle," Blaney said. "Dad is obviously who I grew up watching and admiring, wanted to be like. To be able to do what he did, 'cause as a kid I just wanted to do what dad did, so to be able to race and let alone compete for wins and championships, still have my parents around, people that you look up to that are still around, it makes it even more special."

Chastain won the race in a Chevrolet for Trackhouse Racing and is the first driver to win the season finale while not racing for the championship since Denny Hamlin in 2013, one year before this current elimination format began.

Larson and Byron finished third and fourth for Hendrick Motorsports, while Bell of Joe Gibbs Racing didn't finish and was scored 36th. They were the only four drivers eligible for the title Sunday.

Kevin Harvick finished seventh in the final race of his Cup career.

Even after his clash with Chastain, there was still a final round of pit stops to come when a Kyle Busch spin brought out the final caution of the race with 37 laps remaining. Blaney was second when he headed to pit road but it was Larson and the No. 5 Hendrick team that had the fastest pit stop.

"Let's do this guys," Larson told his crew as he headed in for the stop.

Larson was the first of the title contenders off pit road, while Blaney lost four spots and was sixth on the last restart. Blaney made up some quick ground and eventually caught Larson, but had to race door-to-door for several laps against the 2021 champion before finally clearing him with 20 laps remaining.

"Blaney had to work for it. He really had to work for it," Larson said. "And guys around him that were not in the final four racing him really hard. He definitely deserved it and earned it."

Larson was the only previous champion in the final four, while Blaney, Bell and Byron were racing for their first title.

Blinken shuttles from the West Bank to Iraq trying to contain the fallout from the Israel-Hamas war

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken took his diplomatic push on the Israel-Hamas war to the occupied West Bank on Sunday, trying to assure Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that the Biden administration was intensifying efforts to ease the plight of Gaza's civilians and insisting that Palestinians must have a main say in whatever comes next for the territory after the conflict.

Blinken later flew to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as American

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forces in the region face a surge of attacks by Iranian-allied militias in Iraq and elsewhere. U.S. forces shot down another one-way attack drone Sunday that was targeting American and coalition troops near their base in neighboring Syria, a U.S. official said. From Baghdad Blinken traveled to Turkey.

President Joe Biden's top diplomat traveled through the West Bank city of Ramallah in an armored motorcade and under tight security. It was his third day of shuttle diplomacy aimed at trying to limit the destabilizing regional fallout from the war and overcome what has been Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to consider a U.S. proposal for intermittent pauses in its attack on Hamas long enough to rush vital aid to Gaza's civilians.

Netanyahu had pushed back Friday against the U.S. pressure to start implementing pauses in the fighting, saying there would be no temporary cease-fire until Hamas releases some 240 foreign hostages it is holding.

"This is a process," Blinken told reporters on the matter Sunday. "Israel has raised important questions about how humanitarian pauses would work. We've got to answer those questions," including how pauses would affect Hamas hostages. "We're working on exactly that."

The Biden administration, while remaining the strongest backer of Israel's military response to Hamas' attacks on Oct. 7, is increasingly seeking to use its influence with Israel to try to temper the effect of Israel's weeks of complete siege and near round-the-clock air, ground and sea assaults in Gaza, home to 2.3 million civilians.

Blinken's meeting with Abbas in the West Bank came on the same day that Israeli planes bombed two refugee camps in Gaza, killing at least 53 people, according to health officials in Gaza. An Associated Press reporter saw the dead bodies of eight children brought in to a nearby Gaza hospital after one of those strikes. Israel's military announced its forces had effectively split the Gaza Strip in two before an expected escalated assault on Hamas targets in the north.

As word spread of Blinken's arrival in Ramallah, Palestinians turned out to protest U.S. support for Israel's war. Demonstrators held signs showing dripping blood and with messages that included, "Blinken blood is on your hands."

Neither Blinken nor Abbas spoke as they greeted each other in front of cameras and their meeting ended without any public comment.

The Palestinian Authority administers semiautonomous areas of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It has not been a factor in the Gaza Strip since 2007, when Hamas seized control after winning in elections there a year earlier. Abbas himself is unpopular among Palestinians.

Blinken said in Baghdad that the Palestinian Authority "is playing a very important role right now in the West Bank in trying to keep stability there. That's hugely important because no one wants another front in the West Bank or anywhere else, and they're really stepping up under very difficult conditions to do the necessary work."

He said that "what we all agree" is that in shaping a future for Gaza, the West Bank and "ultimately" for a Palestinian state, "Palestinian voices have to be at the center of that. The Palestinian Authority is the representative of those voices so it's important that it play a leading role."

Abbas, however, said the Palestinian Authority would only assume power in Gaza as part of a "comprehensive political solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, according to the Palestinians' official WAFA news agency. He also condemned Israel's bombardment of Gaza as a "genocidal war" and urged Blinken "to immediately stop them from committing such crimes," the news agency reported.

On his second trip to the Middle East since the war began, Blinken met with Netanyahu on Friday before holding talks in Jordan with Arab ministers Saturday. Netanyahu so far has rejected humanitarian pauses. The Arab officials pushed for an immediate cease-fire. Blinken said that would be counterproductive and could encourage more violence by Hamas.

U.S. officials believe that Netanyahu may soften his opposition to the pause idea if he can be convinced that it is in Israel's strategic interests to ease the plight of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. The soaring death toll among Palestinians — more than 9,700, according to officials of Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry —

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has sparked growing international anger, with tens of thousands from Washington to Berlin taking to the streets over the weekend to demand a cease-fire now.

Arab states are resisting American suggestions that they play a larger role in resolving crisis, expressing outrage at the civilian toll of the Israeli military operations but believing Gaza to be a problem largely of Israel's own making.

Among Arab leaders, Blinken said it is clear that "everyone would welcome the humanitarian pause." He said it "could advance things that we're all trying to accomplish," including freeing hostages, bringing in aid and getting out foreign citizens. On that last point, he said: "We've had important progress there in recent days but also real complications that come along with it. We continue to work through them."

In Baghdad, the talks touched on the security of U.S. forces.

"I made very clear that the attacks, the threats coming from the militia that are aligned with Iran, are totally unacceptable and we will take every necessary step to protect" American personnel, Blinken said. He said the prime minister expressed his own determination to stop the militia strikes.

The U.S. has deep concerns that Iran and its proxies, including several militia groups in Iraq, may take advantage of the situation in Gaza to further destabilize the Middle East. Already Iranian-backed militias have intensified rocket and other attacks on U.S. military facilities in Iraq and Syria, drawing at least one retaliatory strike from American forces.

Sunday's attack by drone against a U.S. site in Syria was at least the 32nd on U.S. and coalition military facilities in Iraq and Syria since Oct. 17. To date there have been at least 17 attacks in Iraq and 15 in Syria. At least 21 service members have been injured by the attacks but all have returned to duty, the Pentagon said.

The same U.S. official who confirmed the U.S. shutdown of the drone said the drone strike was very similar to other recent attacks on U.S. personnel at bases in Iraq and Syria and is believed at this point to be linked to Iranian-backed militia. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

AP Top 25: USC drops out for first time under Lincoln Riley; Oklahoma State vaults in to No. 15

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Southern California dropped out of The Associated Press college football poll Sunday for the first time under coach Lincoln Riley and No. 15 Oklahoma State vaulted into the rankings for the first time this year.

The top nine teams in the Top 25 held their spots, led by No. 1 Georgia. The Bulldogs have now tied the second-longest streak atop the poll at 21 straight weeks, dating back to the middle of last season.

Georgia received 49 first-place votes. No. 2 Michigan got nine first-place votes, No. 3 Ohio State had three and No. 4 Florida State had two.

Washington remained No. 5, followed by Oregon, Texas, Alabama and Penn State.

The last time the first nine teams in the poll went unchanged this late in the season was Nov. 19, 2017. Mississippi moved up a spot to a season-high No. 10.

USC (7-3) lost to Washington on Saturday night in yet another high-scoring, defense-optional affair, and is now unranked after starting the season No. 6. Next week at Oregon, USC will play as an unranked team for the first time since 2021, a 4-8 season in which the school fired coach Clay Helton after two games.

"I think our guys are frustrated that we've been so, so close and we haven't played good enough to be able to separate," Riley said after the Washington game.

USC hired Riley away from Oklahoma after the 2021 season and he brought Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams with him as a transfer.

The Trojans started this season 6-0, but have lost three of four since, allowing 46 points per game. On Sunday, Riley fired defensive coordinator Alex Grinch and named two assistants interim co-coordinators for the remainder of the season.

Oklahoma State (7-2) is having an inverse season to USC.

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The Cowboys beat rival Oklahoma for its fifth straight victory after a 2-2 start. The Cowboys' jump to No. 15 matches the highest ranking for a previously unranked team this deep into the season since the AP poll expanded to 25 teams in 1989.

USC went from unranked to No. 15 on Nov. 13, 2016, after it beat No. 4 Washington 26-13 in Seattle.

POLL POINTS

Georgia's No. 1 streak matches Miami's 21 straight from 2001-02. The Bulldogs still have a long way to go to catch USC's 33 straight from 2003-05.

What did both the Miami and USC streaks have in common? They both ended with a national championship game loss.

