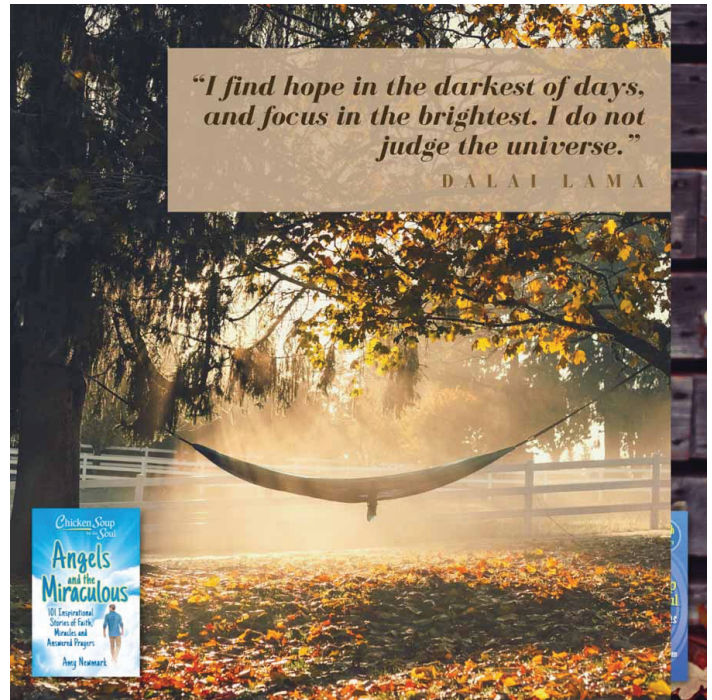


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## Coming up

### Friday, Nov. 17

State Volleyball Tournament at Rapid City  
JH GBB at Milbank (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)  
Senior Menu: BBQ pork driplet on bun, potato salad, mixed vegetables, tropical fruit.  
School Breakfast: Cheese omelets.  
School Lunch: Chicken noodle soup.

### Saturday, Nov. 18

State Volleyball Tournament at Rapid City  
Robotics at Harrisburg  
Thrift Store open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

### Sunday, Nov. 19

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school and Christmas Practice, 10:30 a.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: (Holy Communion) St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday

school, 9:45 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

### Monday, Nov. 20

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m..

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

JH GBB hosts Britton-Hecla (7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.)

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

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, mandarin oranges, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: French bread pizza, green beans.

**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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

## The Bulletin by Newsweek

### World in Brief

former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

**George Santos:** GOP Rep. George Santos said he won't run for a second term next fall, potentially opening up a House seat that Democrats could take in the 2024 elections.

**Florida Law:** The Supreme Court refused to revive a Florida anti-drag law that bans children from "adult live performances." Orlando restaurant Hamburger Mary's, which hosts drag shows, said the state law violated the First Amendment.

**Sean "Diddy" Combs:** Musician and producer Sean "Diddy" Combs has been sued by his former girlfriend R&B singer Cassie (Casandra Ventura), who alleges she was abused and raped during their relationship. Combs has denied the allegations.

**Thursday Night Football:** The Baltimore Ravens secured a 34-20 victory against the Cincinnati Bengals in a critical AFC North showdown on Thursday. Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow left the game in the second quarter with a wrist injury.

**War in Ukraine:** Ukrainian forces are still making slight frontline gains as they continue the search for a decisive battlefield breakthrough of Russian positions before the onset of winter weather that will likely force a pause in mechanized operations, the Institute for the Study of War said.

**Israel-Hamas War:** The Israel Defence Forces found the remains of Noa Marciano—the 19-year-old reservist who was among the hostages taken by Hamas—near the Al-Shifa Hospital. Meanwhile, humanitarian aid to Gaza was halted due to a fuel shortage and communication shutdown, with the U.N. warning that people could soon face starvation.

**David DePape Verdict:** A jury found David DePape, the man accused of attacking Paul Pelosi with a hammer, guilty on charges of assault and the attempted kidnapping of

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## Thanksgiving Boxes to be delivered today

Enrich Groton SoDak Inc volunteers worked together Thursday night and packed 49 Thanksgiving food boxes that will be delivered to residents in Groton by the Groton Police and Public Works Departments. Boxes include food items for a Thanksgiving meal and families will also get an Elf on the Shelf kit donated by Wage Memorial Library. Boxes will be delivered today.





## The Pantry serves 69 families in October

In October 2023, 69 families were served at The Pantry - Groton, SD. These families included 80 children, 86 adults, and 38 seniors with a total of 1,640lbs given out. Enrich Groton SoDak Inc's mission of serving the needs of the community is possible by sales at Common Cents Community Thrift Store - Groton, SD along with the monetary and food donations received.

Pictured here is Manager Pat Miller with her husband David. Both play a vital part in daily operations of the food pantry and volunteer during open hours on Mondays from 11am-3pm. Ruby Larson, Brenda McCarthy and Wendy Monson volunteer during open hours Tuesdays from 4-8pm. The Pantry is located inside the Groton Community Center.

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ALL OVER ROOFING

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

605.759.0000  
1205 6TH AVE SW SUITE 2, ABERDEEN, SD 57401



## 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....

17.) Have been to five countries in Europe



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **'We're going to have these conversations': New sustainability coalition forms in Sioux Falls**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 16, 2023 3:39 PM**

A newly formed coalition is encouraging more conversation around sustainability efforts and policy in Sioux Falls and South Dakota.

The Sioux Falls Sustainability Coalition is made up of already established organizations in South Dakota, including environmental groups SoDak350, Citizens' Climate Lobby (which has chapters in Sioux Falls and Rapid City) and Dakota Rural Action, as well as Common Grounds Indivisible and Change Agents of SD.

The groups came together in response to Sioux Falls' revised sustainability plan released in March — which was less specific and actionable than the original plan — and the city's decision to not seek federal funding to reduce greenhouse gases and other pollution.

Sioux Falls is regarded as a leader in South Dakota, said SoDak350's Arlene Brandt-Jenson during a Thursday press conference, "but we're not leading."

Several other communities across the United States have established sustainability plans, including a joint plan between Black Hills State University and Spearfish.

South Dakota was one of four states to decline federal funding for pollution reduction efforts. Rapid City did accept funding from the federal government.

"We can't just sit by and do nothing, so we're going to have these conversations," Brandt-Jenson said. "... We are way behind. Just the fact that the biggest city in South Dakota has no real sustainability plan as a policy for our city is something to take note of."

The coalition's next effort is a community conversation on climate and sustainability at 8:45 a.m. on Dec. 2 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. The two-and-a-half hour event will allow residents to speak with each other, ask questions and hear from experts in the field, including South Dakota Climatologist Laura Edwards and University of South Dakota professor in sustainability Meghann Jarchow.

While the coalition formed as a political reaction, the event is not political, said Rick Knobe, former Sioux Falls mayor and member of Change Agents of SD.

"All politics are local, so it all starts right here," Knobe said. "The more people who are speaking up and acting, the more our elected officials are paying attention to that."

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.*

### **COMMENTARY**

#### **Look beyond the ads and be cautious with Medicare Advantage**

**TOM DEAN**

Television is flooded these days with commercials encouraging everyone to sign up for Medicare Advantage. What is it, and why are they doing this?

First of all, a bit of history. For more than 30 years Congress has debated whether the private insurance industry could deliver Medicare benefits more efficiently than the federal government. In 2003, these efforts evolved into what is now known as Medicare Part C or, more commonly, Medicare Advantage (MA).

MA plans, operated by private insurance companies, cover services provided by Parts A & B of traditional

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fee-for-service Medicare (FFS), as well as most of the costs traditionally covered by Medicare supplement policies. Many, but not all, include drug coverage traditionally covered by Medicare Part D plans. Some MA plans include services not usually provided by Medicare such as dental and vision coverage.

How is MA financed? Each MA plan receives from the government a fixed payment to cover the services provided. The amount of this payment, known as the "benchmark," is determined on a county-by-county basis. The amount of the benchmark is based on data indicating what traditional fee-for-service Medicare would expect to spend providing care for the residents of that particular county.

MA plans consider the amount of the benchmark and then decide if they will offer a plan in that area. This is why the ads always ask you to provide your zip code when you are looking for an MA plan. If the company decides to offer a plan but decides the benchmark payment will not cover the full cost of the care, it may charge the enrollee an additional premium.

In recent years, MA plans have grown rapidly. They now cover more than 50% of the Medicare eligible population. A broader range of benefits and lower out-of-pocket costs have been the primary drivers of this growth. Additionally, more MA plans have become available, some in areas where plans were not previously offered.

In the original planning for MA, it was hoped that providing a profit incentive would lead plans to find less costly ways to provide care and thereby save the government money. Unfortunately, that has not happened and, for most of its history, MA has cost the government more than traditional FFS Medicare.

So, what is the downside? Broader benefits and decreased out-of-pocket costs would seem to be powerful incentive to switch from FFS to MA. In fact, that is what has happened. Many enrollees have been pleased with the switch. There are, however, reasons to be cautious.

Fixed limits on what they will be paid provide an incentive for plans to limit what they spend. In general, they have been successful in doing this, and for most plans MA has been a highly profitable undertaking — a fact which accounts for the multitude of TV ads we see.

To control costs, some plans cover only limited networks of medical providers. This has meant that enrollees had to leave familiar doctors, hospitals, etc.

Medical providers have complained that MA plans were much harder to work with than FFS. Some have complained about delayed and insufficient payment, frequent requirements for pre-authorization for procedures, etc.

This has especially been a problem for small, rural hospitals. Most of these are enrolled in the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) program, which provides special payment procedures to aid in their survival. In many cases, MA plans have refused to recognize these special payments, leaving CAH facilities even more financially stressed than before. Overall frustration with inadequate MA payment has caused at least one mid-sized hospital in South Dakota to totally withdraw from participation in the program.

Selecting health care coverage is both difficult and very important. We are now in the "open enrollment" period for Medicare. This is a time when eligible folks can decide if they want traditional FFS Medicare or an MA plan. If they choose the latter, they then have to select the plan that best fits their needs. Many people have been well served by MA plans, but they need to ask about network requirements, extent of coverage, additional premiums, etc. This is an important decision and one that should receive careful thought and attention.

*Tom Dean is a retired family physician who grew up on a farm west of Wessington Springs. He graduated from Wessington Springs High School, Carleton College in Minnesota and medical school in Rochester, New York. He completed a family medicine residency at the University of Washington in Seattle. He returned to Wessington Springs to practice in 1978 along with his wife, Kathy, a certified nurse midwife. He retired after 43 years of practice and still lives in Wessington Springs.*

## Cultural connection for Native foster children in South Dakota is lacking, foster parents say

**74% of foster kids, but only 11% of foster homes, are Native American**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER AND ANNIE TODD - NOVEMBER 16, 2023 6:00 AM**

Jennifer Johnson wondered if her boys hated her.

She and her husband fostered and adopted the three brothers — all under 3 years old — in the early 2000s. The couple provided a safe, stable and loving home for the children, she recalled, but it seemed like the boys would try to sabotage their relationships with their adoptive parents at every turn.

They'd steal, or they'd lie, or they'd hide.

They didn't trust their adopted parents. The two eldest boys were placed in four foster homes before being officially adopted by the Johnsons — none of the brothers had lived under the same roof until the Johnsons fostered them.

They tested their family's limits, anticipating that it'd break apart and they'd be sent somewhere else — just like before.

"It's very damaging," Johnson said, explaining children in foster care often develop attachment disorders, which can later turn into anxiety and behavioral issues. "You have situations where kids go into foster care and they're torn away from parents and homes they're attached to. That's traumatic, and they don't understand it."

Shortly after adopting the boys, the Johnsons moved to Kansas City, hundreds of miles from the Pine Ridge reservation in western South Dakota, where the brothers are enrolled tribal members. Johnson and her husband are white, and their sons barely know their biological relatives.

The instability of the boys' early childhood still affects their lives as adults, though they are happy and doing well, Johnson said. They fear change and find it hard to adjust to unfamiliar surroundings, like college or a new job. They've struggled with their identity, just as other children who've been through the foster and adoptive system do.

"Now my sons are grown, and they feel like they are strangers. They are Native, they're enrolled members of the tribe, but they are so disconnected," Johnson said, describing her sons' connection with their tribe. "And that is directly as a result of a white family adopting them."

An Argus Leader/South Dakota Searchlight investigation examined the issues Native families and children face inside South Dakota's child welfare system. Native American children accounted for nearly 74% of the foster care system at the end of fiscal year 2023 — despite accounting for only 13% of the state's overall child population.

With just 11% of foster homes being Native American families, most of the children are placed in non-Native homes.

Such removal and placement can disrupt a child's sense of security and identity, leading to mental and physical health problems throughout their lifetime. But keeping a child connected to their cultural beliefs and practices are protective factors after they are separated physically from their home.

Children who are removed from their homes and placed into foster care are more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety disorders; they are more likely to be incarcerated, homeless and die earlier.

Experts say these lasting effects are due not only to the trauma that led to foster care placement, but also the removal of children from their families, the severing of cultural connections and their loss of identity.

The state does not require foster families or adoptive families to take in-person cultural or traditional parenting classes, which has failed to keep children connected to their cultures, Johnson and other foster parents said.

Potential foster parents are required to watch an online panel discussion about the importance of culture, and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act is "explained to all families" before they're required to sign a statement of understanding, according to the state Department of Social Services.

Other states, such as Oklahoma, require each foster parent go through ICWA training and offer cultural



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programming for foster children.

Johnson, who attended graduate school for cultural anthropology, said South Dakota is obligated to facilitate access to cultural connections for foster children. She said cultural parenting classes weren't available to foster parents in the early 2000s.

"When the state takes custody and then doesn't act in the full best interest of the child, in that way, it is destructive," Johnson said.

## **Foster children more likely to die before 60, studies show**

Children are removed from their families and placed into foster care in an attempt to protect them from adverse childhood events (ACEs), types of abuse and neglect including parental substance abuse, physical abuse, domestic violence and incarceration.