IN-N-OUT

Four teams moved into the rankings this week, matching a season high.

Like Oklahoma State, No. 23 Arizona and No. 25 Liberty made their season debuts in the rankings.

— Arizona beat UCLA 27-10 on Saturday night and is ranked for the first time since a one-week stay at No. 23 in early November 2017.

For the first time in school history, the Wildcats have beaten three straight opponents who were ranked at the time of the game.

"It was as good of a game as I've been a part of this year," third-year coach Jedd Fisch said after the UCLA game. "I've said that now a few weeks in a row and I think that's what makes us cool. You know that we can keep saying we're getting better."

— No. 24 North Carolina moved back into the rankings.

— Unbeaten Liberty is ranked for a second straight season. The Flames spent two weeks in the Top 25 around the same time last year.

Dropping out along with USC were:

— Air Force, which was upset by Army to fall from the ranks of the unbeaten.

— UCLA after taking its third loss of the season.

— Kansas State, which lost in overtime to Texas to fall to 6-3.

CONFERENCE CALL

SEC — 6 (Nos. 1, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17).

Pac-12 — 5 (Nos. 5, 6, 12, 13, 23).

Big 12 — 4 (Nos. 7, 15, 18, 19).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 3, 9).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 4, 11, 24).

American — 1 (No. 20).

Conference USA — 1 (No. 24).

Sun Belt — 1 (No. 21).

Independent — 1 (No. 22).

RANKED vs. RANKED

No. 10 Mississippi at No. 1 Georgia. The fifth time the Rebels and Bulldogs have met as ranked teams and first time since 2016.

No. 2 Michigan at No. 9 Penn State. Third straight ranked matchup in the series and sixth in the last seven years.

No. 13 Utah at No. 5 Washington. Third time the Utes and Huskies will play when both are ranked.

No. 14 Tennessee at No. 16 Missouri. First time in 12 meetings that both are ranked.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds will endorse Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for president, AP sources say

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds plans to endorse Ron DeSantis for president, giving the Florida governor's 2024 campaign a boost as he struggles to show progress against Donald Trump in the Republican primary, two people familiar with the matter said Sunday.

DeSantis has pinned his chances of emerging as an alternative to Trump alternative squarely on Iowa. Reynolds is well-liked within the GOP and will break with long-standing Iowa tradition to endorse DeSantis. Iowa's governor typically stays neutral before the caucuses that kick off the Republicans' nomination calendar in January.

The people familiar with the matter spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity before a Monday rally in Des Moines where Reynolds is expected to announce her endorsement. The Des Moines Register and NBC News first reported the anticipated endorsement.

Reynolds had introduced DeSantis at political events in Iowa and appeared with Florida first lady Casey DeSantis — without publicly declaring her support. But the governor often noted her shared policy priorities and accomplishments, including a bill banning abortion at six weeks of pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant.

Reynolds, who is in her second term, had left open the possibility of lending her support to a candidate in the Jan. 15 caucuses.

She had introduced Trump at an event in March. But Trump has accused her of disloyalty for weighing an endorsement before the caucuses and tried to take credit for her winning the governorship.

His campaign quickly criticized her on Sunday.

"Kim Reynolds apparently has begun her retirement tour early as she clearly does not have any ambition for higher office," the Trump campaign said in an emailed statement. "Earlier this year, she promised her constituents that she would remain neutral in the race, yet she has completely gone back on that promise. Regardless, her endorsement will not make any difference in this race."

Trump also weighed in in a series of angry social media posts, accusing her of disloyalty and reneging on her pledge to remain neutral.

"If and when Kim Reynolds of Iowa endorses Ron DeSanctimonious, who is absolutely dying in the polls both in Iowa and Nationwide, it will be the end of her political career in that MAGA would never support her again, just as MAGA will never support DeSanctimonious again," he wrote. "Two extremely disloyal people getting together is, however, a very beautiful thing to watch. They can now remain loyal to each other because nobody else wants them!!!"

Trump is the heavy favorite to win in Iowa. DeSantis is competing with former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley to emerge in the leadoff contest, just 10 weeks away, as a viable alternative to Trump.

A month ago, DeSantis sent about 20 of his Tallahassee-based campaign headquarters staff to Iowa. The super political action committee supporting him, Never Back Down, has had roughly two dozen staff reaching out to would-be caucus participants since the summer.

On Friday, DeSantis spoke to about 50 GOP activists at a early-afternoon stop in Denison, the heart of Republican-heavy Crawford County. It was the 86th Iowa county he's visited, on a mission to visit each of its 99, and the last puzzle piece in the bloc of conservative western Iowa.

Reynolds is popular within the party in part for signing a school choice bill and strict abortion ban this year.

Nepal villagers cremate loved ones who perished in an earthquake that killed 157 people

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Villagers in the mountains of northwest Nepal on Sunday cremated the bodies of some of those who perished in an earthquake two days earlier. The strong temblor killed 157 people and left thousands of others homeless.

The 13 bodies were carried to the banks of the Bheri River and placed on pyres made of stacked wood. Priests chanted Hindu prayers while family members cried as they covered the bodies of loved ones with flowers before setting them on fire in a cremation ceremony.

They were from Chiuri village in Jajarkot district, which authorities said was the epicenter of the quake, and where at least 105 people were confirmed dead. Another 52 were killed in the neighboring Rukum district, officials said. There were 184 people injured.

Most of the houses in Jajarkot — usually made by stacking rocks and logs — either collapsed or were severely damaged by the sudden earthquake, while the few concrete houses in towns were also damaged. The majority of those killed were crushed by debris.

Thousands spent Saturday night in the bitter cold.

People used whatever they could find to set up shelter for the night, using plastic sheets and old clothes to keep them warm. Most people have been unable to retrieve their belongings from under the rubble.

Many were looking to the government for help.

"Our situation has gotten so worse that we do not even have anything left to eat. Whatever food we had is buried underneath the rubble of our fallen house," Samkhana Bika, who had lost her home, said Sunday.

Her house at Chepare village had fallen. She sat around a fire near their fallen home to keep warm with her six family members.

"Someone else gave us some rice, a little oil and some salt out of which we made a stew last night and ate that," she said.

Nepal's government said it is trying to get aid to the affected areas.

A Cabinet meeting held on Sunday announced that aid would be immediately transported. Communications Minister Rekha Sharma told reporters that supplying food and setting up temporary shelters were the main focus while working on plans to reconstruct damaged houses.

As rescuers were scrambling to rush aid, operations were hampered by the fact that many of the mountainous villages could only be reached by foot. Roads were also blocked by landslides triggered by the earthquake. Soldiers could be seen trying to clear the blocked roads.

The U.S. Geological Survey said that the earthquake had a preliminary magnitude of 5.6 and occurred at a depth of 11 miles (18 kilometers). Nepal's National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Center confirmed that the epicenter was in Jajarkot, which is about 400 kilometers (250 miles) northeast of the capital, Kathmandu.

At the regional hospital in the city of Nepalgunj, more than 100 beds were made available and teams of doctors stood by to help the injured.

"My arms are totally broken, I have injuries in my head and my back hurts, but thankfully it is not fractured. It was hurt when I had bent down and had firewood fall on my back," Kunjan Pun said Sunday from a hospital bed where she is awaiting surgery.

Apart from rescue helicopters, small government and army planes able to set down in short mountain landing strips were also used to ferry the wounded to Nepalgunj.

The quake, which hit when many people were asleep in their homes, was also felt in India's capital, New Delhi, more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) away.

Earthquakes are common in mountainous Nepal. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 killed around 9,000 people and damaged about 1 million structures.

A woman and 3 children are killed by an Israeli airstrike in south Lebanon, local officials say

By BASSAM HATOUM and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BINT JBEIL, Lebanon (AP) — An Israeli airstrike in south Lebanon on Sunday evening killed four civilians, including a woman and three children, raising the likelihood of a dangerous new escalation in the conflict on the Lebanon-Israel border.

Israeli troops and Hezbollah militants and their allies have been clashing for a month along the border since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. While clashes remain largely contained, they have increased in intensity as Israel conducts a ground incursion in Gaza against Hezbollah ally Hamas.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that two civilian cars carrying members of the same family — one of them a local journalist — were driving between the towns of Ainata and Aitaroun on Sunday evening when they were hit by an Israeli airstrike. One of the cars was hit directly and burst into flames, the report said. One woman and three girls, ages 10, 12 and 14 were killed, and others were wounded, it said.

Shortly after the Israeli strike, Hezbollah said its fighters had fired Grad rockets from southern Lebanon into Israel in response. A number of rockets hit the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona Sunday, Israeli rescue services said. Videos verified by The Associated Press showed a burning car on the street of Kiryat Shmona.

At least one civilian was killed Sunday as a result of attacks by Hezbollah, the Israeli military said, but it wasn't immediately clear if it was in the Kiyat Shmona attack or an earlier one.

Samir Ayoub, the Lebanese journalist, who was in the car in front of the one that was struck, told the AP that the three girls killed were his sister's children and the woman was their grandmother.

"There were no men in the car that was hit — there were three innocent young children with their grandmother and their mother," he said. "Three children were burned in the car and no one could save them. And I pulled out their mother as she was screaming, 'My children!' Where are the terrorists? Israelis, you are the terrorists."