But not understanding why they can't return to their loved ones is an adverse childhood experience in itself, said Michaela Seiber, CEO of South Dakota Urban Indian Health in Sioux Falls.

The emotional and psychological harm caused by removal can lead to deep-seated feelings of rejection and abandonment, attachment disorders, substance abuse problems, aggression, learning disabilities and suicidal tendencies.

The more ACEs a child experiences, the more it can affect their mental and physical health — so much so that adults with high ACE scores may die earlier than their counterparts. But the ACE test doesn't take into account a child's sensitivity to experiencing such events, and it doesn't take into account any protective relationships put into place to shield the child from such stress.

Increased ACEs may contribute to a cycle of violence as well, Seiber explained. ACEs can impact a child's genes and the way the body handles stress, all of which can be passed down through generations.

"The fact that we are still seeing kids being ripped out of their homes for all different reasons by Child Protection Services and the state when we don't know the outcomes that are going to happen is really scary," Seiber said.

## **Cultural connections serve as protective factor, anchor for children**

One way to lower a child's ACE score is to add protective factors or preventative measures, Seiber said. Establishing connections to the child's cultural background is one way to do that.

A sense of connection to culture is correlated to emotional well-being for Native American foster kids, studies show, whereas mere participation in cultural activities (like attending a powwow but not understanding the importance of drum songs and dancing) had mixed results.

Natasha Eagle Star maintains one of the 98 Native foster homes in South Dakota and lives in Winner, near the Rosebud Indian Reservation. She tells her foster kids to think of her as an auntie, not as a traditional foster mother, to maintain family connections.

"I found that when kids see that we're Lakota, they come out of their shell a little bit quicker while they're in foster care, knowing that they have that connection," Eagle Star said.

Toni Handboy, a former foster child turned addiction counselor, struggled with drug and alcohol addiction for years after aging out of the foster system. Reconnecting with her spiritual traditions as an adult helped her overcome her addiction.

Handboy left the system 30 years ago but still keeps in contact with her foster mom and siblings. Her foster mother, who is white, currently cares for six siblings from the Pine Ridge Reservation in her Hot Springs home. Handboy explains traditional Native practices while her foster mother has the children in her care, such as not cutting children's hair unless there's a death in the family.

Handboy travels from Eagle Butte to check in on the children, comb their hair, share stories and cultural knowledge with them, and to be another person to talk to. It's important to her that she offers that lifeline, especially given the importance cultural connections had in her recovery.

"I want them to know that they're loved and that they have a connection to me as an Indigenous person, because I don't think they really have that in Hot Springs," Handboy said. "I want them to have an identity, to be able to connect with their identity and let them know they still belong to our culture, our spirituality and our people."

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Some non-Native families say they're isolated from accessing cultural practices and knowledge for their Native foster or adopted children.

Holly Christensen has served as a foster parent in South Dakota, Idaho and Oklahoma. She said South Dakota is the worst at supporting foster families and children and keeping children connected to their tribal cultures.

Christensen participated in her daughter's Native American graduation ceremony at Washington High School in Sioux Falls this spring, where she and her daughter struggled to understand the ceremonial customs and traditions.

Organizers assumed participating adults were Native and knew what to do, Christensen said. She had to ask other adults questions during the ceremony and felt uncomfortable with the process. The event left her daughter tearful and confused about her identity as a mixed-race, Native American adopted child.

"I'm trying to work so hard to make sure my child fits in that day with everybody else there and she has the same things that everybody else has," Christensen said. "But yet, when you ask the questions, you don't get answers. When you get an answer, you feel judged."

Christensen said it would be helpful if Native foster children could have access to their culture, even if it's through language flash cards, tribal flags or merchandise sent to the child from their tribe. Her daughter has a Comanche flag that helps her remember where she came from in Oklahoma.

## How other states have found success

Christensen explained while in Oklahoma, the state made it a priority to keep Native kids connected to their culture, with methods including language practice and hosting a statewide powwow for foster families with tribes collaborating on the event.

"Not having that here definitely makes it harder because it would also keep you connected on what's going on within the tribe," Christensen said.

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services has its own tribal program, which acts as a liaison between tribes and the state, said Keitha Wilson, program administrator for the Oklahoma tribal program. In addition to the annual powwow and other events, Oklahoma requires foster parents of Native children to have cultural and Indian Child Welfare Act training.

"Just having that as a foundation or springboard into ICWA, it allows those applying to be foster and adoptive parents to ask questions about how to keep these children connected to their tribe," said Te'Ata Loper, executive director of Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Association.

Most of the programming has been funded for the last seven years through a federally-funded ICWA partnership grant with the state working alongside the tribes, courts and child welfare system to improve foster care and ICWA compliance. Oklahoma has had a tribal-state workgroup on ICWA since the early 2000s.

"This work is not fast, but the relationships and commitment are key," Loper said. "When you have these relationships first, you're able to have the difficult discussions and make changes."

South Dakota lacks cultural connection, protective factors

Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff said his department would consider cultural programming if it came at the recommendation of foster families or tribes.

"Those certainly would be things that we would consider in a heartbeat," Althoff said.

While it's important that the content and programming come from tribal suggestions, Johnson said, South Dakota must play a part to facilitate such programming.

Because it's clear the state doesn't prioritize cultural connections for foster children, she said. She felt cut off from support while raising her children in Kansas City, not having a state worker or a tribal liaison to contact back in South Dakota.

Johnson attended a graduate program for cultural anthropology and has read books regarding Lakota teachings, but she said she is not in a position to teach her boys how to be Oglala Lakota. She attempted to bring them to programming and powwows in Kansas City, but those focused on local tribal customs, not Lakota traditions.

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Not much has changed since then, said Johnson, who recently moved back to South Dakota with her husband.

South Dakota does not require foster families to receive in-person cultural training or traditional parenting classes, and the state does not provide cultural programming for its foster children and families.

Instead, the state requires prospective foster parents to listen to a recorded panel discussion about the importance of culture with emphasis on language, identity and ways families can support keeping cultural connections, according to the state DSS. Some Native American foster parents might be referred to specific cultural "Unity" training by tribes.

Simply Smiles foster care, a foster village on the Cheyenne River Reservation that temporarily closed earlier this year, required foster parents receive 70 extra hours of training than what is required by the state, including education about Lakota culture. The village also used trauma-informed and culturally relevant evidence-based methods for mental health evaluations.

State licensing specialists can also connect foster families with resources in their areas for cultural connection, according to the Department of Social Services, such as Red Horse Healing, the Ateyapi mentoring program and Connecting With Our Youth in Rapid City. The state also offers virtual training that can incorporate traditional parenting or cultural programming to foster parents — all of which is optional.

That only scratches the surface, and doesn't provide enough resources for foster and adoptive parents, Christensen and Johnson agreed.

"The state should make clear to foster parents that it is important that kids be connected to their culture, but you can't place that all on foster parents," Johnson said.

Having families — Native or non-Native, biological or fostered or adopted — take part in cultural parenting classes is a protective factor, Seiber said. The Department of Social Services does host free "Positive Indian Parenting" classes across the state, which are open to foster parents. The course was developed by the National Indian Child Welfare Association for Native parents.

South Dakota Urban Indian Health is taking on the role of providing cultural trainings for foster parents, biological parents, and children in the Sioux Falls area. The health network is teaching the same traditional parenting curriculum, and started a free, weeklong summer camp this year where nearly 70 Native children from the Sioux Falls area, including a handful of foster children, learned about Native American culture on the Lake Traverse Reservation.

The children built tipis and learned about praying, sweat lodges and smudging — the ceremonial burning of sacred herbs, such as sage, to purify a space or person. Boys learned songs on the drum while girls learned about ribbon skirts and how to hoop dance. Seiber said children returned home watching YouTube videos on dances and other things they learned, which motivated organizers to plan more cultural programming for the future.

"We honed in on the basics because we know a lot of our kids had never been exposed to the culture or coming together," Seiber said.

Johnson added those kinds of cultural connections would help non-Native foster families learn more about the history of Native Americans in South Dakota and increase their understanding about the Oceti Sakowin, or the tribes that make up the Great Sioux Nation.

She said she and her boys would have benefitted from such programming: culture camps, in-depth parenting classes and more.

"The state should be motivated to help facilitate these programs coming into practice," Johnson said. "Whether it's a hands-off approach just providing funding or it's offering transportation or facilitating access, that's what the state needs to do."

## Cultural support and training

Additional cultural supports and optional trainings for foster parents provided by South Dakota DSS:

SDPB Native American educational content

Additional DSS trainings on culture and family connections

Additional ICWA training & tribal information

Informational training on Oaye Luta Okolakiciye and the Lakota Cultural Identity Development

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Language and Oral History Training from the Children's Home Society  
Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board trainings on Indigenous trauma informed healing; Ikotomi Story; as well as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, opioid use disorders and neonatal abstinence syndrome  
Youth and Family Services Oyate Prevention Coalition trainings on intergenerational trauma and two-spirit children  
Federal training on cultural humility and maintaining children's connections  
Federal training on parenting in racially and culturally diverse families  
Spirit Rangers Netflix show  
PBS Berenstain Bears in Lakota  
Lakota language apps: Owoksap; Lakota Dictionary; Dakhód lápi Wičhóie Wówapi  
Wičháho Blihélya – A Podcast in the Lakota Language

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This story has been updated with a correction to accurately reflect Jennifer Johnson took cultural anthropology classes, but did not earn a degree.*

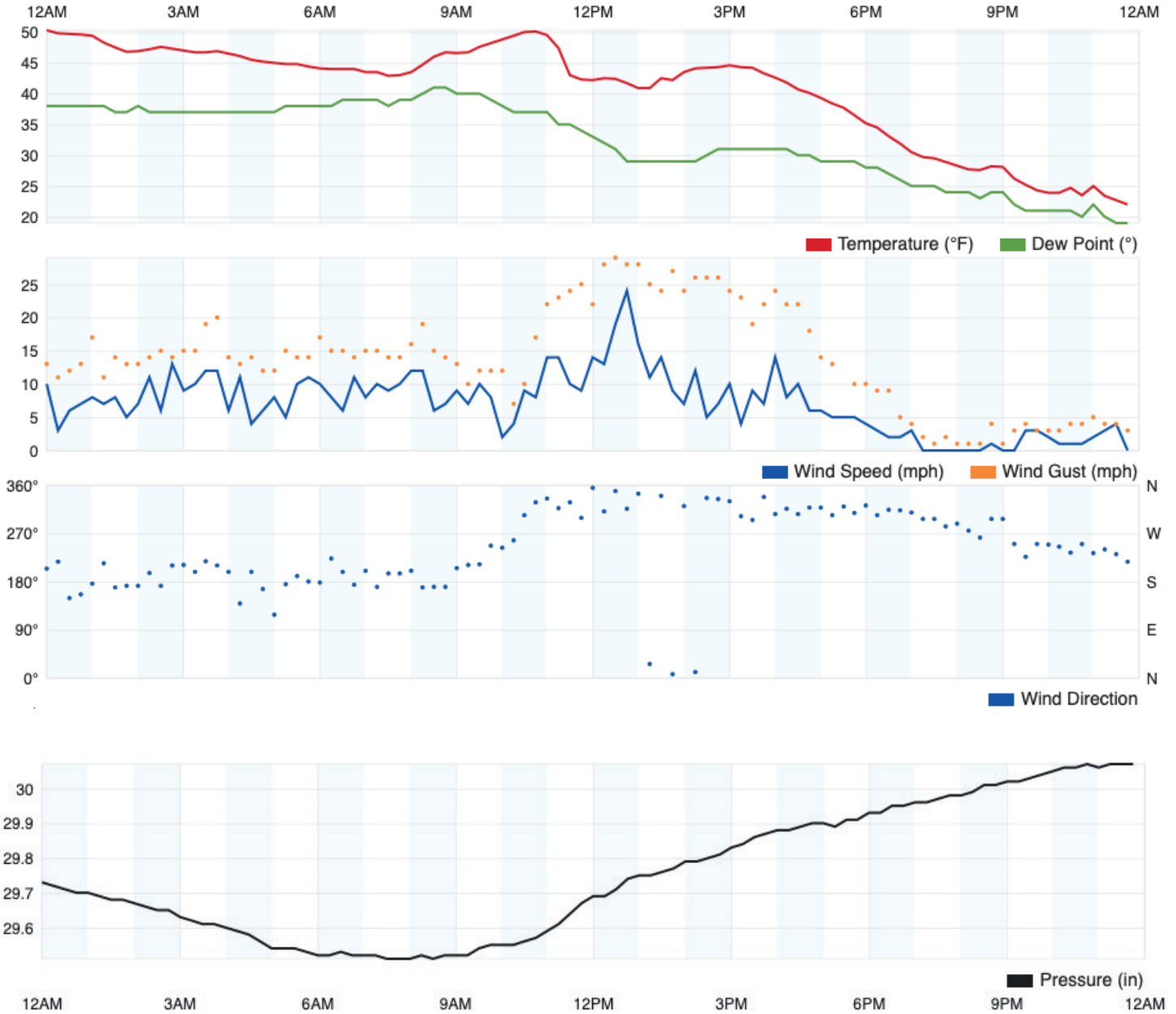
*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.*

*Annie Todd covers state politics for the Argus Leader in Sioux Falls. She was born and raised in Colorado and graduated from the University of Wyoming.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
Nov 17	Nov 18	Nov 19	Nov 20	Nov 21	Nov 22	Nov 23
49°F	53°F	55°F	48°F	36°F	25°F	24°F
28°F	32°F	37°F	28°F	17°F	12°F	11°F
S	SSW	ESE	ESE	NW	NW	WNW
17 MPH	6 MPH	15 MPH	11 MPH	21 MPH	21 MPH	17 MPH
			30%			

## Next Couple Days

Today



Highs: 48-54°F

Lows: 27-32°F

Saturday



Highs: 52-60°F

Lows: 28-33°F

Sunday



Highs: 50-55°F

Lows: 34-37°F

Chance of evening precip



NWS Aberdeen, SD  
weather.gov/abr

November 17, 2023 3:59 AM

Our above average temperatures will continue through the weekend with clouds increasing. Sunday evening, we chance for precipitation (30-40%, slightly higher south of I-90). Accumulations are expected to be low.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 50 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Temp: 23 °F at 11:29 PM

Wind: 29 mph at 12:17 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 29 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 72 in 1953

Record Low: -8 in 1959

Average High: 42

Average Low: 19

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.47

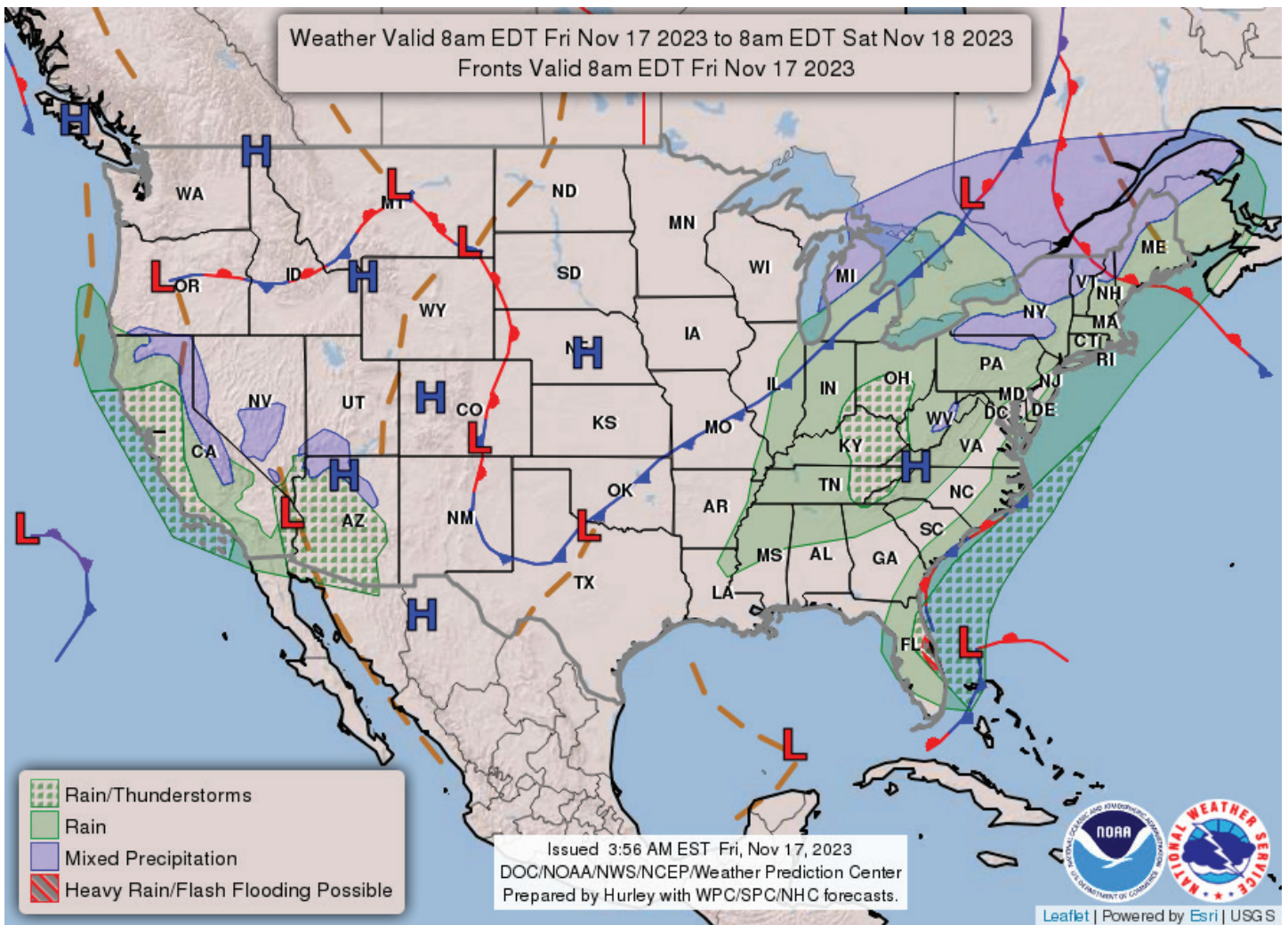
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.17

Average Precip to date: 20.94

Precip Year to Date: 23.15

Sunset Tonight: 5:02:17 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:33:46 AM



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## Today in Weather History

November 17, 1971: Snow fell off and on from the 16th through the 18th from west central Minnesota to north central Minnesota. A series of weak low-pressure waves moving northeast generally along a Sioux City to Rochester line caused heavy snow of more than 4 inches in a narrow band from Morris to Alexandria; then the snow band widened to 100 miles from Park Rapids northeast into Canada. Milbank, South Dakota received 3 inches of snow, while Wheaton, Minnesota went from no snow on the 15th to reporting eight inches on the morning of the 17th.

November 17, 1986: Three to six inches of snow fell across eastern South Dakota on the 17th and 18th with the heaviest amount reported in Sisseton. Numerous accidents occurred in the southeast part of the state. The slick roads were a factor in the vehicle death of a woman on Interstate 29, near Beresford in Lincoln County. Browns Valley reported four inches of snow, and Milbank received 7 inches.

1869 - Southwest winds of hurricane force swept the Berkshire and Green Mountains of New England causing extensive forest and structural damage. (David Ludlum)

1927: A tornado (at times to 260 yards wide) cut a seventeen-mile path through Alexandria, Virginia across the District of Columbia from the Navy yard to Benning Rd. & 19th St. NE and Northeast to East Riverdale, Maryland. This storm injured 31 people. The tornado struck the Naval Air Station where a wind gust of 93 mph was recorded. 2013: An unusually powerful storm system spun up five dozen tornadoes from the Great Lakes to the Tennessee Valley. Two EF4 twisters struck Illinois, hitting the communities of Washington and New Minden.

1953 - The temperature at Minneapolis, MN, reached 71 degrees, their warmest reading of record for so late in the autumn. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A storm in the Rockies produced 21 inches of snow at the Monarch ski resort in Colorado, with 14 inches reported at Steamboat Springs CO. Early morning thunderstorms in the southeastern U.S. drenched Mary Esther FL with 4.43 inches of rain. Gale force winds over the Great Lakes Region gusted to 49 mph at Johnstown PA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Another in a series of storms brought heavy snow to the mountains of the western U.S. Totals ranged up to 17 inches at Bob Scott Summit in Nevada. Winds around Reno NV gusted to 80 mph. The Alta and Sundance ski resorts in Utah received 14 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Freezing temperatures overspread the southeastern U.S. in the wake of the severe weather outbreak of the previous two days. Eight cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Gilbert AR with a reading of 8 degrees. A fast moving storm blanketed the Great Lakes Region and Upper Ohio Valley with snow during the night. Totals ranged up to 12 inches at Pellston MI and Little Valley NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### NO LIMITS

Shortly after birth he became physically ill. Not long after that he developed some early childhood mental problems. He entered school two years late and was asked to leave three months after enrolling. The authorities felt he was "addled."

Discouraged but not defeated, his mother began to teach him at home. Much to her surprise, he learned so fast that she finally gave up. When he was nine years old, she purchased a chemistry book and encouraged him to read it. He was fascinated with its ideas, purchased some chemicals and began mixing them together to see what might happen. Unfortunately, one of his experiments started a fire, and he burned down his father's barn. Three years later a similar accident happened to a railroad baggage car.

Though deaf and considered by most to be "backward," he became one of the world's greatest inventors and was credited with 1,093 patents. Among his inventions are the motion picture camera, the phonograph, the long-lasting electric light bulb and what we now call industrial research parks. Thomas Edison did not allow any handicap or any person to stop him from doing what he was called to do. Because he persevered in spite of great obstacles, he was able to accomplish much.

We too can accomplish great and mighty things for God. Whatever He calls us to do we can do because His Word assures us that we can do "all things through Him."

Prayer: Father, we look to You for insight, inspiration and encouragement to do what You have called us to do. May we use our time, talents and treasures wisely. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture For Today: For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13



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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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.14.23

29 35 59 61 69 22

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$267,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 17 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.15.23

15 16 26 34 51 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,250,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 32 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.16.23

11 22 25 29 34 10

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 47 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.15.23

8 18 26 31 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$57,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 47 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.15.23

14 15 30 58 59 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 16 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.15.23

3 4 51 53 60 6

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$280,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 16 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

## Thursday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

SDHSAA State Playoffs=

Class A=

Quarterfinal=

Dell Rapids def. Platte-Geddes, 25-20, 20-25, 25-10, 25-14

Miller def. Wagner, 25-23, 25-18, 11-25, 22-25, 15-12

Rapid City Christian def. Dakota Valley, 25-27, 25-22, 13-25, 25-14, 15-11

Sioux Falls Christian def. Lennox, 25-21, 25-19, 25-15

Class AA=

Quarterfinal=

Harrisburg def. Aberdeen Central, 25-18, 25-16, 25-18

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Brandon Valley, 25-21, 25-21, 25-11

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Watertown, 25-16, 25-12, 25-22

Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Lincoln High School, 25-13, 25-14, 20-25, 25-18

Class B=

Quarterfinal=

Burke def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-19, 25-15, 15-25, 23-25, 15-10

Castlewood def. Colman-Egan, 25-21, 25-20, 24-26, 25-23

Chester def. Faulkton, 25-15, 25-10, 25-14

Warner def. Gayville-Volin High School, 25-23, 25-9, 25-9

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

## Thousands of bodies lie buried in rubble in Gaza. Families dig to retrieve them, often by hand

By WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The wreckage goes on for block after devastated block. The smell is sickening. Every day, hundreds of people claw through tons of rubble with shovels and iron bars and their bare hands.

They are looking for the bodies of their children. Their parents. Their neighbors. All of them killed in Israeli missile strikes. The corpses are there, somewhere in the endless acres of destruction.

More than five weeks into Israel's war against Hamas, some streets are now more like graveyards. Officials in Gaza say they don't have the equipment, manpower or fuel to search properly for the living, let alone the dead.

Hamas, the militant group behind the deadly Oct. 7 attack that killed about 1,200 people in Israel, has many of its bases within Gaza's crowded neighborhoods. Israel is targeting those strongholds.

But the victims are often everyday Palestinians, many of whom have yet to be found.

Omar al-Darawi and his neighbors have spent weeks searching the ruins of a pair of four-story houses in central Gaza. Forty-five people lived in the homes; 32 were killed. In the first days after the attack, 27 bodies were recovered.

The five still missing were al-Darawi's cousins.

They include Amani, a 37-year-old stay-at-home mom who died with her husband and their four children. There's Aliaa, 28, who was taking care of her aging parents. There's another Amani, who died with her

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14-year-old daughter. Her husband and their five sons survived.

"The situation has become worse every day," said the 23-year-old, who was once a college journalism student. The smell has become unbearable.

"We can't stop," he said. "We just want to find and bury them" before their bodies are lost in the rubble forever.

More than 11,400 Palestinians have been killed, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. The U.N. humanitarian affairs office estimates that about 2,700 people, including 1,500 children, are missing and believed buried in the ruins.

The missing have added layers of pain to Gaza's families, who are overwhelmingly Muslim. Islam calls for the dead to be buried quickly — within 24 hours if possible — with the shrouded bodies turned to face the holy city of Mecca. Traditionally, the body is washed by family members with soap and scented water, and prayers for forgiveness are said at the gravesite.

The search is particularly difficult in northern Gaza, including Gaza City, where Israeli ground forces are battling Hamas militants. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled southward, terrified by the combat and pushed by Israeli warnings to evacuate. But even in the south, continued Israeli airstrikes and shelling mean nowhere is safe in the tiny territory.

The Palestinian Civil Defense department, Gaza's primary search-and-rescue force, has had more than two dozen workers killed and over 100 injured since the war began, said Mahmoud Bassal, the department spokesman.

More than half of its vehicles are now either without fuel or have been damaged by strikes, he said.

In central Gaza, outside the northern combat zone, the area's civil defense director has no working heavy equipment at all, including bulldozers and cranes.

"We actually don't have fuel to keep the sole bulldozer we have operating," said Rami Ali al-Aidei.

At least five large bulldozers are needed just to search a series of collapsed high-rise buildings in the coastal town of Deir al-Balah, he said.

This means that bodies, and the desperate people searching for them, are not the focus.

"We're prioritizing areas where we think we will find survivors," said Bassal.

As a result, the search for bodies often falls to relatives, or to volunteers like Bilal Abu Sama, a former freelance journalist.

He ticks off a handful of Deir al-Balah's victims: 10 corpses still lost in what is left of the al-Salam Mosque; two dozen bodies missing in a destroyed home; 10 missing in another mosque attack.

"Will those bodies remain under the rubble until the war ends? OK, when will the war end?" said Abu Sama, 30, describing how families dig through the wreckage without any tools. "The bodies will be decomposed. Many of them have already decomposed."

On Tuesday, 28 days after an airstrike flattened his home, Izzel-Din al-Moghari found his cousin's body.

Twenty-four people from his extended family lived in the home, in the Bureij refugee camp. All but three were killed.

Eight are still missing.

A civil defense bulldozer came three days after the strike to clear the road, then left quickly for another collapsed building. The bulldozer came again Tuesday and helped find al-Moghari's cousin.

After finding his cousin, al-Moghari went back into the wreckage in search of his father and other relatives.

"I am stunned," he said. "What we lived through is indescribable."

Gaza has become a place where many families are denied even the comfort of a funeral.

Al-Darawi, the man searching for his cousins, understands that.

"Those who found their dead are lucky," he said.