Mohammad Suleiman, head of Salah Ghandour hospital in the town of Bint Jbeil, the bodies of the woman and three children were "completely burned." The children's mother was wounded but in stable condition and was transferred to another area hospital, he said.

Daniel Hagari, an Israeli military spokesperson, didn't comment on the details, but told reporters, "We study and investigate all incidents that take place to know the details."

Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, condemned Israel for the drone attack, calling it a "heinous crime." He said that Lebanon will file a complaint to the U.N. Security Council.

Earlier Sunday, local Lebanese officials said an Israeli drone had struck near two ambulance on their way to pick up casualties from overnight strikes in southern Lebanon, wounding four paramedics. The Israeli army said in a statement that it had launched strikes on a "terrorist cell" that was attempting to fire missiles toward Israel from the Ras Naqoura area in south Lebanon and hadn't intentionally targeted the vehicles.

Also Sunday, Hezbollah said in a statement that it had targeted an Israeli military vehicle across the border from the Lebanese town of Blida with guided missiles Sunday, which it claimed had killed and wounded members of the crew.

The death of the woman and three children raised the number of civilians killed on the Lebanese side in the border clashes to at least 14, while at least two Israeli civilians have been killed, as well as seven Israeli soldiers and dozens of fighters with Hezbollah and allied groups in Lebanon.

Hezbollah officials have warned that if Israel kills Lebanese civilians, it will be considered a violation of the rules of engagement and it will retaliate by attacking civilian targets.

The hostage situation at Hamburg Airport ends with a man in custody and his 4-year-old daughter safe

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The hostage situation at Hamburg Airport ended Sunday afternoon, around 18 hours after a man drove his vehicle through the gates of the airport with his 4-year-old daughter as a passenger, authorities said. The man was arrested and the girl is safe.

Hamburg police said that man had left the car with his daughter, who didn't appear to be harmed, and he was "arrested by the emergency services without resistance." Authorities said the man's ex-wife had previously contacted them about a child abduction.

The airport in the northern German city had been closed to passengers and flights were canceled since Saturday night when the man, who was armed, broke through an airport gate with his vehicle and fired twice into the air with a weapon, according to German news agency dpa. The man drove the vehicle just outside a terminal building and parked it under a plane.

Police said the 35-year-old man, a Turkish citizen, had his daughter inside the car after reportedly taking her by force from the mother in an ongoing custody battle.

A psychologist had been negotiating with the man for several hours. Nobody was injured during the standoff after all passengers had evacuated the airport, police said.

The mother of the girl also arrived at the airport earlier on Sunday.

On Sunday evening, police released details about the hostage taker's identity saying he was a Turkish citizen who was already under investigation for allegedly kidnapping his daughter in March 2022, dpa reported.

At that time, he had traveled to Turkey with his daughter without authorization, but the mother was later able to bring the child back to Germany.

Police didn't give the suspect's name in line with German privacy rules.

Local media reported that the man, who parked his car next to a Turkish Airlines plane during the stand-off, had demanded that he and his daughter could leave Germany and fly to Turkey.

More than 100 flights were canceled and several planes were rerouted during the hostage situation. Thousands of travelers had been affected by the standoff and hundreds were put up at hotels close by.

Flight operations at the airport resumed on Sunday night, almost 24 hours after the hostage situation began.

Hamburg Mayor Peter Tschentscher expressed relief that nobody was injured.

"The hostage-taking at Hamburg Airport is over after long, dramatic hours," Tschentscher said, thanking police for their efforts.

"I wish the mother, the child and her family a lot of strength to cope with these terrible experiences," he added.

Weekend box office results are muted without 'Dune: Part Two'

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The North American box office had one of its slowest weekends of the year, due in large part to "Dune: Part Two's" absence from the lineup.

Moviegoers had many other options to choose from. The video game adaptation "Five Nights at Freddy's" repeated its first-place ranking, followed by "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" still going strong. Sofia Coppola's "Priscilla" expanded nationwide and "Oppenheimer" returned to IMAX screens. Several well-received indies opened as well.

But this was the weekend that Warner Bros. and Legendary's "Dune: Part Two" was supposed to open, before the SAG-AFTRA strike prompted many studios to shuffle release dates in anticipation of a lengthy dispute that has stopped movie stars from promoting their films. The "Dune" sequel starring Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya was pushed to March 2024, and no major blockbusters moved in to take its Nov. 3 spot.

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Even with "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" still bringing Swifties to the multiplex, and prestige offerings including Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" and Alexander Payne's "The Holdovers," overall ticket sales are likely to be around \$64 million for the weekend, making it one of the slowest of the year.

"It's hard to reverse engineer, but 'Dune 2' would have certainly been the No. 1 movie and it would have been a bigger overall weekend," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "The strikes have had a profound impact on this marketplace. But this left a lot of opportunity for films like 'Priscilla,' 'The Holdovers' and 'Radical' to get more of a spotlight."

In its second weekend, "Five Nights at Freddy's" picked up an additional \$19.4 million to take first place, according to studio estimates Sunday. It's a hefty 76% drop from its first weekend. That's not unexpected given that the movie is also streaming on Peacock and that viewership for films targeting intense and niche fandoms are often wildly frontloaded. But taking in \$217 million globally against a reported \$20 million production budget makes it a hit for Universal Pictures and Blumhouse.

"Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" took second place, with fourth weekend earnings at an estimated \$13.5 million for the AMC release. Playing only on Thursdays through Sundays, the film has made an astonishing \$231.1 million globally to date.

In third place, "Killers of the Flower Moon" was down only 25% in its third weekend, with \$7 million from 3,786 screens, which brings its domestic total to \$52.3 million. The \$200 million film was financed by Apple Original Films with Paramount overseeing its theatrical run.

After a healthy opening in New York and Los Angeles last weekend, "Priscilla," based on Priscilla Presley's 1985 memoir "Elvis and Me," expanded to 1,359 screens where it earned \$5.1 million over the weekend to take fourth place. Coppola's well reviewed film starring Cailee Spaeny and Jacob Elordi attracted an audience that was predominately younger (75% under 35) and female (65%). The hope is that A24 release will have a long life into awards season.

"The Holdovers," a Focus Features release, also expanded slightly to 64 theaters this weekend, where it grossed an additional \$600,000. Next weekend the New England-set period drama starring Paul Giamatti as a curmudgeonly prep school teacher will expand to over 800 locations.

A handful of smaller films made their theatrical debuts this weekend, including Meg Ryan's "What Happens Later," released by Bleecker Street; and Sundance gems "Radical" and "All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt."

The biggest of the batch was "Radical," which is based on a true story about a teacher in a Mexican border city and stars Eugenio Derbez. The warmly reviewed Pantelion release opened in 419 locations and made \$2.7 million.

"'Radical' is a big winner this weekend and a big win for Eugenio Derbez," Dergarabedian said. "He's becoming a global superstar."

"What Happens Later," a rom-com starring Ryan and David Duchovny as exes stuck in an airport, made \$1.6 million from 1,492 screens. Raven Jackson's "All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt," meanwhile, opened on three screens and earned \$12,529, according to A24.

"The overall box office is rather quiet, but there are so many interesting films out there," Dergarabedian said. "Independent film can really shine right now."

The effects of the ongoing strike at the box office are not easily quantifiable. Up to this point, it's mainly meant that stars without interim agreements haven't been able to promote their films. "Priscilla" was one of the exceptions and Elordi and Spaeny have been able to do interviews and appear on talk shows to drum up awareness.

Next weekend will be an interesting test, as Marvel and Disney release "The Marvels" without months of appearances from stars like Brie Larson, Teyonah Parris and Lashana Lynch preceding it. It is possible a resolution between the actors' guild and the major entertainment companies may come this week, but it's unclear if that will have any impact on "The Marvels."

"All eyes will be on 'The Marvels,' not only what it represents during the strikes, but what it means for Marvel as a whole, which is always compared to their past successes," Dergarabedian said. "But the opening weekend isn't everything anymore. Hopefully it'll provide an infusion of that blockbuster feeling going

into the holiday season.”

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

1. “Five Nights at Freddy’s,” \$19.4 million.
2. “Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour,” \$13.5 million.
3. “Killers of the Flower Moon,” \$7 million.
4. “Priscilla,” \$5.1 million.
5. “Radical,” \$2.7 million.
6. “The Exorcist: Believer,” \$2.2 million.
7. “After Death,” \$2 million.
8. “Paw Patrol: The Mighty Movie,” \$2 million.
9. “What Happens Later,” \$1.6 million.
10. “Freelance,” \$1.3 million.

Tamirat Tola sets NYC Marathon course record to win men’s race; Hellen Obiri takes women’s title

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tamirat Tola wasn’t thinking about breaking the New York City Marathon course record as he was running by himself in Central Park for the last few miles of the race. He just was focused on trying to win.

The Ethiopian runner broke the 12-year old mark, finishing the 26.2-mile race in 2 hours, 4 minutes and 58 seconds on Sunday — eight seconds faster than Geoffrey Mutai in 2011.

“The people of New York is amazing to give me moral support every kilometer,” Tola said. “I’m happy for them. Thank you all people. It’s a long kilometers to do alone. ... I’m not thinking about a lot. I’m thinking to win. So this is nice.”