## Live updates | Israeli troops exchange fire with militants in Jenin as aid grinds to a halt in Gaza

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli troops and Palestinian militants exchanged fire in the town of Jenin in the occupied West Bank during an army raid overnight into Friday, which ended at a hospital where the Palestinian Red Crescent said Israeli forces detained and searched paramedic crews.

Meanwhile in Gaza, aid agencies said they had to call off deliveries of basic necessities on Friday, warning of the looming possibility of widespread starvation a day after internet and telephone services collapsed in the besieged enclave because of a lack of fuel. They said most people in the Gaza Strip already do not have adequate food or clean water.

At least 11,470 Palestinians — two-thirds of them women and minors — have been killed since the war began, according to Palestinian health authorities, who do not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. About 2,700 people are reported missing.

Israel vowed to wipe out Hamas after the militant group launched its Oct. 7 incursion. Some 1,200 people have been killed in Israel, mostly during the initial attack, and around 240 were taken captive by militants.

Currently:

- At a Global South summit, Modi urges leaders to unite against challenges from the Israel-Hamas war
- Thousands of bodies lie buried in rubble in Gaza. Families dig to retrieve them, often by hand.
- As the battle for Gaza rages, families of hostages wait with trepidation.
- Under a communication blackout, Gaza's 2.3 million people are cut off from each other and the world.
- Turkey's Erdogan is visiting Germany as differences over the Israel-Hamas war widen.
- Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

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

### BATTLE IN THE WEST BANK LEAVES AT LEAST 3 DEAD AND 15 WOUNDED

JERUSALEM — Israeli troops and Palestinian militants exchanged fire in the town of Jenin in the occupied West Bank during an army raid and at least three Palestinians were killed, the Palestinian health ministry said Friday.

Jenin has long been a flashpoint, and the military has carried out near-nightly operations there since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza six weeks ago.

Gunbattles erupted in several locations, also drawing in fighters from Hamas, the militant group battling Israeli forces in Gaza. At one point, an Israeli aircraft targeted militants who threw explosives toward Israeli forces, the Israeli military said. The military said it killed five militants in the raid and arrested 15 Palestinians.

Airstrikes were once a rare attack mode in the West Bank but have grown increasingly common since war began.

Israel said its forces unearthed explosives under some streets and confiscated weapons, ammunition and surveillance equipment from a vehicle and two militant command centers.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said that once at the hospital, Israeli forces detained and searched paramedic crews. Videos posted to social media by the organization showed Red Crescent paramedics with their hands raised in surrender, leaving the hospital building and walking slowly to stand in front of several Israeli military trucks lined up outside the hospital.

Palestinian health officials, who do not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths, said that 15 Palestinians were injured in the raid, four of them seriously.

### DOZENS ARE KILLED OR INJURED FROM STRIKES OVERNIGHT IN SOUTHERN GAZA

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip — Israel bombarded two homes in southern Gaza late Thursday and Friday morning, according to survivors accompanying those killed and wounded in the strikes to the main hospital in Khan Younis.

An Associated Press journalist witnessing the arrivals said he saw three dead and dozens injured, including babies and young children, from Friday's strike. The attack late Thursday killed 11 members of a family

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who had fled the main combat zone in Gaza City in the northern part of Gaza earlier in the war.

The strikes hit Bani Suheila, an area east of Khan Younis, located in the southern half of Gaza. Early in the war, now in its sixth week, Israel told civilians to flee the north and head south for their safety.

On Wednesday, Israel dropped leaflets over Bani Suheila and other nearby areas, calling on residents to leave yet again and seek shelter elsewhere. The leaflets triggered fears that Israel is expanding its offensive, which is currently focused on northern Gaza. The south of Gaza is already crammed with hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians who have nowhere else to go.

The Israeli army rarely comments on individual airstrikes but says the attacks are aimed at Hamas operatives and targets.

Mohammed Zaqout, the head of Gaza's hospitals, said a total of 35 people were killed in airstrikes in Khan Younis and the nearby town of Rafah overnight.

## AFGHANISTAN DENOUNCES ISRAEL'S ONGOING STRIKES IN GAZA

ISLAMABAD — Afghanistan's Taliban-led administration denounced the ongoing Israeli strikes in Gaza, including the raid on Shifa Hospital. In an overnight statement, Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Israeli forces were continually breaking all rules of war.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan called on the United Nations and other human rights bodies, saying that "if they genuinely believe in their stated values, they must prevent the ongoing brutalities by adopting an honest, transparent & just position vis-a-vis crimes against humanity carried out by the Zionists against the people of Gaza," the statement read, referring to Jews who seek to regain and retain their biblical homeland.

It also asked Arab and Islamic countries "to respond to the cries of the oppressed Muslims of Gaza, & to fulfill their religious & human responsibility through effective & meaningful positions & steps."

The Taliban-led administration seized power in 2021, and since then the U.N. and other human rights groups have blamed it for human rights violations.

In September, the U.N. said it documented more than 1,600 cases of human rights violations committed by authorities in Afghanistan during arrests and detentions of people. At the time, it urged the Taliban government to stop torture and protect the rights of detainees. The report by the mission's Human Rights Service covered 19 months — from January 2022 until the end of July 2023 — with cases documented across 29 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. It said 11% of the cases involved women.

## SEVERAL ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES HIT NEAR DAMASCUS, SYRIA'S STATE NEWS AGENCY SAYS

DAMASCUS, Syria — Syria's state news agency says Israel's military has carried out strikes that hit several posts near the capital, Damascus, causing material damage but no casualties.

SANA quoted an unnamed military official as saying that Syrian air defenses shot down most of the missiles before they reached their targets early Friday.

There has been no confirmation from the Israeli military.

In the weeks since the latest war between Israel and Hamas broke out, Syria reported Israeli airstrikes that hit the international airports in Damascus and the northern city of Aleppo, damaging their runways and putting them out of service.

Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets inside government-controlled parts of Syria in recent years, including attacks on the Damascus and Aleppo airports, but rarely acknowledges or discusses the operations.

## Aid agencies say they can't send food and other supplies to Gaza because of communications blackout

By NAJIB JOBAIN, BASSEM MROUE and DAVID RISING Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Aid agencies said they had to stop deliveries of food and other basic necessities to Gaza on Friday, warning of the possibility of starvation a day after internet and telephone services collapsed in the besieged enclave because of a lack of fuel.

The communications blackout largely cuts off Gaza's 2.3 million people from one another and the out-



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side world — and paralyzes the coordination of aid, which humanitarian groups were already struggling to deliver because of the fuel shortage.

Israeli forces, meanwhile, have signaled they could expand their offensive toward Gaza's south even while pressing operations in the north. Troops have been searching the territory's biggest hospital for traces of a Hamas command center the military alleges was located under the building.

They have shown what they said were a tunnel entrance and weapons found inside the compound but not yet any evidence of the command center, which Hamas and staff at Gaza City's Shifa Hospital deny existed.

The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel, in which the militants killed more than 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured some 240 men, women and children.

On Friday, the military said it found the body of another hostage, identifying her as Cpl. Noa Marciano. Marciano's body was recovered in a building adjacent to Shifa, the military said, like that of another hostage found Thursday, 65-year-old Yehudit Weiss.

More than 11,400 Palestinians have been killed in the war, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The count does not differentiate between civilians and militants, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

## AID DRIES UP

Since the war began, Gaza has received only 10% of its required food supplies each day, and dehydration and malnutrition are growing with nearly all residents in need of food, said Abeer Etefa, a Mideast regional spokeswoman for the United Nations' World Food Program.

"Food production has come to an almost complete halt, markets have collapsed, fishermen cannot access the sea, farmers cannot reach their farms," she said Thursday from Cairo. "People are facing the immediate possibility of starvation."

The breakdown of the communications network only worsened the situation. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, or UNRWA, said no aid deliveries would be able to enter from Egypt on Friday because of the difficulties coordinating them without phones or internet.

"We have seen fuel and food and water and humanitarian assistance being used as a weapon of war," said agency spokesperson Juliette Touma. It is "outrageous that humanitarian agencies are reduced to begging for fuel."

Fuel is needed for electricity generators that run everything from communication systems to water and sewage pumps.

Israel has barred fuel shipments into Gaza since the beginning of the war, but permitted a limited shipment to UNRWA earlier this week for trucks delivering food after the agency's fuel reservoir ran dry.

## STRIKES IN THE SOUTH

Following the surprise attack by Hamas, Israel has focused its air and ground assault on northern Gaza, vowing to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities.

In recent days, Israel's military has indicated it could expand operations in the south, where most of the population has taken refuge.

"We are close to dismantling the military system that was present in the northern Gaza Strip," Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi said Thursday. Israeli forces dropped leaflets Wednesday afternoon telling Palestinians in areas near the southern town of Khan Younis to evacuate.

Halevi said that while "there remains work to be completed" in the north, more and more places would be targeted in the fight against Hamas.

Two homes east of Khan Younis were hit by Israeli strikes late Thursday and early Friday, according to survivors.

An Associated Press journalist witnessed three dead and dozens wounded, including babies and young children, from Friday's strike being brought to the city's main hospital. The attack late Thursday killed 11 members of a family that had fled the main combat zone in Gaza City, whose bodies were also brought

to the main hospital.

Overall, 35 people were killed in Khan Younis and Rafah, which is farther south, said Mohamed Zaqout, an official with the Health Ministry in Hamas-controlled Gaza.

Most of Gaza's population is crowded into the south, including hundreds of thousands who heeded Israel's calls to evacuate the north to get out of the way of its ground offensive. In all, some 1.5 million people have been driven from their homes.

If the assault moves into the south, it is not clear where people would go, as Egypt refuses to allow a mass transfer onto its soil. The Israeli military has called on people to move to a "safe zone" in Mawasi, a town on the Mediterranean coast a few square kilometers (square miles) in size.

The heads of 18 U.N. agencies and international charities on Thursday rejected that proposal, saying that concentrating civilians in one area while hostilities continue was too dangerous. They called for a cease-fire and unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid and fuel.

## SEARCHING SHIFA

Israel's troops stormed into Shifa on Wednesday, and have been searching the complex. The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the troops searched underground levels of the hospital Thursday and detained technicians who run its equipment.

Israel faces pressure to prove its claim that Hamas set up its main command center in and under the hospital, which has multiple buildings over an area of several city blocks. The U.S. has said it has intelligence to support the claims.

So far, Israel has mainly shown photos and video of weapons caches that it says its soldiers found in the hospital.

On Thursday, the military released video of a hole in the hospital courtyard it said was a tunnel entrance. It also showed several assault rifles and RPGs, grenades, and ammunition clips laid out on a blanket that it said were found in a pickup truck in the courtyard. The Associated Press could not independently verify the Israeli claims.

The allegations are part of Israel's broader accusation that Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields across the Gaza Strip, contending that is the reason for the large numbers of civilian casualties during weeks of bombardment.

As the war continues to inflame tensions elsewhere, Israeli troops clashed with Palestinian gunmen in Jenin in the occupied West Bank, killing at least three Palestinians. The fighting broke out late Thursday during an Israeli raid.

Israel's military said five militants were killed. The Palestinian Health Ministry said three people died. The militant Islamic Jihad group claimed the three dead as members and identified one as a local commander.

## Turkey's Erdogan to visit Germany as differences over the Israel-Hamas war widen

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan set off for Germany Friday on a short visit overshadowed by the two countries' very different stances on the war between Israel and Hamas.

Erdogan is due to meet Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Germany's largely ceremonial president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in Berlin. Scholz invited Erdogan to visit in May following his re-election.

Turkey has long been viewed as an awkward but essential partner in Germany, which is home to more than 3 million people with Turkish roots. It's a NATO ally that also is important in efforts to control the flow of refugees and migrants to Europe, an issue on which Scholz faces intense domestic pressure, but there have been tensions in recent years over a variety of issues.

This visit is overshadowed by a growing chasm between the two countries' stances on events following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

Germany is a staunch ally of Israel and has opposed calls for a cease-fire, while pushing for aid to civilians in Gaza, advocating "humanitarian pauses" and seeking to keep open channels of communication

with other countries in the region to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Erdogan has taken an increasingly strident stance against Israel. On Wednesday, he called it a "terrorist state" intent on destroying Gaza along with all of its residents. He described Hamas militants as "resistance fighters" trying to protect their lands and people. Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and European Union.

Those and similar comments have appalled politicians across the spectrum in Germany. Asked earlier this week about Erdogan's comments, Scholz didn't mention the Turkish leader by name but said "the accusations that are being made there against Israel are absurd."

On Wednesday, Scholz told parliament that his talks with Erdogan will include a discussion of "differing views — in this question, it is very important that there is clarity and that we make our own position very clear."

Israel recalled its diplomats from Turkey last month after Erdogan accused Israel of committing war crimes. Turkey later also recalled its ambassador from Israel.

Another possible area of tension emerged ahead of the visit. Late Thursday, Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler said Turkey plans to purchase 40 Eurofighter Typhoon jets, but Germany was impeding the sale of the warplanes produced by Germany, the U.K., Spain and Italy.

Guler told members of the Turkish parliament's defense committee that Spain and the U.K. favored selling the jets to Turkey and were now working to persuade Germany.

## **At a Global South summit, Modi urges leaders to unite against challenges from the Israel-Hamas war**

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged leaders of developing nations to unite in the face of growing challenges due to the Israel-Hamas war as he convened a virtual summit of more than 100 countries Friday.

"This is the time when the countries of the Global South should unite for the greater global good," Modi said in a speech, referring to developing nations.

The Voice of Global South Summit was convened to follow up on decisions made during the Group of 20 top world economies meeting in September that New Delhi claimed was a diplomatic success and where the African Union was added as a member.

India sees itself as a leader of the Global South and says the world should make progress on key issues important to these countries.

"We are more than 100 countries but our priorities are similar," Modi said at the summit, while emphasizing on issues critical to developing nations, including resource efficiency, poverty reduction and food security.