Tola, who finished fourth in the race in 2018 and 2019, pulled away from countrymate Jemal Yimer when the pair were heading toward the Bronx at mile 20. By the time Tola headed back into Manhattan a mile later he was up by 19 seconds and left only chasing Mutai’s mark. The 32-year-old was a late add to the field, joining three weeks ago.

Albert Korir of Kenya, who won the 2021 NYC Marathon, finished second nearly two minutes behind Tola.

While there wasn’t much drama in the men’s race after Tola pulled away, the women’s competition came down to the final stretch. Hellen Obiri of Kenya pulled away in the final 400 meters to take the women’s title.

The 33-year-old Obiri ran New York for the first time last year and finished sixth.

“My first debut here was terrible for me, and I say like I don’t want to come back here next year,” Obiri said. “After that, I said, wow, I’m here again. So you know sometimes you learn from your mistakes, so I did a lot of mistakes last year, so I said I want to try to do my best.”

She sure did.

Obiri, Letesenbet Gidey of Ethiopia and defending champion Sharon Lokedi were all running together exchanging the lead. Obiri made a move as the trio headed back into Central Park for the final half-mile pulling away. She finished in 2:27:23. Gidey finished second, six seconds behind.

Lokedi was 10 seconds behind Obiri, who won the Boston Marathon in April. She’s the first woman to win those two marathons in the same year since Norwegian Ingrid Kristiansen did it in 1989.

This was a stellar women’s field that was expected to potentially take down the course record of 2:22:31 set by Margaret Okayo in 2003. Unlike last year when the weather was unseasonably warm with temperatures in the 70s, Sunday’s race was much cooler with it being in the 50s — ideal conditions for record breaking times and for the 50,000 runners.

Instead, the women had a tactical race with 11 runners, including Americans Kellyn Taylor and Molly Huddle in the lead pack for the first 20 miles. Taylor and Huddle both led the group at points before falling

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back and finishing in eighth and ninth.

"The first 20 miles, I was like what the heck was going on," Taylor said. "It was super weird, one of the weirdest races I ever ran with the caliber of talent in the field. There were talks of breaking the course record and doing all the things, after a bit it was like that's not going to happen. We're running six-minute pace for no good reasons. Sometimes that's how races play out. You can jump on board and do that or do your own thing. Today I just decide to jump onboard and try and hang on."

Once the lead group came back into Manhattan for the final few miles, Obiri, Gidey and Lokedi pushed the pace.

As the trio entered Central Park they further distanced themselves from Kenya's Brigid Kosgei, who finished fourth.

The men's and women's winners finished within a few minutes of each other. About an hour earlier, Marcel Hug won the men's wheelchair race, finishing a few seconds short of his own course record by finishing in 1:25:29. It was the Swiss star's record-extending sixth NYC Marathon victory.

"It's incredible. I think it takes some time to realize what happened," Hug said. "I'm so happy as well."

He's the most decorated champion in the wheelchair race at the event, breaking a tie with Tatyana McFadden and Kurt Fearnley for most wins in the division in event history.

Catherine Debrunner of Switzerland won her New York debut, shattering the course record in the women's wheelchair race. She finished in 1:39:32, besting the previous mark by over 3 minutes, which was held by American Susannah Scaroni.

"It's difficult to describe in words. I said to my coach if I win this race, it's the best performance I ever showed," she said. "Knew it's the toughest marathon of all. It was the first time. I knew it was going to be so tough."

Debrunner and Tola both earned a \$50,000 bonus for topping the previous course records.

TICKETS TO PARIS

Daniel Romanchuk and Aaron Pike qualified for the 2024 Paris Games by finishing as the top Americans in the men's wheelchair race. Scaroni and McFadden qualified on the women's side for the Olympics.

Trump's decades of testimony provide some clues about how he'll fight for his real estate empire

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump has testified in court as a football owner, casino builder and airline buyer. He bragged in a deposition that he saved "millions of lives" by deterring nuclear war as president. Another time, he fretted about the dangers of flung fruit.

Conditioned by decades of trials and legal disputes, Trump is now poised to reprise his role as witness under extraordinary circumstances: as a former Republican president fighting to save the real estate empire that vaulted him to stardom and the White House.

Trump is set to testify Monday at his New York civil fraud trial, taking the stand in a deeply personal matter that is central to his image as a successful businessman and threatens to cost him control of marquee properties such as Trump Tower. His highly anticipated testimony in the trial of New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit follows that of his eldest sons, Trump Organization executives Eric and Donald Trump Jr., who testified last week. His eldest daughter, Ivanka, is set to testify on Wednesday.

Trump has testified in court in at least eight trials since 1986, according to an Associated Press review of court records and news coverage. He also has been questioned under oath in more than a dozen depositions and regulatory hearings.

In 1985, he was called to testify before Congress as owner of the USFL's New Jersey Generals and he testified on behalf of lawyer and friend Roy Cohn at a state disciplinary hearing that led to Cohn's disbarment. In an early flash of his firebrand persona, in 1986, Trump told New Jersey's casino commission that plans for highway overpasses near one of his casinos "would be a disaster. It would be a catastrophe."

Those testimonies, captured in thousands of pages of transcripts and some on videotape, offer clues to

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the approach Trump is likely to take when he testifies Monday. They show clear parallels between Trump as a witness and Trump as a president and current candidate for the office. His rhetorical style in legal proceedings over the years bears echoes of his political verve: a mix of ego, charm, defensiveness, aggressiveness, sharp language and deflection. He has been combative and boastful, but sometimes vague and prone to hedging or being dismissive.

Testifying in the USFL's antitrust lawsuit against the NFL in 1986, Trump denounced allegations that he had spied on NFL officials at one of his hotels, calling the claim "such a false interpretation it's disgusting."

In 1988, as he sought to buy Eastern Air Lines' Northeast shuttle service, Trump turned on the charisma, flashing a wide smile at the judge's female law clerks and shaking hands with the bailiff during a break in his testimony at a federal court hearing in Washington. Trump testified that his \$365 million purchase, later approved, would be a "major boost in morale" for employees.

On the stand in a boxing-related case in 1990, Trump described a Mike Tyson fight he planned for one of his casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, as "one of the greatest rematches you could have." Accused by two men of cutting them out of a riverboat gambling project, Trump professed ignorance, testifying in 1999: "I was shocked by this whole case. I had no idea who these people were."

Trump was briefly called to the witness stand in the New York case last month to explain comments outside of court that the judge said violated a limited gag order.

Before that, he last testified in a courtroom in 2013, two years before launching his winning presidential campaign. An 87-year-old suburban Chicago widower had sued him over changes to contract terms for a hotel and condominium tower she had bought units in as an investment. Trump grew increasingly agitated as his testimony wore on, at one point raising his arms and bellowing: "And then she sued me. It's unbelievable!"

In 1990, Trump testified in a losing effort in a lawsuit over his company's failure to make pension contributions on behalf of about 200 undocumented Polish workers hired to tear down a building to make way for Trump Tower. A year later, he was in court again in Manhattan, testifying against a man who claimed he had a contract to develop Trump's board game and was owed 25% of profits from "Trump: The Game."

Trump won that one and another lawsuit in 2005, where he testified that a construction company had "fleeced" him by overcharging him by \$1.5 million for work at a golf course in New York's Westchester County.

When questioned in the past about his business and financial dealings, Trump has sometimes deflected responsibility and blame. In a 2013 deposition over a failed Florida condo project, Trump blamed an employee for paperwork that said he was developing a project when, in reality, he wasn't.

Another refrain in Trump's depositions is his incredulity that he would be taken so seriously for hyping up his real estate projects.

"You always want to put the best possible spin on a property that you can," Trump said in a December 2007 deposition in his lawsuit against a journalist he had accused of downplaying his wealth. "No different than any other real estate developer, no different than any other businessman, no different than any politician."

Virginia school board elections face a pivotal moment as a cozy corner of democracy turns toxic

By CALVIN WOODWARD and ALI SWENSON Associated Press
FREDERICKSBURG, Va. (AP) — The "crossroads of the Civil War," as Virginia's Spotsylvania County calls itself, is once again a cauldron of hostilities, this time minus the muskets.

Within range of four devastating battles that laid waste to tens of thousands of lives, 21st century culture wars rage. The stakes hardly compare to such tragic losses, but feelings run fever high.

Dirty tricks spill out; political struggles are taken to the extreme.

The principal flashpoint: school board meetings. And not just here. A long tradition of doing prosaic but

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vital work has sunk into chaos and poisonous confrontation across the United States. The lower rungs of democracy are cracking.

In Tuesday's elections in Virginia, the far right is fighting to gain control of more local offices — often school boards — while the left claws back with cries of "fascism."

"Just bananas," a Spotsylvania School Board candidate with Democratic support says of the local fight over education. "So far out of hand," agrees a county Republican leader.

Though the nearly 600 school board seats open in Virginia are officially nonpartisan, political parties and aligned groups have been aggressively involved. Each party wants its say over the future of public education. National figures, including presidential candidates, are watching the off-year election to see which side prevails as a hint about voter sentiment heading into 2024.

It's a microcosm of what's happened around the country in recent years as a growing faction on the right has targeted public education, arguing parents should have more control over what their children learn and experience at school.