"Voice of the Global South is one of the most unique platforms of the 21st century. From a geographical perspective, the global south has always existed, but it has received the voice of its own for the first time," he said.

Climate finance, the debt burden of developing countries, and affordable and inclusive energy transition for sustainable development are among the topics to be discussed in the summit's closed-door sessions, India's External Affairs Ministry said.

Modi in his speech also condemned civilian deaths during the Israel-Hamas war and emphasized the new challenges from the war.

"India has condemned the terrorist attack in Israel on Oct. 7. We have exercised restraint as well. We have given emphasis on dialogue and diplomacy. We also strongly condemn the deaths of civilians in the conflict between Israel and Hamas," Modi said.

India has long walked a tightrope between Israel and the Palestinians, with historically close ties to both. While it has expressed solidarity with Israel after the Oct. 1 incursion by Hamas militants, it has urged that international humanitarian law be upheld in Gaza and has also sent aid to the besieged population in the enclave.

## **Biden signs temporary spending bill averting government shutdown, pushing budget fight into new year**

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — President Joe Biden on Thursday signed a temporary spending bill a day before a potential government shutdown, pushing a fight with congressional Republicans over the federal budget into the new year, as wartime aid for Ukraine and Israel remains stalled.

The measure passed the House and Senate by wide bipartisan margins this week, ensuring the government remains open until after the holiday season, and potentially giving lawmakers more time to sort out their considerable differences over government spending levels for the current fiscal year. Biden signed the bill in San Francisco, where he is hosting the summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies.

News of the signing came late at night. The president signed the bill at the Legion of Honor Museum, where he held a dinner for APEC members.

The spending package keeps government funding at current levels for roughly two more months while a long-term package is negotiated. It splits the deadlines for passing full-year appropriations bills into two dates: Jan. 19 for some federal agencies and Feb. 2 for others, creating two dates when there will be a risk of a partial government shutdown.

The two-step approach was championed by new House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, and was not favored by many in the Senate, though all but one Democrat and 10 Republicans supported it because it ensured the government would not shut down for now.

Johnson has vowed that he will not support any further stopgap funding measures, known as continuing resolutions. He portrayed the temporary funding bill as setting the ground for a spending “fight” with the Senate next year.

The spending bill does not include the White House’s nearly \$106 billion request for wartime aid for Israel and Ukraine. Nor does it provide humanitarian funding for Palestinians and other supplemental requests, including money for border security. Lawmakers are likely to turn their attention more fully to that request after the Thanksgiving holiday in hopes of negotiating a deal.

## **Biden seizes a chance to refocus on Asia as wars rage in Europe and the Mideast**

By AAMER MADHANI, DIDI TANG and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Sometimes it can be easy to forget that President Joe Biden’s original foreign policy priority was reasserting American influence in Asia.

After all, that was before Russian tanks tried to blitz Ukraine, and before Israel and Hamas descended into a fresh round of bloody fighting. With each new crisis, it appeared that Asia was slipping further down the presidential to-do list.

But this week was a rare opportunity for Biden to demonstrate otherwise. While playing host for an annual summit of Asian leaders in San Francisco, he could finally refocus on the continent that he views as key to the future.

“The United States remains vital to the future of the region, and the region is more vital than ever to the United States of America,” he told a gathering of business executives during one of the summit’s many receptions. “That’s been my administration’s outlook from day one.”

Turning that vision into a reality has never been more challenging. Biden’s tenure as president is being constantly reshaped by two very different and unpredictable wars in Europe and the Middle East. He’s also struggling to ease doubts about his reelection chances as Donald Trump, the former Republican president, pursues a comeback bid for the White House that would upend American foreign policy.

However, those concerns faded into the background for at least a few days during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. Biden outlined a vision of collaboration and friendship for the region during a gala for visiting dignitaries on Wednesday evening.

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"From here in San Francisco, America reaches out all across the Pacific, building bridges mightier than the Golden Gate," he said. He added that everyone should "take full advantage of this summit to make new connections and spark new partnerships."

On Thursday, Biden attended a working lunch with regional leaders and posed for pictures with his counterparts. He carved out time for a separate photo with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, a reflection of closer relations between the two U.S. allies.

Biden has always described recalibrating U.S. foreign policy toward Asia as the true test of his administration. The region is the most important crossroads for global trade, a source of critical minerals for fighting climate change and a hub of technological innovation.

It also remains a potential flashpoint for conflict as Biden tries to counter the rise of authoritarian China, which is emerging as a counterweight to the liberal world order.

Biden's most important meeting of the week was unquestionably his hours-long encounter with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday, which overshadowed the summit itself. The conversation ended with new commitments for Beijing to crack down on the flow of fentanyl and reengage in communications between the two countries' militaries.

A senior administration official said Biden and Xi were more candid with each other than the last time they met, almost exactly one year ago on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia.

It helped, the official said, that concerns about the coronavirus have eased, and the leaders and their advisers were able to sit more closely together.

The intimacy did not preclude disagreements. The official, who insisted on anonymity to describe private conversations, said Biden expressed concerns about Chinese rules on intellectual property, while Xi complained about how the Chinese Communist Party has been negatively portrayed in the U.S.

Biden also pressed China to use its influence to persuade Iran to avoid provocations in the Middle East, which could cause the war between Israel and Hamas to engulf more of the region.

The entreaty doubled as a sign of respect from Biden to Xi, acknowledging China's desire to play a larger role on the global stage.

Indeed, Beijing appeared pleased by Xi's reception in San Francisco. Chinese state media described how Biden greeted Xi at the picturesque estate where they met outside the city and then personally saw him off afterward.

The official Xinhua news agency ran a photo in which Biden showed a picture of Xi posing in front of the Golden Gate Bridge when he visited in 1985 as a county party chief.

"Do you recognize this young man?" Biden asked Xi, as reported by Xinhua. "You haven't changed a bit," Biden said, triggering laughter in the room.

Relations between Washington and Beijing threatened to unravel earlier this year when a Chinese spy balloon floated over the United States, sparking a political uproar. But since then, diplomats have worked toward a rapprochement, culminating in Wednesday's meeting.

Yun Sun, director of the China Program at the Stimson Center, a Washington think tank, said Xi and Biden both had their own reasons for wanting to ease tensions.

"One could argue that as Xi seeks stability with U.S. so that he can focus on domestic challenges, Biden is seeking stability partially with China because the U.S. attention is also distracted elsewhere," she said, referring to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Reminders of conflict in the Middle East were kept on the periphery of this week's summit. Protesters calling for a cease-fire in Gaza shut down all vehicular traffic heading into San Francisco over the Bay Bridge. Some lay on the ground covered in white sheets to represent slain Palestinians.

Aisha Nizar with the Palestinian Youth Movement said in a statement that Biden was "hosting cocktail parties in San Francisco" while thousands of people were being killed.

Biden wasn't the only world leader looking to bolster his position with a few rounds of international speed dating.

Xi used the summit as an opportunity to meet individually with leaders from Bahrain, Fiji, Japan, Mexico

and Peru.

He also outlined his own vision for relations between the U.S. and China in a speech to hundreds of business leaders after meeting with Biden.

"The more difficulties there are, the greater the need for us to forge a closer bond between our peoples and to open our hearts to each other, and more people need to speak up for the relationship," he said.

However, Xi indicated that he did not want limits on China's ambitions.

"We will be glad to see a confident, open, ever-growing and prosperous United States," he said. "Likewise, the United States should not bet against China, or interfere in China's internal affairs."

## 'Bring them home': As the battle for Gaza rages, hostage families wait with trepidation

By DANICA KIRKA and SAM McNEIL Associated Press

Abbey Onn lost her aunt and a young cousin when Hamas attackers rampaged through Kibbutz Nir Oz on Oct. 7. Now Onn is worried about what will happen to three other family members taken hostage that day as Israel pounds Gaza City in a bid to end Hamas' control of the Gaza Strip.

She wants the world to remember that Ofer Kalderon and his children Sahar, 16, and Erez, 12, are caught in the crossfire.

"As long as they are hostage, we're all hostage," Onn says. "And we need them home so that whatever is happening there can be solved. I don't think it's a simple solution, but you can't hold hostages and fight a war at the same time."

As the Israeli military tightens its grip around Gaza City, friends and family of the roughly 240 hostages held by Hamas fear their loved ones will be an afterthought for the politicians and generals directing the campaign. Hamas on Monday released video of the first hostage confirmed to have died in captivity.

With much of northern Gaza flattened and face-to-face battles underway, the question of how to safely free the captives is becoming more urgent. Israel's twin goals of crushing Hamas and freeing the hostages are about to collide.

### HOW TO BALANCE WAGING WAR AND RESCUING HOSTAGES?

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the goal of the assault on Gaza is to prevent future attacks on Israel by destroying Hamas and ensuring it can never again govern the territory.

On the other side, Hamas is reluctant to release the hostages because they are useful as human shields and offer leverage in squeezing concessions from Israel, says Justin Crump, a former British Army tank commander and CEO of Sibylline, a London-based strategic advisory firm.

Any rescue operation would be risky because the militants are holding their captives in secret locations, probably underground tunnels, where they can ambush Israeli soldiers and inflict heavy casualties, Crump says.

"The Israelis want the hostages, but it's not the sole purpose of this operation. And they're not going to be held hostage by the hostages themselves, if that makes sense..," he says. "They've got to focus on their most important objective."

But with the Israeli military now claiming that Hamas no longer controls Gaza, Israel may soon be willing to negotiate for the return of the hostages, says Nomi Bar-Yaacov, an associate fellow in the international security program at Chatham House, a London-based economic and global affairs think tank.

"I think we're at a turning moment," she says. "I don't think Israel will achieve all of their military targets, but it means that that's achieved a serious chunk of them. And therefore, I think, this is the time when a deal will have to be made, and the sooner the better."

Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, an Israeli military spokesman, says the bombardment was necessary to crush Hamas and put pressure on the militants to release the hostages. Asked whether the attack on Gaza was putting the hostages at greater risk, Netanyahu said last week that Israel was "taking that into consideration."

"There's no one who wants to get our hostages back more than us," he told ABC News.

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Oliver McTernan, who has worked on hostage negotiation for 20 years, says the families of the hostages are right to be concerned. The only way to achieve the return of the captives, he says, is a cease-fire of enough duration to move them safely across the battlefield. Israel says such a move would simply allow Hamas to rearm.

"I think every day that goes on there is a risk — risk with bombings, risk with incursions and whatever — of the civilians, Israeli civilians, dying in Gaza," McTernan says. That, he says, "should be a priority of any government: to ensure their safety and their return to their families."

## CONCERN AMONG WAITING FAMILIES

Eilon Keshet is one of those family members. During the attack on Kibbutz Nir Oz, Hamas abducted Keshet's cousin Yarden Bibas, his wife, Shiri, son Ariel, 4, and baby boy Kfir, who at just 10 months old is the youngest hostage.

"I am scared about the war in Gaza, there are explosions, and gunfire everywhere," he says. "I am afraid my family will get hurt, but I understand that we must act too, to bring them back to us."

The families of the hostages on Tuesday began a five-day march from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to focus attention on their loved ones. The march started with a moment of silence for Noa Marciano, the 19-year-old hostage whose death was announced Monday.

Hamas says dozens of captives have been killed by Israeli strikes but hasn't provided evidence. Israel has dismissed such claims as psychological warfare.

Last week, Rachel Goldberg joined another demonstration at the Western Wall and Dome of the Rock in eastern Jerusalem — sites sacred to Jews and Muslims — and appealed to world leaders not to forget the hostages, even as global attention shifts to the horror of civilian casualties in Gaza.

Her son, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, was kidnapped from the Supernova music festival on Oct. 7.

"The hostages have been underground in Gaza for 32 days," she said at the rally. "I cry out to every single person here and every single person on the planet to make it your mission to free these souls, 240 souls. They are from 33 different countries, their ages range from 9 months to 85 years old, they are Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. They are human beings and they need you."

But the desperation of the families is also tinged with hope — hope for peace and that the hostages will ultimately be rescued.

"I don't know one Israeli or one Jew that wishes any citizen or civilian in Gaza right now to go through what they're going through, not one of us," Onn said. "We want our families home. That's our No. 1 priority."

## Gang attack on Haitian hospital leads to a call for help and an unlikely triumph for police

By EVENS SANON and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The bullets began piercing the windows of the hospital as women cradling young children ran from room to room searching for a safe place to hide while the heavily armed gang drew closer.

The louder the gunfire grew, the more the women screamed until a hospital employee begged them to stay quiet and ordered them to lie on the ground. Mothers with babies and shaky hands forced one breast into their tiny mouths to keep them quiet, wondering if they would live through Wednesday's attack on the Fontaine Hospital Center and the surrounding community in the Haitian slum of Cite Soleil.

A couple of hours went by. The gunfire never ceased. Suddenly, an employee appeared, told them to get up and go to the front yard without making noise. Police were waiting with armored cars.

"Get in! Get in! Get in! Get in quickly!" the employees shouted as women carrying children and babies stepped into buses and private ambulances that officers would escort out of Cite Soleil, a rare triumph for a police department that is understaffed, under resourced and outmatched by gangs. Employees also joined the dozens of evacuees, carrying plastic containers that cradled newborns on oxygen.

It was the latest gang attack on a vulnerable and impoverished community in the capital of Port-au-Prince,

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a show of defiant force and violence that continues to overwhelm a crumbling government that requested the immediate deployment of an international armed force more than a year ago and has yet to arrive.

"A big disappointment is that the state has disappeared," Jose Ulysse, hospital director and founder, said of the government's inability to fight gangs as he thanked police for saving people's lives on Wednesday.

He said he hopes he can reopen the hospital soon as many are left wondering why it was attacked amid speculation it could have been gangs flexing their muscles during an ongoing turf war, signaling that no one is safe.

The assault that forced the evacuation of the hospital and left dozens of homes ablaze was blamed on the Brooklyn gang. It is led by Gabriel Jean-Pierre, nicknamed "Ti Gabriel," leader of a powerful gang alliance known as G-Pep, one of two rival coalitions in Haiti.

Previous attacks in Cite Soleil and other areas have left hundreds of civilians dead as gangs pillage communities, raping and killing people inside their homes. More than 1,230 killings and 701 kidnappings were reported across Haiti from July 1 to Sept. 30, more than double the figure reported during the same period last year, according to the U.N.

Ulysse said gang clashes in Cite Soleil increased after the recent death of Iskar Andrice, a former math and physics teacher who became a feared gang leader.

During the recent clashes in the sprawling seaside slum that led up to Wednesday's attack, gangs could be seen traveling by boat to surprise and kill rival gang members, Ulysse said.

"The minute a chief is dead, others will try to control the area," he said. "It's a matter of controlling more territory and collecting money."

Residents worry the violence in Cite Soleil and elsewhere will only escalate as gangs fight to fill the vacuum that Andrice's death left.

The shooting on Wednesday began around dawn, recalled Edline Pierre, a 26-year-old mother of three. She was at the Fontaine Hospital Center with her two youngest, who were being treated for diarrhea and malnutrition.

By late morning, the gunfire grew closer, and she scampered under a bed with her two children. As bullets began to hit the hospital's roof and break the windows, she heard people in the yard yelling, "God, come get me!"

Many were in shock and scared, she recalled.

Then, after everyone inside the hospital grew quiet, she heard gangs outside arguing whether or not to burn the facility.

"If it wasn't for God, (Wednesday) could have been the last day for me on earth," she said, recalling that police were still shooting at gang members hiding in bushes as they left in ambulances and buses.

Pierre, along with many who were at the hospital that day, is staying at a private home in a safer community for now. She doesn't know if her eldest child or her mother, who was taking care of her, are alive. Their home was burned during the attack.

Marie-Marthe Pierre, mother of four children, has the same fear. She was at the hospital with her 7-month-old baby and now can't get ahold of relatives who were caring for her other offspring.

Bullets flew through the windows and hit the walls of the room where she was hiding.

"We were there, stuck, vulnerable," she said. "If the police hadn't shown up, I don't know what would have happened to us."

A spokesperson for Haiti's National Police did not return messages for comment.

Those interviewed praised the police and Ulysse, who pleaded for help via social media as the facility came under attack.

Yolande Saint-Philippe, who was at the hospital with the 2-year-old toddler of her 14-year-old daughter who was product of a gang rape, called Ulysse "a good man."

"He could have abandoned us, but he managed to move us to a safe house where the child is still being fed, I'm still being fed," she said, explaining that they're both malnourished. "Lucky for us, God sent us a savior."

Everyone was evacuated safely from the hospital except for one person: a baby born during the attack



who died during a breech birth because gunfire prevented medical staff from helping the mother.

## Argentina's Peronist machine is in high gear to shore up shaky votes before the presidential runoff

By DANIEL POLITI Associated Press

CIUDAD EVITA, Argentina (AP) — As Argentina heads for a presidential runoff election on Sunday, the decades-old populist movement known as Peronism is on shaky ground, its candidate having lost some traction even among longtime loyalists living in a suburb of the capital that is its literal and figurative embodiment.

Built in the 1950s by Peronism's founder, then-President Juan Domingo Perón, Ciudad Evita's original boundaries were shaped like the profile of his wife, former first lady María Eva Duarte de Perón, better known as Evita. It provided workers not just large homes but also dignity, and its generations of inhabitants have been ardent supporters of a political movement that champions social justice and workers' rights.

But that support has been rattled by rising poverty and red-hot inflation that has punished society. Some Ciudad Evita residents are tempted to do the previously unthinkable: Vote against the Peronist candidate, Economy Minister Sergio Massa, on Sunday. That has Massa working overtime to keep once-steadfast supporters from straying to his opponent, right-wing populist Javier Milei, who rocked Argentina's political landscape by receiving the most votes in the August primary election.

"I've always been a Peronist. But not for the past few years," said Susana García, a 62-year-old who has lived in Ciudad Evita most of her life and, as a longtime union worker, has seen the power of Peronism firsthand to mobilize Argentina's workers. García is struggling to make ends meet, much less pay for needed repairs to her three-bedroom home.

"I have a nice house, but I can't maintain it," she said.

Peronism, a nebulous movement with both left- and right-wing factions, has been the dominant force in Argentine politics for decades and draws its origins to the three-time-President Perón's strong alliances with workers' unions. Its promise has been derailed by decades of economic decay, and Ciudad Evita is now surrounded by poorer neighborhoods with dilapidated houses and shacks.

"There has been deep disaffection with Peronism in the lower-income sectors over the past four years," said Pablo Touzon, a Peronism expert who runs the local political consultancy Escenarios. "That is partly what made Milei's victory in the primaries possible."

To recover lost ground, Massa has kicked the Peronist vote-getting machine into overdrive. It consists of vast networks of local leaders who hand out mattresses, fridges and stoves. Government-funded organizations provide food, aid and jobs through an array of welfare programs in the poorest neighborhoods. In both cases, they remind voters to which party they owe gratitude.

And Massa has also pulled out all stops from his ministerial post — to the deep chagrin of government creditors and political opponents. He slashed income taxes for the highest earners, began refunding some of a value-added tax levied on food purchases, unveiled fresh payments for pensioners and unemployed people, and announced bonuses for millions of workers.

Massa has described the programs as helping people get by after the government devalued the peso by almost 20% in August, which pushed inflation even higher. It is now running at an annual rate of more than 140%.

Critics say Massa's moves amplify the patronage of Peronism that they say has created a system of dependence.

"Being able to push the levers of the Economy Ministry allowed him to inject money quickly to influence the election results," Milei said in a television interview after the first-round vote.

Peronism's well-oiled operations have kept it a political force for decades. Houses for workers like those in Ciudad Evita, many of whom were able to pay them off in years, were just part of Peronism's promise to provide.

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"People could ask for prosthetics, a dress for Communion, food, beds. Whatever they needed, there was no limit," explained Carolina Barry, who runs the history of Peronism program at the National University of Tres de Febrero. That created "loyalties across generations," she said.

That aid doesn't necessarily translate into the votes it once did, said Mariano Machado, principal analyst for the Americas at Verisk Maplecroft, a global risk intelligence firm. But it helps, he said.

Massa and his supporters warn that such bounty could evaporate if Milei wins the presidency. A self-proclaimed anarcho-capitalist, Milei has spoken out in favor of cutting government subsidies that keep prices of transport and utilities low, particularly in Buenos Aires, privatizing Argentina's public health and education systems and other measures to cut the state down to size.

In recent weeks, Milei has denied that any such measures would be immediate and accused the Peronist government of carrying out a "campaign of fear." In his final campaign ad, Milei starkly looks at the camera while insisting he won't privatize education nor health care.

Massa's campaign delivered a seven-point win over Milei in October in the first round of voting, defying almost all pre-election polls. Yet the weakening of Peronism is revealed by the fact it is united behind Massa, who netted 37% — the same as just one of two Peronist candidates in 2015 when the party was divided, according to Ana Iparraguirre, partner at pollster GBAO Strategies.

Just a five-minute drive from García's spacious home in Ciudad Evita lies a neighborhood of uneven streets teeming with sewage and dilapidated apartment buildings, interspersed with precarious shacks. The Evita Movement is one of many Peronist social organizations tending to residents there. The group runs a soup kitchen that hands out more than 400 meals a week.

"I've lived off the soup kitchen for a long time. It helps people a lot, people who have more children than me," said Cristina Bramajo, 48, who has three children. "I am a Peronist and, come what may, I will always vote for Peronism."

Despite her misgivings over what she calls a corrupt government, García said she, too, will vote for Massa. While change is alluring, Milei's plan to shrink the state scares her.

"I didn't like the things he was proposing, what he's going to cut, what he's going to eliminate, like schools, studies, universities, everything becoming private," she said. "I'm from the lower middle class, and it's not what I hope for my grandchildren."

## **Biden and Mexico's leader will meet in California. Fentanyl, migrants and Cuba are on the agenda**

By COLLEEN LONG and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — President Joe Biden and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, two strong allies who don't always get along personally, will talk migration, fentanyl trafficking and Cuba relations on Friday.

The two leaders are in San Francisco for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference, where Biden has held a series of face-to-face meetings with other leaders, including China's President Xi Jinping and the leaders of Japan and South Korea, as he seeks to reassure the region that the U.S. and China are competitors, not zero-sum rivals.

Biden's relationship with López Obrador is at times tense, in part because of Biden's willingness to criticize Mexico on topics such as fentanyl production and the killing of journalists. And López Obrador isn't afraid to snub the U.S. leader. He skipped a Los Angeles summit last year where leaders tackled the issue of migration because the U.S. didn't invite Cuba, Nicaragua or Venezuela. He also initially said he would skip this year's APEC conference, but changed his mind.

López Obrador said he would use Friday's meeting with Biden to take up the case for Cuba and would urge his U.S. counterpart to resume a dialogue with the island nation and end U.S. sanctions.

Biden, meanwhile, was expected to bring up migration as the U.S. continues to manage a growing number of southern border crossings. The leaders also are expected to discuss deadly fentanyl trafficking,

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particularly after Biden secured an agreement with Xi to curb the illicit opioid.

The issues are related. Human smuggling over the border is a part of cartel operations that also include drug trafficking into the U.S.

Mexico and China are the primary sources for synthetic fentanyl trafficked into the U.S. Nearly all the chemicals needed to make it come from China, and the drugs are then mass-produced in Mexico and trafficked via cartels into the U.S.

The powerful opioid is the deadliest drug in the U.S. today. More than 100,000 deaths a year have been linked to drug overdoses since 2020 and about two-thirds of those are related to fentanyl. The death toll is more than 10 times as in 1988, at the height of the crack epidemic.

And migration challenges facing the U.S. are growing increasingly intractable. Democratic leaders at the state and local level are begging for federal assistance to help care for migrant families living in squalid shelters and sleeping in police stations. Republicans are loudly critical of Biden's border policies as too lax. And Congress has not passed an immigration overhaul in decades.

Biden asked for \$14 billion border security funding from Congress to help manage the issue, but the temporary spending bill passed this week included no funding for the border, Ukraine aid or Israel.

There are rising numbers of migrants at the border. Arrests for illegal crossings along the U.S.-Mexico line were up 21% to 218,763 in September, and Biden has repeatedly said Congress should act to fix outdated immigration laws. But in the meantime, his administration has developed policies that aim to deter migrants from making a dangerous and often deadly journey while also opening up new legal immigration pathways.

Mexico's support is critical to any push by the U.S. to clamp down at the southern border, particularly as migrants from nations as far away as Haiti are making the trek on foot up through Mexico and are not easily sent back to their home countries.

Earlier this year, Mexico agreed to continue to accept migrants from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba and Nicaragua who are turned away at the border, and up to 100,000 people from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador who have family in the U.S. will be eligible to live and work there.

According to data on asylum-seekers in Mexico, people from Haiti remained at the top with 18,860 so far this year, higher than the total for the whole of 2022.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is accepting 30,000 people per month from the four nations for two years and offering them the ability to work legally, as long as they come legally, have eligible sponsors and pass vetting and background checks.

Guatemala and Colombia will open regional hubs where people can go to make asylum claims in the hope of stopping them from traveling on foot. But Mexico has so far refused to allow the U.S. to set one up.

## **DeSantis, Haley and Ramaswamy will meet in Iowa for a 'family discussion' on politics**

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The Republicans battling to be the alternative to former President Donald Trump will come together for what an influential Christian organization in Iowa is billing as a friendly conversation on politics and their world views.

Three candidates — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy — will appear at the roundtable "family discussion" in Des Moines Friday. Trump is not expected to attend, though he was invited.

The field around Trump is winnowing with less than two months before the Iowa caucuses kick off the GOP nominating calendar. In a sign of the urgency the field faces, many of his rivals are going after each other more frequently with jabs that have often turned personal.

This week, DeSantis and Ramaswamy both criticized Haley after she said Tuesday that social media companies should ban people from posting anonymously online.

DeSantis posted on social media that the proposal was "dangerous and unconstitutional," while Ra-

maswamy referenced the idea as "disgusting." Ramaswamy and Haley have frequently feuded in recent candidate debates, culminating with Haley calling Ramaswamy "scum" after he attacked her daughter for using TikTok, the video-sharing app that many Republicans want to ban due to its links to China.

And the rivalry between DeSantis and Haley is also growing, with both sides competing hard for major donors and arguing over who has a better chance of beating Trump.

The Family Forum will put candidates at one table to give Iowans "a chance to see what's in the candidates' hearts, not just in their plans," said Bob Vander Plaats, president and CEO of the influential Family Leader, in a statement. Vander Plaats will moderate the discussion.

The Family Leader reiterated that the event is not a debate after the Republican National Committee's counsel's office circulated a letter to campaigns dated Oct. 28 reminding candidates of their pledge not to participate in non-sanctioned debates and warning that attending the Family Leader's forum would disqualify them from future RNC debates.

After DeSantis committed to attending anyway last Friday, Vander Plaats posted on social media and the RNC issued a second letter to campaigns stating that the two had come to an agreement on the format and the forum would proceed as planned.

Trump, the dominant front-runner for the 2024 Republican nomination, has skipped all three primary debates so far and instead hosted large rallies to appeal to his supporters, as he will on Saturday in Fort Dodge, Iowa.

## **Texas woman convicted and facing up to life in prison for killing pro cyclist Mo Wilson**

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A woman convicted of murder in the shooting death of rising professional cyclist Anna Moriah Wilson faces up to life in prison in Texas when sentenced in a case that led investigators on a 43-day international search to find her.

Kaitlin Armstrong, 35, was convicted Thursday. The jurors also will recommend a sentence and are expected to resume deliberating on Friday.