Their fight to remove classroom materials they view as upsetting to children, dump equity programs and reject accommodations for transgender students has sparked a fierce backlash from parents who say supporting public education means ensuring children with different backgrounds and needs have ample opportunity to thrive.

In communities where political differences used to be sorted out with civilized compromise, public meetings devolve into screaming matches. Legal complaints fly. Deputies kick people out. School board members refuse to cede any ground. Neither side can bear giving up what each thinks is best for kids.

Students wait for any change in the struggles they face, among them pandemic learning loss, mental health problems and teacher shortages.

In Spotsylvania County, both sides can agree that Tuesday's election will determine whether any progress is possible and whether a plaintive cry to restore civility, heard from many across the political spectrum, can be met.

Two meetings, a month apart, illustrate the gulf between the raw politics of the day and the sober civility that some dare hope will return.

One was a discordant school board meeting in September that stretched over nearly five hours. The other was a school board candidates forum that drew a full room in October. The first showed what the school board has looked like the past two years. The second showed what a more conciliatory future might be.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

At the county school board meeting Sept. 11, a session when some in the room tried to reach agreement on fixing a high school auditorium's terrible sound and stage-light system so plays can be put on properly, a member of the public stood to declare that Michelle Obama is a man.

Another rose to say that promoters of transgender rights in schools should be "executed."

Another read extended and explicit sexual passages from a book she said was in school libraries, as board members sat mute. They spent much of the meeting arguing with each other over procedures and stopping the show with cries of "point of order." Motions to move ahead on the auditorium refresh failed on tie votes.

The online recordings of these meetings — in a rural, somewhat transient community about 60 miles (100 kilometers) south of the nation's capital — draw thousands. The sessions have been known to last nine hours.

In September 2022, one meeting got so bad the county sheriff pulled his deputies from future ones, exasperated, he said, by demands from the chair that his officers eject citizens merely for expressing opinions contrary to the body's conservative leadership. Since then, the school board has hired its own private security to stand guard at meetings.

"The local political scene is just bananas," said Belén Rodas, a candidate for school board who received money from a Democratic political action committee but won't take any party endorsement. "Everything about Spotsylvania right now is completely extreme and chaotic and irrational."

Her conservative opponent, endorsed by the local GOP, does not disagree.

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"Anybody that's been paying attention to the Spotsylvania School Board in particular has realized, you know, it has become just a nonfunctioning mess," said Jordan Lynch, a onetime agitator from the floor of school board meetings who has moderated his positions and voice.

In her Republican-red jacket, Dale Swanson, first vice chair of the county GOP and chair of the Rappahannock Conservative Women's Coalition, voiced a need for "someone with real calmness" as she handed out sample ballots to voters at an early polling site.

"They don't trust anything in politics now," she said. "Things have gotten so far out of hand."

She added: "We need a better, kinder America."

As she spoke to a reporter, an independent candidate for clerk of court, running on a platform of streamlining handgun permits, handed out misleading sample ballots near her, some in blue and some in red. They fooled some voters into thinking each political party had endorsed his candidacy.

Democrats and Republicans implored him to stop, but he defiantly pressed on until, days later, a judge barred him from distributing the sheets.

"There's dirty tricks being played all over the place," Swanson said. "This country is so divided now, and they're pitting people against people and parties against parties. And it's intentional. It's really intentional. None of us accomplishes anything that we want to do, neither party."

With school board fights nationwide pitting increasingly sophisticated social conservative groups such as Moms for Liberty against teachers unions and others on the left, it seems the old axiom that all politics is local no longer applies. Local politics now is everyone's fray.

Virginia has taken center stage. Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin was elected in 2021 on a platform of parents' rights.

In August, Spotsylvania County became the first school division in the state to adopt the governor's model policies on the treatment of transgender students, requiring school staff to refer to children by the name and pronoun in their official record and only use alternate names or pronouns with a parent's written permission.

With Virginians divided over what Youngkin's vision of parental rights means, many counties have found themselves facing school board races as pivotal and high voltage as the one in Spotsylvania.

In Rockingham County, a network of parents is working to find safe havens for transgender teenagers, bracing for an election that could push the board farther to the right.

In Goochland County, civility and the board majority hang in the balance as the board's vice chair sues her four colleagues for defamation.

The polarization on school boards distresses Frank Morgan, a retired career-long educator in Virginia and South Carolina who said schools can only work with collaboration in the community.

"The partisanship just scares me to death," he said.

School board members "are just going to focus on these hot button political partisan issues and not look at really the successful operation of schools," he said. "I want voters to look at the whole picture and not just narrow little slivers that fire people up."

A CALMER PAST

Things in Spotsylvania County weren't always this way.

In 2017, when Tamara Quick started regularly attending school board meetings, she didn't always agree with the members, but they were always professional, she said.

"There might be some elevated voices or some obvious disagreements like you'd have around the dinner table with your family at Thanksgiving," said Quick, a 52-year-old mother and special education advocate in the county. "But you could tell they were a cohesive group for the most part that was really trying to do what was best for students."

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Quick recalled, and fights over masks, remote learning and the content of books in school libraries stirred conflict.

At a meeting in November 2021, the board voted for staff to remove books from the shelves if they contained "sexually explicit" material. Two members suggested the books should be burned, thrusting

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Spotsylvania County into national headlines.

"I don't want to even see them," Rabih Abuismail, who is giving up his seat on the board this year, said of the books. "I think they should be thrown in a fire."

Kirk Twigg, his colleague who is running for reelection Tuesday and served last year as board chairman, said he wanted to "see the books before we burn them so we can identify within our community that we are eradicating this bad stuff."

Met with a fierce public outcry, the board voted to rescind the ban a week later.

THE RIGHT TAKES OVER

The same month, an election flipped the school board, giving Twigg, Abuismail and two more hard-right colleagues a majority on the seven-person board. Twigg became chairman.

The county's superintendent of nine years agreed to resign at the end of the school year to give the board time to find new leadership. Instead, the new majority fired him "without cause" during an incendiary meeting as one of its first acts.

It then paid a recruiting company \$25,000 to search nationwide for a new candidate, according to local news reports, only to select Mark Taylor, a former Spotsylvania County administrator and attorney who had no experience in public education. Taylor had previously served on the board of an organization run by Twigg's family, according to state records.

During a March school board meeting, in a budget discussion, Taylor floated the idea of eliminating school libraries, cutting advanced programs and laying off teachers if the school system didn't get the money it needed. The same month, in response to a law signed by Youngkin requiring that parents be notified of sexually explicit content in instructional materials, he ordered schools to remove 14 books from the shelves, two of them by Nobel laureate Toni Morrison.

His hiring is one of many school board moves that have left some community members exasperated.

"They turn off microphones of minority board members," said Tom Eichenberg, a retired principal who spent 20 years working in Spotsylvania County. "They cut off public comments when they don't like what they're hearing."

He said the board does not allow minority members to bring up new business and has not approved meeting minutes in over a year, which means the only record of each one is an hourlong video that is difficult to search.

Eichenberg, who said he used to email school board members with questions regularly and receive quick replies, sent The Associated Press copies of emails he has written to the new majority. He has fired off more than 20 and received no answers to his questions.

In February, just after his term as chair, Twigg was charged with criminal forgery of a public document and a misdemeanor count of tampering with a public record in an effort last year to unilaterally raise the pay of an interim superintendent above levels approved by the board. Twigg pleaded not guilty and is awaiting a jury trial expected in January.

Chatting up voters and volunteers at the early voting site last month, Twigg declined to be interviewed by the AP, saying only: "Right now we're just going to let the elections continue. ... You're going to have a new sheriff and a continued conservative, constitutional school board — and watch us work, in the name of God and community."

Superintendent Taylor, board member Abuismail and the current board chair, Lisa Phelps, did not respond to requests for comment.

TEACHERS EXIT

The school division's new leadership has prompted many teachers and staff members to leave for neighboring districts.

Among them is 45-year-old Fabiana Parker, an English-as-a-second-language teacher who won the state-wide prize for teacher of the year in 2022 while working in Spotsylvania County schools. She left before the 2023-24 school year, along with several other language teachers, because she didn't agree with the

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district's new positions on LGBTQ issues, books or diversity, equity and inclusion.

"I wasn't in a district that was aligned with my beliefs," said Parker, now teaching in Manassas.

Longtime history and language arts teacher Heather Drane also left this year. The final straw was when she was informed she would be involuntarily moved to a different school and position after working 18 years in the same school. While she does not have proof, Drane thinks it was retaliation for her vocal resistance against the new school board majority.

"It just seemed like I turned around and one minute, we're being lauded for the extra work we were doing, and the next, we were being vilified," said Drane, who added she easily knows 10 other staff members who have left in part because of the school board's new direction. "I do think the soul of this county is on the line."

Parents are questioning whether to stay, too. Quick, for one, is set in her post-election plans if the school board's status quo remains.

"We will 100% be putting our house on the market if it doesn't change significantly," she said.

THE OCTOBER MEETING

It's not all screaming.

On Oct. 16, six school board candidates showed up for a forum sponsored by the NAACP. To a person, they preached civility and normalcy. They promised to come to school board meetings with respectful voices and fealty to Robert's Rules of Order, the guide to how to run — and behave in — such proceedings.