Prosecutors said Armstrong gunned down the 25-year-old Wilson in a jealous rage in May 2022. Wilson, also known as "Mo," had briefly dated Armstrong's boyfriend several months earlier. Wilson went swimming and to a meal with him the day she was killed.

Jurors deliberated for about two hours after two weeks of testimony before delivering their verdict.

"From the day she was born, she had a force in her," Wilson's mother, Karen Wilson, told jurors Thursday at the start of the punishment phase of the trial. "She lived as if every day was her last day. And she lived it so fully. She never wasted any time. ... It's as if she knew her life would be short."

Wilson's family and friends, who sat in the front row for most of the trial, hugged and cried after the verdict.

Caitlin Cash, the friend who found Wilson's body and tried to perform CPR, told jurors she had texted Wilson's mother earlier that day with a photo of her starting a bike ride with a note: "Your girl is in safe hands here in Austin."

"I felt a lot of guilt not being able to protect her," Cash said. "I fought for her with everything I had."

Kaitlin Armstrong's younger sister Christine and their mother sat behind the defense table and cried after the verdict. Armstrong's father stood silently for several minutes.

Christine Armstrong told jurors her older sister "is not a bad person."

"She's such a special person," Christine Armstrong said before looking at her sister. "I've always looked up to you. ... She's always cared for other people."

A Vermont native and former alpine skier at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, Wilson was an emerging star in pro gravel and mountain bike racing. She was visiting Austin ahead of a race in Texas, where she was among the favorites to win.

Kaitlin Armstrong tracked Wilson to the apartment where she was staying through a fitness app and

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shot her three times, twice in the head and once through the heart, investigators said.

"I would have done anything to stand in the way of that bullet," Karen Wilson said. "She did not deserve a death like that."

Kaitlin Armstrong did not testify on her own behalf during the trial.

Her Jeep was seen near the apartment around the time Wilson was shot and bullet casings found near Wilson's body matched a gun Armstrong owned. Armstrong briefly met with police before selling her vehicle and using her sister's passport to fly to Costa Rica.

She spent more than \$6,000 on a nose job there and changed the color and style of her hair to evade authorities before she was arrested at a beachside hostel, investigators said.

Armstrong again tried to escape authorities during an Oct. 11 medical appointment outside of jail. She faces a separate felony escape charge.

## **Biden tells Asia-Pacific leaders US 'not going anywhere' as he looks to build economic ties**

By COLLEEN LONG and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — President Joe Biden on Thursday made America's case to national leaders and CEOs attending the Asia-Pacific summit that the United States is committed to high standards in trade and to partnerships that will benefit economies across the Pacific.

"We're not going anywhere," he declared.

Fresh off his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Biden also told business leaders that the U.S. was "de-risking and diversifying" but not "decoupling" from Beijing. But he did not mince words in suggesting the U.S. and friends in the Pacific could offer businesses a better option than China. He also noted that U.S. economies had invested some \$50 billion in fellow Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies in 2023, including in clean energy technologies, aviation and cybersecurity.

"This is not all kumbaya but it's straightforward," Biden said. "We have real differences with Beijing when it comes to maintaining a fair and level economic playing field and protecting your intellectual property."

Biden sought to send a clear message about American leadership as business leaders grapple with the risks of doing businesses in the midst of wars in the Middle East and Europe and a still shaky post-pandemic economy. He was also spending time Thursday letting Indo-Pacific leaders know that the U.S. is committed to nurturing economic ties throughout the region.

The president also met jointly Thursday with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on the sidelines of the summit.

The meeting comes less than three months after Biden hosted Kishida and Yoon for a historic summit at the Camp David presidential retreat. Japan and South Korea have been historically bitter rivals, but the two leaders have sought to look past decades of tension because of shared concerns about growing regional threats from North Korea and an increasingly assertive China. Japan colonized the Korean Peninsula between 1910 and 1945.

Biden in his remarks to the CEOs sought to highlight his administration's efforts to strengthen ties with the region. APEC members have invested \$1.7 trillion in the U.S. economy, supporting some 2.3 million American jobs. U.S. companies, in turn, have invested about \$1.4 trillion in APEC economies.

Later, during talks with APEC leaders at a working lunch, Biden spoke about efforts funded by his Inflation Reduction Act to fight climate change and improve sustainability and clean energy infrastructure in the U.S. At a dinner for the APEC delegations, he challenged his fellow leaders to "harness the power of the Pacific" for a "future of greater prosperity and dignity for all."

The U.S. hasn't hosted the annual leaders' summit — started in 1993 by President Bill Clinton -- since 2011. The group met virtually in 2020 and 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Leaders did gather in Bangkok last year, but Biden skipped the summit because his granddaughter was getting married, and he sent Vice President Kamala Harris in his place.

The annual conference brings together heads of nations and other top economic and diplomatic lead-

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ers. Biden told those who gathered Wednesday evening at a welcome party that today's challenges were unlike those faced by previous APEC leaders.

Biden also sought to underscore that he was seeking to responsibly manage the United States' strained relationship with China one day after he and Xi sat down for more than four hours of talks at bucolic Filoli Estate outside of San Francisco.

"A stable relationship between the world's two largest economies is not merely good for the two economies but for the world," Biden said. "A stable relationship. It's good for everyone."

Demonstrations in and around APEC continued Thursday. Hours before leaders were to gather at the Moscone Center for the summit, protesters calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war were detained by police after shutting down all traffic over a major commuting bridge heading into San Francisco.

After decades of trade built on the premise of keeping prices low, accessing new markets and maximizing profits, many companies are now finding a vulnerable global economy. The Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts aren't helping matters.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed frailties in their supply chains. Climate change has intensified natural disasters that can close factories. The Israel-Hamas war and Ukraine's defense against the Russian invasion have generated new financial risks, and new technologies such as artificial intelligence could change how companies operate and displace workers.

Xi too, met with American business leaders — at a \$2,000-per-plate dinner Wednesday evening. It was a rare opportunity for the business leaders as they seek clarification on Beijing's expanding security rules that could choke foreign investment.

"There is plenty of room for our cooperation, and we are fully able to help each other succeed and achieve win-win outcomes," he told them, according to an English-language translation.

Xi did not address the APEC CEOs meeting but instead sent a lengthy "written speech" in which he wrote that "forcing uniformity will not advance cooperation in the region" and declared that China was looking for stability during a moment of "turbulence and change" in the world.

"The region cannot and should not be an arena for geopolitical rivalry, still less should it be plunged into a new cold war or camp-based confrontation," Xi wrote.

Separately, Xi on Wednesday signaled that China would send the U.S. new giant pandas, just a week after three from the Smithsonian National Zoo were returned to China, much to the dismay of Americans. There are only four pandas left in the United States, at the Atlanta Zoo.

Biden and Xi understand that the complicated ties between the two nations have major global impacts. Their meeting Wednesday at a Northern California estate was in part an effort to show the world that while they are global economic competitors, the U.S. and China aren't rivals seeking conflict.

Xi, though, was gloomy about the state of the post-pandemic global economy. China's economy remains in the doldrums, with prices falling due to slack demand from consumers and businesses.

"Industrial and supply chains are still under the threat of interruption, and protectionism is rising," Xi said. "All these are grave problems."

White House officials said Biden has been bolstered by signs that the U.S. economy is in a stronger position than China's and that the U.S. was building stronger alliances throughout the Pacific.

Part of that is through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, announced during a May 2022 trip to Tokyo. It came six years after the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade deal that was signed by 12 countries.

The new framework has four major pillars: supply chains, climate, anti-corruption and trade. There won't be any official trade deals to announce — the "framework" label allows Biden to bypass Congress on any agreements reached with the 13 countries. Biden celebrated that work on three of the four pillars had been completed.

"Put simply, my colleagues and I are driving a race to the top, among nations in the Indo-Pacific," Biden said.

While U.S. allies are still looking to hammer out comprehensive trade agreements with Washington, Biden administration officials are underscoring that IPEF has helped the U.S. and partners take action at

a far faster clip than traditional trade deals.

"Most trade negotiations take years to complete," said Mike Pyle, Biden's deputy national security adviser for international economics. "The issues that are at the cutting edge of the global economic conversation, issues like supply chains, clean energy, good government — we have struck agreements around them in just 18 months, with a full set of IPEF partners."

## **China's agreement expected to slow flow of fentanyl into US, but not solve overdose epidemic**

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Experts say new steps China has agreed to will eventually reduce the flow of the deadly opioid fentanyl into the U.S., but that alone will not stem the overdose crisis killing Americans at a record rate.

President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping announced at a meeting Wednesday in California that China is telling its chemical companies to curtail shipments to Latin America and elsewhere of the materials used to produce fentanyl, which is largely finished in Mexico and then smuggled into the U.S.

China has also resumed sharing information about suspected trafficking with an international database. "It's a step in the right direction because not doing this would be negligent," said Adam Wandt, an associate professor of public policy at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "If this is a diplomatic option that we did not take, every fentanyl death over the next decade would be on our heads."

But he and others described the steps as necessary in addressing the overdose crisis in the U.S. — but not sufficient.

Wandt said the steps should reduce the amount of fentanyl in the U.S., though when that happens depends on how much of the chemicals are already in possession of Mexican cartels. And even if fentanyl is eradicated, he said, "they will switch to another drug, which I predict will be even more lethal."

Kevin Roy, the chief public policy officer at Shatterproof, a national group dedicated to combatting the addiction and overdose crisis, said that the steps announced were crucial, but they still have to be carried out.

"It's only one part of a bigger picture," Roy said.

He was also concerned that the nations did not reach any agreements on how to deal with laundering drug money through China, an issue that Rahul Gupta, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, identified at a congressional hearing this year as another major problem.

China's National Narcotics Control Commission issued a directive Friday citing existing laws on narcotics and customs controls as a reminder to logistics businesses in the country on preventing the shipment of narcotics and psychotropic drugs abroad.

The notice called on businesses and companies to be "cautious about orders from the United States and Mexico and be wary of the exported items being used to manufacture drugs." It also warned businesses of the risk of getting caught up in law enforcement actions abroad.

The Biden administration confirmed Thursday that as part of the arrangement, it was lifting trade sanctions against the Chinese Ministry of Public Security's Institute of Forensic Science.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the continued listing of the institute, known as IFS, was a barrier to sealing Chinese cooperation on the issue.

"Ultimately we decided that given the steps China was willing to take to cut down on precursor trafficking, it was an appropriate step to take," Miller said.

The U.S. Commerce Department listed the institute in 2020, saying it was "complicit in human rights violations and abuses committed in China's campaign of repression, mass arbitrary detention, forced labor and high-technology surveillance against Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs, and other members of Muslim minority groups."

Fentanyl emerged as a widespread problem in the U.S. about a decade ago as there were crackdowns on prescribing opioid painkillers, which were linked to soaring death numbers already.

In the early days, it was largely shipped from China to the U.S., easily concealed in envelopes and small

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packages. Fentanyl's potency makes it appealing to drug suppliers because it's easy to ship. And because it's made from chemicals in labs, it doesn't rely on growing crops for drugs such as heroin, cocaine or marijuana.

Pushed by then-President Donald Trump, China agreed in late 2018 to crack down on shipments of finished fentanyl and some of its precursors. After that, more production moved to Mexico — with the raw materials still coming largely from China.

Synthetic opioids are now the biggest killers in the deadliest drug crisis the U.S. has ever seen. In 2014, nearly 50,000 deaths in the U.S. were linked to drug overdoses of all kinds. By last year, the total was more than 100,000, according to a tally by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than two-thirds of those deaths — more than 200 per day — involved fentanyl or similar synthetic drugs.

The powerful drugs are showing up in different places in the nation's supply of illicit substances. It's in counterfeit pills and cocaine, in some cases causing overdoses in people who have no idea that they're using fentanyl. It's also sought out by some people with opioid use disorder. In many areas of the country, it's mostly replaced the supply of heroin.

Xi said at a dinner Wednesday in San Francisco, "China sympathizes deeply with the American people, especially the young, for the sufferings that fentanyl has inflicted upon them."

Biden said of the agreement, "It's going to save lives, and I appreciate President Xi's commitment on this issue."

The tone has changed from earlier this year. In April, Wang Wenbin, a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry criticized the U.S. for blaming China for the precursors, saying they're "ordinary chemicals sold through normal trade." And China blasted the U.S. over the summer for imposing sanctions on Chinese anti-drug efforts rather than praising their efforts.

A key part of the new announcement from China is that it is sharing information on the drug trade. It's resumed submitting information to the International Narcotics Control Board for the first time in three years and agreed to launch a counternarcotics working group with the U.S.

"As we know only too well, the supply piece of this is just one part and we're not going to solve the fentanyl overdose issue solely by reducing the supply," said Regina LaBelle, who directs the Addiction and Public Policy Initiative at Georgetown University's O'Neill Institute and served as acting director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy under President Biden.

She said that it's significant that China and the U.S. are dealing with fentanyl, but it's an issue that demands cooperation from other countries, too. Xi was meeting Thursday with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Biden was scheduled to meet with him Friday.

The rise of fentanyl across the U.S. has intensified efforts to reduce the danger. Naloxone, a drug that reverses overdoses, has become more widely available, including without prescriptions. A growing number of places are allowing drug screening kits so users can find out if their drugs include fentanyl. Harm reduction groups also preach that people using drugs should use a small amount first to test for adverse effects and that they should not use alone.

"We're making investments in the United States in addressing prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction," LaBelle said. "All of those things have to continue to be ramped up."

## Internet, phone networks collapse in Gaza, threatening to worsen humanitarian crisis

By WAFAA SHURAFU, JACK JEFFERY and LEE KEATH Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Internet and telephone services collapsed across the Gaza Strip on Thursday for lack of fuel, the main Palestinian provider said, bringing a potentially long-term blackout of communications as Israel signaled its offensive against Hamas could next target the south, where most of the population has taken refuge.