The crowd applauded Lynch, the one Republican-aligned candidate to attend, as he called for the politics of compromise. It did the same for the more liberal candidates on the panel when they, too, summoned the better angels of community life.

Though given only one minute to respond to each question, the candidates, at least on the surface, appeared to get closer to agreement on books in school libraries than the shouters across the country have managed to achieve in all of their cantankerous debate.

Liberals said they don't want their children exposed to everything, either. Some were open to a ratings system like that for movies. Several endorsed parental notification by email when a student checks out a book.

Candidates touched on ways to let parents opt their children in or out of being able to check out a list of challenged books.

"The book burners have never been on the right side of history," Rodas told the audience.

"We don't need to burn them," said her opponent, Lynch. "We don't need to ban them."

No one criticized anyone in attendance. After the forum, Rodas and Lynch chatted with each other and posed together for a neighborly photo, smiling broadly.

"It was nice to hear a little bit of common sense again, and collaborate," Rodas said.

For at least a moment, politics was local again.

Families of Israel hostages fear the world will forget. So they're traveling to be living reminders

By LORI HINNANT and LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The photo of the white-haired woman in a golf cart, wrapped in a purple blanket and flanked by a gunman, was among the first to emerge of the hostages seized during the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel.

But Yaffa Adar's granddaughter is afraid that the world's memory of that harrowing day — and the impetus to free some 240 people held by Hamas — is fading. So Adva Adar and her brother, like many other relatives of the hostages, have left Israel for what they hope will be a friendly reception in cities around the world.

Paris, Atlanta and London. Chicago and Vienna. The island of Cyprus.

They fear the alternative will be a collective amnesia, as memories of that day are replaced by news of Palestinian deaths in Gaza. Israeli social media is filled with images of the missing person flyers of the

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hostages being ripped down around the world.

"It's very scary thinking that it's going to be old news that my grandmother will stay hostage," Adva Adar said.

IN AN INFORMATION VACUUM, FEARS SPREAD

Hamas has said it will free non-Israeli hostages, who are from 28 countries and account for about half the total believed held.

But although there have been no concrete steps toward even that liberation, the idea only raises new fears for families like the Adars, who are Israeli and nothing else. If all the Americans are freed, or all the Europeans, what incentive will there be to press for the release of the others?

"The entire world should press Hamas to release the hostages no matter what nationality," she said. "I can tell you that my grandmother and my cousin have no other nationality. So it's like they have no reason to come back home, and it makes me really mad."

In interviews, some of the families show signs of turning the corner from pure shock and horror to frustration and anger.

The bloodiest day in Israeli history is also abundantly recorded, thanks to smart phones and social media. Yet relatives say they have hardly more information than they did in the days after their loved ones disappeared.

"I'm furious, actually," said Tal Edan, the aunt of 3-year-old Abigail, who was taken hostage. The family has buried and mourned Abigail's parents, Roy and Smadar who were killed that day. "They don't tell us anything," she said of the Israeli government. "They have nothing."

Israel's overwhelming military bombardment of Gaza, families say, raises questions about whether destroying Hamas or rescuing hostages is more important — or whether the two aspirations are mutually exclusive.

Many families are turning for help to other governments — Germany, France and the United States, for example — in an implicit acknowledgement that Israel is unable to secure their loved ones' releases.

"The priority should be first bring back the hostages before anything else. It should be the only thing on the table, and it doesn't feel like that is the sentiment," Ayelet Sella, who has seven family members held hostage in Gaza, said at a news conference with the families of other hostages in Paris on Tuesday.

Gilad Korngold, whose son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren are hostages, told reporters on Wednesday that an Israeli government official keeps in contact with the family three times a week. He says he believes Israel will do what it can for the hostages.

He said members of the family have German or Austrian citizenship, and "I trust the German embassy."

"Germany and Austria don't have a fight with any country," Korngold said. "They have contact with everybody in the world. I believe they can do it."

Asked if he's confident that Israel puts the hostages' release at the top of the agenda, he paused.

"I was believing this in the beginning, three, four days ago. Now I start to lose belief because every day that it's over we worry more and more. We lose a lot of hope. Now, with less," he said. "Every day, there's no sign for them. But I think that the priority is to release the hostages."

FROM LONDON TO ATLANTA, FAMILIES ARE SPEAKING UP

In London, seated behind a picture of his 74-year-old mother, Ada Sagi, her son Noam called on "all the governments in the world" to bring the hostages home. Four have been freed, including two Americans, and one has been rescued.

For Oliver McTernan, who has years of experience as a mediator and hostage negotiator, only one government matters: the United States. McTernan, who has been going back and forth to Gaza for the better part of 20 years, said there is no way that more than 240 hostages being held presumably in separate locations could possibly be moved safely under bombing.

"I really would have hoped that America (in) particular and some of the European countries would have been a better friend to Israel. You know, when you're traumatized, you need real friends who can say 'Just hold back. ... Think what the consequences of this will be.' And I don't see evidence of that at the moment."

On Friday, after a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu ruled out "a temporary cease-fire that doesn't include a return of our hostages."

In Atlanta earlier this week, during an event that brought six relatives of hostages together with Georgia state lawmakers, Shani Segal interrupted another speaker when she announced she needed to go out in the hall because Hamas had released a video showing her cousin, Rimon Kirsht, who is among the missing.

"You see my cousin Rimon, sitting alive, skinny, and the only thing that I have in mind is: She's alive," Segal said.

"I want you to try and imagine not knowing for three weeks and two days if your family member is alive or not," Segal said. "And the reason that I'm saying that is because when you try to go to bed. when you try to go to sleep, the only thing that you think is: 'Does she have a bed? Is she eating? Is she drinking?'"

Segal argued that Americans should prioritize the plight of the Israeli hostages and pressed her family's case to lawmakers in Georgia, even as Adva Adar did the same in Paris. Segal, like other Israelis speaking, said they were concerned for Palestinians in Gaza but believed most Palestinians were being oppressed by Hamas: "They are holding 2.3 million people hostage, not only our 240."

Humanoid robots are here, but they're a little awkward. Do we really need them?

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Building a robot that's both human-like and useful is a decades-old engineering dream inspired by popular science fiction.

While the latest artificial intelligence craze has sparked another wave of investments in the quest to build a humanoid, most of the current prototypes are clumsy and impractical, looking better in staged performances than in real life. That hasn't stopped a handful of startups from keeping at it.

"The intention is not to start from the beginning and say, 'Hey, we're trying to make a robot look like a person,'" said Jonathan Hurst, co-founder and chief robot officer at Agility Robotics. "We're trying to make robots that can operate in human spaces."

Do we even need humanoids? Hurst makes a point of describing Agility's warehouse robot Digit as human-centric, not humanoid, a distinction meant to emphasize what it does over what it's trying to be.

What it does, for now, is pick up tote bins and move them. Amazon announced in October it will begin testing Digits for use in its warehouses, and Agility opened an Oregon factory in September to mass produce them.

Digit has a head containing cameras, other sensors and animated eyes, and a torso that essentially works as its engine. It has two arms and two legs, but its legs are more bird-like than human, with an inverted knees appearance that resembles so-called digitigrade animals such as birds, cats and dogs that walk on their toes rather than on flat feet.

Rival robot-makers, like Figure AI, are taking a more purist approach on the idea that only true humanoids can effectively navigate workplaces, homes and a society built for humans. Figure also plans to start with a relatively simple use case, such as in a retail warehouse, but aims for a commercial robot that can be "iterated on like an iPhone" to perform multiple tasks to take up the work of humans as birth rates decline around the world.

"There's not enough people doing these jobs, so the market's massive," said Figure AI CEO Brett Adcock. "If we can just get humanoids to do work that humans are not wanting to do because there's a shortfall of humans, we can sell millions of humanoids, billions maybe."

At the moment, however, Adcock's firm doesn't have a prototype that's ready for market. Founded just over a year ago and after having raised tens of millions of dollars, it recently revealed a 38-second video of Figure walking through its test facility in Sunnyvale, California.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk is also trying to build a humanoid, called Optimus, through the electric car-maker's robotics division, but a hyped-up live demonstration last year of the robot's awkwardly halting steps didn't impress experts in the robotics field. Seemingly farther along is Tesla's Austin, Texas-based neighbor Aptronik, which unveiled its Apollo humanoid in an August video demonstration.

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All the attention — and money — poured into making ungainly humanoid machines might make the whole enterprise seem like a futile hobby for wealthy technologists, but for some pioneers of legged robots it's all about what you learn along the way.

"Not only about their design and operation, but also about how people respond to them, and about the critical underlying technologies for mobility, dexterity, perception and intelligence," said Marc Raibert, the co-founder of Boston Dynamics, best known for its dog-like robots named Spot.

Raibert said sometimes the path of development is not along a straight line. Boston Dynamics, now a subsidiary of carmaker Hyundai, experimented with building a humanoid that could handle boxes.

"That led to development of a new robot that was not really a humanoid, but had several characteristics of a humanoid," he said via an emailed message. "But the changes resulted in a new robot that could handle boxes faster, could work longer hours, and could operate in tight spaces, such as a truck. So humanoid research led to a useful non-humanoid robot."

Some startups aiming for human-like machines focused on improving the dexterity of robotic fingers before trying to get their robots to walk.

Walking is "not the hardest problem to solve in humanoid robotics," said Geordie Rose, co-founder and CEO of British Columbia, Canada-based startup Sanctuary AI. "The hardest problem is the problem of understanding the world and being able to manipulate it with your hands."

Sanctuary's newest and first bipedal robot, Phoenix, can stock shelves, unload delivery vehicles and operate a checkout, early steps toward what Rose sees as a much longer-term goal of getting robots to perceive the physical world to be able to reason about it in a way that resembles intelligence. Like other humanoids, it's meant to look endearing, because how it interacts with real people is a big part of its function.

"We want to be able to provide labor to the world, not just for one thing, but for everybody who needs it," Rose said. "The systems have to be able to think like people. So we could call that artificial general intelligence if you'd like. But what I mean more specifically is the systems have to be able to understand speech and they need to be able to convert the understanding of speech into action, which will satisfy job roles across the entire economy."

Agility's Digit robot caught Amazon's attention because it can walk and also move around in a way that could complement the e-commerce giant's existing fleet of vehicle-like robots that move large carts around its vast warehouses.

"The mobility aspect is more interesting than the actual form," said Tye Brady, Amazon's chief technologist for robotics, after the company showed it off at a media event in Seattle.

Right now, Digit is being tested to help with the repetitive task of picking up and moving empty totes. But just having it there is bound to resurrect some fears about robots taking people's jobs, a narrative Amazon is trying to prevent from taking hold.

Agility Robotics co-founder and CEO Damion Shelton said the warehouse robot is "just the first use case" of a new generation of robots he hopes will be embraced rather than feared as they prepare to enter businesses and homes.

"So in 10, 20 years, you're going to see these robots everywhere," Shelton said. "Forever more, human-centric robots like that are going to be part of human life. So that's pretty exciting."

Mississippi has a history of voter suppression. Many see signs of change as Black voters reengage

AYANNA ALEXANDER Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A few years ago, Tiffany Wilburn just didn't see the point in voting any longer. Her children didn't have proper school books, health insurance was expensive and hard to get, police abuse continued against Black residents, and her city's struggle to get clean drinking water seemed emblematic of her community always coming out on the short end of state decision-making.

Combine that with Mississippi's long history of voter suppression and she felt casting a ballot was simply

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a hopeless exercise.

"It's like you're not being heard," Wilburn said in her hometown of Jackson, the state capital. "You run to the polls, hoping and praying for change, and then you look around and nothing's really happening. So you shut down."

Recent interviews with Black voters, voting rights groups, candidates and researchers show that the voter fatigue felt by Wilburn has been widely shared in a state where nearly 40% of the overall population is Black. This year, political dynamics have combined to begin changing that, leading many voters such as Wilburn to reengage.

The race for governor appears competitive and is drawing national attention. Tuesday's election also happens to be the first one in Mississippi to be held without the burden of an unusual post-Reconstruction constitutional provision that had made it virtually impossible for Black candidates to win on a statewide basis.

Five Black candidates are running for statewide office, from agriculture commissioner to secretary of state. Each is trying to become the first Black candidate to ever win one of those posts.

Voting rights advocates hope the changes will encourage a rebuilding of the Black community's voting base and provide a tail wind to Democrats in a state that is now mostly controlled by Republicans.

"Black people here aren't scared to vote and do care because it impacts all of us, our entire livelihood," said Glennard Warren, a 66-year-old voter in Vicksburg. "Now it's more important that we enhance and educate all voters, especially Black people. But the voting process isn't necessarily sound and there are many constraints that we're facing like gerrymandering, purging of voter rolls — it's a lot. But I'm going and taking everyone I can with me."

White leaders of both parties used numerous tactics over several decades to suppress the Black vote, from poll taxes to literacy tests. Among the most pernicious was a provision slipped into the Mississippi Constitution in 1890 that required candidates for governor and other statewide offices to win not only a majority of the vote, but also a majority of the state's 122 House districts.

After a lawsuit, voters in 2020 repealed it, ensuring that candidates just had to win a simple statewide majority. Some voting rights groups and candidates said that provides an opening, not just for this year's candidates, but also to start expanding their voter base.

Robert Bradford, the Democratic nominee for state agriculture commissioner, said repealing that part of the constitution will open doors for Black candidates to succeed in the years to come. He joined with several other Democratic candidates to engage with voters who had become disenchanted, thinking their voice would never make a difference in the state.

"We've got to sow those seeds in areas that never had anything grown," he said. "We met people who felt like, 'Why vote because nothing's going to happen?' It's that mindset and those feelings that we have to address."

Black voters in the state still face a disproportionate burden. A common complaint is about a purging of voter rolls that has caused problems for Black voters as recently as this year's August primary.

Taylor Turnage of the Mississippi Votes Action Fund had to file a provisional ballot after she went to her polling place and found her name had been removed from the rolls.

"I've been voting in Tougaloo for several years with no problems. But when I went, I was told, 'You're not in the system,'" she said. "You're purging people who are actually voting now? If people don't know they're purged until Election Day, it's too late then."

Among the remaining hurdles is another part of the state constitution that strips voting rights from people who have committed certain felonies, a provision that also dates to 1890.

Critics say the named crimes were ones the white power structure thought Black people were more likely to commit. In 2009, a former Democratic state attorney general issued an opinion that expanded the list to 22 crimes, including timber larceny, carjacking, felony shoplifting and passing bad checks.

"We have to have conversations about what's still on the books -- because that repeal is done, but the work isn't over," said Danyelle Holmes, a national social justice organizer for Repairers of the Breach, a group that advocates for voting rights, democracy and a range of social issues. "That's how we get to the

root of the fatigue.”

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to reconsider a 2022 decision by the conservative 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that said Mississippi had remedied the discriminatory intent of the original provisions by altering the list of disenfranchising crimes.

Many other states in recent years have taken steps to reinstate voting rights for former felons. In Mississippi, more than 10% of Black adults are formerly incarcerated, according to a 2022 report by The Sentencing Project.

“That’s a huge percentage. If the elections were close and that 10% could vote, it very well could sway the elections,” said Marvin King, a professor at the University of Mississippi who focuses on African American politics.

More recent events have contributed to a sense of embattlement in the Black community.

In particular, a 2022 water crisis in Jackson left most of the 150,000 residents in the majority Black city without running water for several days after heavy rains damaged one of the water-treatment plants. Residents lamented the government’s lack of attention to their basic needs.

Last spring, Republican Gov. Tate Reeves, who faces a reelection challenge from Democrat Brandon Presley, signed into law a major change passed by the Republican-controlled and majority white Legislature that created special courts with appointed judges in the county that includes Jackson.

Two lawsuits challenged it, arguing that the Mississippi Constitution requires most judges to be elected. Critics also said it was another way to make it harder for Black voters to elect candidates of their choice. In September, the Mississippi Supreme Court blocked the appointment of the circuit court judges but allowed a new lower-level court with one appointed judge.

Ty Pinkins, the Democratic nominee for secretary of state, took notice, citing his extensive history in suing the state for similar offenses in the past.

“We’re here to make sure that doesn’t continue to happen,” he said during a candidates’ rally in Vicksburg.

Black voters are listening, but some said boosting engagement is a two-way street: If they show up to vote, it has to be translated into action. That sentiment is especially strong on college campuses, a focal point of several of the Black candidates running for statewide office.

Students at Jackson State University, a historically Black college, want to see candidates spend time on campus discussing the priorities of the youngest voting generation.

“If I were to put myself in a candidate’s shoes, I would actually go on campus not to get votes but to understand,” said Austin Crudup, a 23-year-old student. “Ask what is something that you would like me to fix or change? What could I do to make your life a little bit easier?”

Trump’s decades of testimony provide some clues about how he’ll fight for his real estate empire

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump has testified in court as a football owner, casino builder and airline buyer. He bragged in a deposition that he saved “millions of lives” by deterring nuclear war as president. Another time, he fretted about the dangers of flung fruit.

Conditioned by decades of trials and legal disputes, Trump is now poised to reprise his role as witness under extraordinary circumstances: as a former Republican president fighting to save the real estate empire that vaulted him to stardom and the White House.

Trump is set to testify Monday at his New York civil fraud trial, taking the stand in a deeply personal matter that is central to his image as a successful businessman and threatens to cost him control of marquee properties such as Trump Tower. His highly anticipated testimony in the trial of New York Attorney General Letitia James’ lawsuit follows that of his eldest sons, Trump Organization executives Eric and Donald Trump Jr., who testified last week. His eldest daughter, Ivanka, is set to testify on Wednesday.

As court ended Friday, a state lawyer teased the former president’s appearance. Asked who would be testifying Monday, Andrew Amer told the judge: “The only witness will be Donald J. Trump.”

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Trump has testified in court in at least eight trials since 1986, according to an Associated Press review of court records and news coverage. He also has been questioned under oath in more than a dozen depositions and regulatory hearings.

In 1985, he was called to testify before Congress as owner of the USFL's New Jersey Generals and he testified on behalf of lawyer and friend Roy Cohn at a state disciplinary hearing that led to Cohn's disbarment. In an early flash of his firebrand persona, in 1986, Trump told New Jersey's casino commission that plans for highway overpasses near one of his casinos "would be a disaster. It would be a catastrophe."

Those testimonies, captured in thousands of pages of transcripts and some on videotape, offer clues to the approach Trump is likely to take when he testifies in Manhattan.

They show clear parallels between Trump as a witness and Trump as a president and current candidate for the office. His rhetorical style in legal proceedings over the years bears echoes of his political verve: a mix of ego, charm, defensiveness, aggressiveness, sharp language and deflection. He has been combative and boastful, but sometimes vague and prone to hedging or being dismissive.

Testifying in the USFL's antitrust lawsuit against the NFL in 1986, Trump denounced allegations that he had spied on NFL officials at one of his hotels, calling the claim "such a false interpretation it's disgusting."

In 1988, as he sought to buy Eastern Air Lines' Northeast shuttle service, Trump turned on the charisma, flashing a wide smile at the judge's female law clerks and shaking hands with the bailiff during a break in his testimony at a federal court hearing in Washington. Trump testified that his \$365 million purchase, later approved, would be a "major boost in morale" for employees.

On the stand in a boxing-related case in 1990, Trump described a Mike Tyson fight he planned for one of his casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, as "one of the greatest rematches you could have." Accused by two men of cutting them out of a riverboat gambling project, Trump professed ignorance, testifying in 1999: "I was shocked by this whole case. I had no idea who these people were."

Trump was briefly called to the witness stand in the New York case last month to explain comments outside of court that the judge said violated a limited gag order.

Before that, he last testified in a courtroom in 2013, two years before launching his winning presidential campaign. An 87-year-old suburban Chicago widower had sued him over changes to contract terms for a hotel and condominium tower she had bought units in as an investment. Trump grew increasingly agitated as his testimony wore on, at one point raising his arms and bellowing: "And then she sued me. It's unbelievable!"

Chicago lawyer Shelly Kulwin cross-examined Trump on behalf of the plaintiff, Jacqueline Goldberg. He said the tenor of Trump's testimony inside the federal courthouse in Chicago echoed the bruising ebb and flow later seen at campaign rallies and on TV.

"His demeanor was calm at first, and then argumentative, defensive, off-topic, speechmaking. Exactly what he does today," Kulwin said in an interview.

"Based on my experience with him, you better be able to have super tight questions, with documents to support them, so that he cannot wiggle around," Kulwin added. "I would approach the judge and have him admonished before he even got on the stand: 'Mr. Trump, this is not a political campaign. These people, you're not trying to get their vote. This is a judicial proceeding.'"

Goldberg lost to Trump but said she did not regret suing him, testifying: "Somebody had to stand up to him." She died in August at age 97.

Trump has attended seven days of the New York trial, quietly studying witnesses from the defense table while also lashing out at the case, the judge and state lawyers in front of TV cameras in the hallway. He's called the case a "sham," a "scam," and "a continuation of the single greatest witch hunt of all time."

Opining about the case on social media, he thrills in what he calls the trial's "Perry Mason" moments — testimony and arguments he feels have helped his side — as he pays homage to the classic TV courtroom drama.

In 1990, Trump testified in a losing effort in a lawsuit over his company's failure to make pension contributions on behalf of about 200 undocumented Polish workers hired to tear down a building to make way

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for Trump Tower. A year later, he was in court again in Manhattan, testifying against a man who claimed he had a contract to develop Trump's board game and was owed 25% of profits from "Trump: The Game."

Trump won that one and another lawsuit in 2005, where he testified that a construction company had "fleeced" him by overcharging him by \$1.5 million for work at a golf course in New York's Westchester County.

Trump's current New York trial hinges in part on how much he and other Trump Organization executives were involved in valuing his properties and calculating his wealth for the annual financial statements that were given to banks, insurers and others to make deals and secure financing.

James alleges the statements inflated Trump's net worth by billions of dollars, making him appear to lenders as a more worthy credit risk and allowing him to obtain better interest and insurance rates. Trump has denied wrongdoing.

Eric and Donald Trump Jr. testified that they relied on an outside accounting firm and the Trump Organization's finance team to prepare the statements and that they assumed those statements were accurate.

Trump testified in a deposition in a case in April that he never felt his financial statements "would be taken very seriously," and that a disclaimer on them warned people doing business with him to do their own homework.

He insisted the banks that James alleges were snookered with lofty valuations suffered no harm, got paid in his deals and "to this day have no complaints." Trump decried the lawsuit as a "terrible thing," telling James and her staff "you don't have a case."

Before the trial, the judge ruled that the statements were fraudulent. He set in motion punishment that shifts control of some Trump companies to a court-appointed receiver. An appeals court has put that on hold, for now.

The nonjury trial, now into its second month, concerns allegations of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records. James, who is suing Trump, his company and top executives, including his eldest sons, is seeking \$250 million in penalties and a ban on the defendants doing business in New York.

When questioned in the past about his business and financial dealings, Trump has sometimes deflected responsibility and blame. In a 2013 deposition over a failed Florida condominium project, Trump blamed an employee for paperwork that said he was developing a project when, in reality, he wasn't.

"I have a woman that does it," he said. He then started parsing the wording at issue, saying: "But you know, developing, the word develop, it can be used in a lot of different contexts."

Another refrain in Trump's depositions is his incredulity that he would be taken so seriously for hyping up his real estate projects.

"You always want to put the best possible spin on a property that you can," Trump said in a December 2007 deposition in his lawsuit against a journalist he had accused of playing down Trump's wealth. "No different than any other real estate developer, no different than any other businessman, no different than any politician."

Trump's penchant for puffery is sure to come up on Monday. He and his company are accused of inflating his property values and using a variety of methods to maximize the results. For years, he even listed his Trump Tower penthouse in Manhattan as being three times its actual size. He now claims his financial statements undersold his wealth and that his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida is worth more than \$1 billion.

Trump is portraying the civil fraud case and his four criminal cases as prongs of political persecution designed to impede his candidacy as the 2024 Republican front-runner for president. He has referenced his political standing in prior legal settings, including during a 2016 deposition when he noted, unprompted, how he had defeated his Republican primary opponents.

"I obviously have credibility because I now, as it turns out, became the Republican nominee running against, we have a total of 17 people that were mostly senators and governors, highly respected people. So it's not like, you know, like I've said anything that could be so bad," he said.

In his April deposition, Trump soberly described the presidency as the "most important job in the world" before bragging about saving lives by preventing North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un from launching a

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nuclear attack.

In an October 2021 deposition, Trump waxed about weapons of a different sort, warning of the dangers posed by tomatoes and other fruit, which he feared would be thrown at him on the campaign stage.

"You get hit with fruit it's — no, it's very violent stuff," he said. Trump was testifying in connection to a lawsuit filed by a group of protesters who said they were roughed up by Trump's private security guards when he was running in 2015.

Trump had been asked about a rally in which he told the crowd: "If you see someone getting ready to throw a tomato, just knock the crap out of them, would you."

"It was said sort of in jest. Buy maybe, you know, a little truth to it," Trump said of his remarks.

"It's very dangerous stuff. You can get killed with those things," he warned. "I wanted to have people be ready because we were put on alert that they were going to do fruit. And some fruit is a lot worse than — tomatoes are bad by the way. But it's very dangerous."

Today in History: November 6

Ronald Reagan wins reelection in a landslide over Walter Mondale

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 6, the 310th day of 2023. There are 55 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 6, 1984, President Ronald Reagan won reelection by a landslide over former Vice President Walter Mondale, the Democratic challenger who won just one state, his native Minnesota.

On this date:

In 1860, former Illinois congressman Abraham Lincoln of the Republican Party was elected President of the United States as he defeated John Breckinridge, John Bell and Stephen Douglas.

In 1861, James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, was born in Almonte, Ontario, Canada.

In 1928, in a first, the results of Republican Herbert Hoover's presidential election victory over Democrat Alfred E. Smith were flashed onto an electric wraparound sign on the New York Times building.

In 1947, "Meet the Press" made its debut on NBC; the first guest was James A. Farley, former postmaster general and former Democratic National Committee Chair; the host was the show's co-creator, Martha Rountree.

In 1977, 39 people were killed when the Kelly Barnes Dam in Georgia burst, sending a wall of water through Toccoa Falls College.

In 1990, about one-fifth of the Universal Studios backlot in southern California was destroyed in an arson fire.

In 2001, billionaire Republican Michael Bloomberg won New York City's mayoral race, defeating Democrat Mark Green.

In 2012, President Barack Obama easily won reelection, vanquishing Republican former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney 332 electoral votes to 206.

In 2014, the march toward same-sex marriage across the U.S. hit a roadblock when a federal appeals court upheld laws against the practice in four states: Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee. (A divided U.S. Supreme Court overturned the laws in June 2015.)

In 2015, President Barack Obama rejected the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, declaring it would undercut U.S. efforts to clinch a global climate change deal at the center of his environmental legacy.

In 2016, FBI Director James Comey abruptly announced that Hillary Clinton should not face criminal charges related to newly discovered emails from her tenure at the State Department.

In 2018, Democrats seized the House majority in the midterm elections, but Republicans gained ground in the Senate and preserved key governorships.

In 2019, Democrats announced that they would launch public impeachment hearings against President