Israeli troops for a second day searched Shifa Hospital in the north for traces of Hamas. They displayed



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what they said were a tunnel entrance and weapons found in a truck inside the compound. But the military has yet to release evidence of a central Hamas command center that Israel has said is concealed beneath the complex. Hamas and staff at the hospital, Gaza's largest, deny the allegations.

The military said it found the body of one of the hostages abducted by Hamas, 65-year-old Yehudit Weiss, in a building adjacent to Shifa, where it said it also found assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. It did not give the cause of her death.

The communications breakdown largely cuts off Gaza's 2.3 million people from each other and the outside world, worsening the severe humanitarian crisis in southern Gaza, even as Israeli airstrikes continue there. The U.N.'s World Food Program warned of "the immediate possibility of starvation" in Gaza as the food supply has broken down under Israel's seal and too little is coming from Egypt.

The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel in which the militants killed over 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and captured some 240 men, women and children. Weiss, the woman whose body was found Thursday, is the third hostage confirmed dead, while four others have been freed and one rescued.

Israel responded to the attack with a weeklong air campaign and a ground invasion of northern Gaza, vowing to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities.

More than 11,470 Palestinians have been killed, two-thirds of them women and minors, according to Palestinian health authorities. Another 2,700 have been reported missing, believed buried under rubble. The official count does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths, and Israel says it has killed thousands of militants.

Fifty-six Israeli soldiers have died during the ground offensive.

The war has inflamed tensions elsewhere. In the occupied West Bank, Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a checkpoint on the main road linking Jerusalem to Israeli settlements, killing a soldier and wounding three people.

The three attackers were killed, according to police, who said the assailants had assault rifles, handguns and hatchets, and were preparing an attack in Jerusalem. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack.

## SOME GUNS, BUT SO FAR NO TUNNELS

A day after storming into Shifa, Gaza's largest hospital, Israeli troops continued searching the complex. Gaza's Health Ministry said the troops searched underground levels of the hospital Thursday and detained technicians who run its equipment.

The hospital has not had electricity for nearly a week, and staff say they have been struggling to keep alive 36 premature babies and 45 dialysis patients without functional equipment.

One dialysis patient died Thursday, Shifa's director, Mohamed Abu Selmia, told Al Jazeera, adding that 650 wounded patients and 5,000 displaced people are in the hospital.

Israel said its soldiers brought medical teams with incubators and other supplies, though Shifa staff said incubators were useless without fuel. Gaza's Health Ministry said 40 patients, including three babies, died before the raid after the emergency generator ran out of fuel Saturday.

During previous days of fighting in the nearby streets, there was no report of Hamas fighters firing from inside Shifa, and no fighting when Israeli troops entered Wednesday.

Israel faces pressure to prove its claim that Hamas set up its main command center in and under the hospital, which has multiple buildings over an area of several city blocks. So far, it has mainly shown several caches of weapons.

On Thursday, the military released video of a hole in the hospital courtyard it said was a tunnel entrance. It also showed several assault rifles and RPGs, grenades, ammunition clips and utility vests laid out on a blanket that it said were found in a pickup truck in the courtyard. The Associated Press could not independently verify the Israeli claims.

For years, Israel has depicted the hospital as the site of a major Hamas headquarters. In recent weeks, it released satellite maps that specified particular buildings as a command center or as housing underground complexes. It released a computer animation portraying a subterranean network of passageways

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and rooms filled with weapons and fuel barrels. The U.S. said it has intelligence to support Israeli claims.

The allegations are part of Israel's broader accusation that Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields across the Gaza Strip — which Israeli officials say is the reason for the large numbers of civilian casualties during weeks of bombardment.

## LOOKING SOUTH

The military says it has largely consolidated its control of the north, though fighting continues there. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Wednesday the ground operation will eventually "include both the north and south. We will strike Hamas wherever it is." He did not give a time frame.

Israeli forces dropped leaflets Wednesday afternoon telling Palestinians in areas east of the southern town of Khan Younis to evacuate. Similar leaflets were dropped over northern Gaza for weeks ahead of the ground invasion.

Strikes continued in the south Thursday. In the city of Deir al-Balah, a funeral was held for 28 people killed in an overnight bomb that leveled several buildings.

Most of Gaza's population is crowded into southern Gaza, including hundreds of thousands who heeded Israel's calls to evacuate to the north to get out of the way of its ground offensive. Some 1.5 million people driven from their homes have packed into U.N. shelters or houses with other families.

If the assault moves into the south, it is not clear where they would go, as Egypt refuses to allow a mass transfer onto its soil. The Israeli military has called on people to move to a "safe zone" in Mawasi, a town on the Mediterranean coast a few square kilometers (square miles) in size, where humanitarian aid could be delivered.

The heads of 18 U.N. agencies and international charities on Thursday rejected the creation of a safe zone, saying that concentrating civilians in one area while hostilities continue was too dangerous. They called for a cease-fire and unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid and fuel for Gaza's population.

Israel has sealed off Gaza since the start of the war, allowing only a trickle of aid from Egypt. It also bars delivery of fuel, saying it will be diverted to Hamas — though it allowed a small amount this week for U.N. trucks to use in delivering aid.

The World Food Program said the 447 trucks that have brought food into Gaza from Egypt — out of 1,129 relief trucks total since Oct. 21 — provide less than 7% of the population's daily caloric needs. Bread is "scarce or non-existent" after fuel shortages shut down most bakeries, and food supply chains have collapsed, it said.

"With winter fast approaching, unsafe and overcrowded shelters and the lack of clean water, civilians are facing the immediate possibility of starvation," said WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain.

Lack of fuel also brought down the internet and phone network, and it can't be restarted unless Israel lets in fuel, said Palnet, the main Palestinian telecoms provider. That raises the potential for a long-term communications blackout, after three earlier shutdowns that Gaza authorities were able to repair.

The previous blackouts traumatized Palestinians, leaving them unable to call ambulances or reach family members to ensure they are alive. Aid workers say the shutdowns wreak havoc on humanitarian operations and hospitals. Some Palestinians manage to keep up communications using satellite phones or SIM cards that reach Israeli or Egyptian networks.

## **New York judge lifts gag order that barred Donald Trump from maligning court staff in fraud trial**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A gag order that barred Donald Trump from commenting about court personnel after he disparaged a law clerk in his New York civil fraud trial was temporarily lifted Thursday by an appellate judge who raised free speech concerns.

Judge David Friedman of the state's intermediate appeals court issued what's known as a stay — suspending the gag order and allowing the former president to speak freely about court staff while a longer appeals process plays out.

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The trial judge, Arthur Engoron, imposed the gag order Oct. 3 after Trump posted a false comment about the judge's law clerk to social media on the second day of the trial in New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit. James alleges Trump exaggerated his wealth on financial statements used to secure loans and make deals.

Engoron later fined Trump \$15,000 for violating the gag order and expanded it to include his lawyers after they questioned clerk Allison Greenfield's prominent role on the bench, where she sits alongside the judge, exchanging notes and advising him during testimony. Friedman's ruling allows the lawyers to again comment about court staff, as well.

At an emergency hearing Thursday, Friedman questioned Engoron's authority to police what Trump says outside the courtroom. He also disputed the trial judge's contention that restricting the 2024 Republican front-runner's speech was necessary or the right remedy to protect his staff's safety.

"Considering the constitutional and statutory rights at issue an interim stay is granted," Friedman said, announcing his decision as he scribbled it on a court order.

The appellate court intervened after Trump's lawyers filed a lawsuit against Engoron late Wednesday that challenged his gag order as an abuse of power. They sued the judge under a state law known as Article 78, which allows lawsuits over some judicial decisions.

Trump and his lawyers have been increasingly frustrated with Engoron presiding over the non-jury trial in James' lawsuit. Trump, angered by a pretrial fraud ruling imperiling his real estate empire, has called him an "extremely hostile" judge. His lawyers Wednesday asked for a mistrial, citing evidence of "tangible and overwhelming" bias.

Trump and his lawyers have repeatedly criticized Greenfield, contending the former judicial candidate is a partisan voice in Engoron's ear — though both are Democrats.

Engoron did not address the gag order ruling in court Thursday afternoon. Regarding the mistrial motion, he gave James' office until Dec. 8 to respond before he rules.

Several of Trump's lawyers and state lawyers from James' office left the Manhattan trial to attend the emergency hearing at a state appellate courthouse a couple miles away. They sat around a table in a conference room and argued for about 45 minutes before Friedman ruled.

Trump's lawyer Christopher Kise lauded the temporary stay as the "right decision."

Friedman has "allowed President Trump to take full advantage of his constitutional First Amendment rights to talk about bias in his own trial, what he's seeing and witnessing in his own trial — which, frankly, everyone needs to see," Kise said.

Trump didn't wait long to lash out at Greenfield, calling her a "politically biased and out of control, Trump Hating Clerk" in a post to his Truth Social platform Thursday night.

Trump lawyer Alina Habba said she saw no reason to tell Trump to stay quiet about the clerk, telling reporters that James "is continuing to disparage" her client and that "both sides need to be able to speak."

State lawyers and a court system lawyer representing Engoron urged the appellate judge to keep the gag order in place. They argued the trial judge had taken a reasonable step to protect his staff amid increased threats to their safety.

Engoron and his staff have received hundreds of threatening and antisemitic phone calls and letters since the trial began Oct. 2, court system lawyer Lisa Evans said. She blamed Trump's comments about Engoron and Greenfield for amplifying his supporters' anger toward them. Greenfield is "playing Whac-A-Mole now trying to block her number," Evans said.

"It's not that Mr. Trump has directly issued threats to the staff and Judge Engoron, it's that what he's said has led his constituents" to make threats, Evans argued, comparing the potential effect to the Jan. 6 capitol riot and a violent attack on Rep. Nancy Pelosi's husband, Paul.

"That is not political speech. That is threatening behavior and it should be stopped," Evans said.

Kise suggested the safety concerns were overblown, arguing that Engoron was using the guise of threats — and the "hobgoblins of Trump's a bad person and he says bad things" — to keep the ex-president and his lawyers from questioning Greenfield's influence on the trial.

Trump hasn't threatened Greenfield, nor has he disclosed any personal information such as her home

address, Kise said. Meanwhile, he noted, she's routinely photographed sitting next to Engoron by media photographers and videographers covering the trial.

State lawyer Daniel Magy argued that Trump's immense social media audience had made the clerk more of a target for threats. Trump's offending social media post was based on a post by someone else who was followed by just a handful of people.

Both posts included a picture that Greenfield had publicly posted online of her with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, but Trump added a falsehood about her personal life before sending it off to his millions of followers.

Kise on Thursday characterized Trump's addition as "political parody" and Friedman questioned if the blowback for Greenfield was entirely Trump's fault, asking, "If you put something out in public and then it goes viral, who's responsible?"

Engoron fined Trump \$5,000 on Oct. 20 after his post was found to have lingered on his campaign website after the judge ordered it deleted. He added a \$10,000 fine Oct. 26 after Trump commented outside court about "a person who's very partisan sitting alongside" the judge. In an extraordinary moment, Engoron abruptly called Trump to the stand and questioned him before deeming his denial "not credible" and issuing the fine.

## **Mistrial declared after federal jury deadlocks in trial of ex-officer in deadly Breonna Taylor raid**

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Jurors failed to reach a unanimous verdict on federal civil rights charges Thursday in the trial of a former Louisville police officer charged in the police raid that killed Breonna Taylor, prompting the judge to declare a mistrial.

Brett Hankison was charged with using excessive force that violated the rights of Taylor, her boyfriend and her next-door neighbors. Hankison fired 10 shots into the Black woman's window and a glass door after officers came under fire during a flawed drug warrant search on March 13, 2020. Some of his shots flew into a neighboring apartment, but none of them struck anyone.

The 12-member, mostly white jury struggled fruitlessly to reach a verdict over several days. On Thursday afternoon, they sent a note to the judge saying they were at an impasse. U.S. District Judge Rebecca Grady Jennings urged them to keep trying, and they returned to deliberations.

The judge reported there were "elevated voices" coming from the jury room at times during deliberations, and court security officials had to visit the room. Jurors then told the judge Thursday they were deadlocked on both counts against Hankison, and could not come to a decision — prompting Jennings' declaration of a mistrial.

The mistrial could result in a retrial of Hankison, but that would be determined by federal prosecutors at a later date.

Federal prosecutors didn't immediately respond to an email afterward seeking comment.

Before the mistrial was declared, the lead federal prosecutor, Michael Songer, said in court that it would take "enormous resources ... to retry this case." Songer wanted the jury to keep deliberating.

Jennings said she believed the jury would not be able to reach a verdict. "I think the totality of the circumstances may be beyond repair in this case," the judge said. "They have a disagreement that they cannot get past."

Lonita Baker, an attorney for Taylor's family, said afterward that Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, was disappointed with the outcome but remained encouraged "because a mistrial is not an acquittal. And so we live another day to fight for justice for Breonna."

Hankison, 47, was acquitted by a Kentucky jury last year on wanton endangerment charges. State prosecutors had alleged he illegally put Taylor's neighbors in danger. Months after his acquittal last year, the U.S. Department of Justice brought the new charges against Hankison, along with separate charges against a group of other officers involved in crafting the warrant.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said Taylor, a 26-year-old nursing student, "should be alive today" when he announced the federal charges in August 2022. The charges that Hankison faced carried a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Hankison was the only officer who fired his weapon the night of the Taylor raid to be criminally charged. Prosecutors determined that two other officers were justified in returning fire after one was shot in the leg.

Songer said Monday in the trial's closing arguments that Hankison "was a law enforcement officer, but he was not above the law." Songer argued that Hankison couldn't see a target and knew firing blindly into the building was wrong.

Hankison's attorney, Stewart Mathews, countered that he was acting quickly to help his fellow officers, who he believed were being "executed" by a gunman shooting from inside Taylor's apartment. Taylor's boyfriend had fired a single shot when police burst through the door. Her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, said he believed an intruder was barging in.

"If his perception was reasonable in the chaos of that moment, that was not criminal," Mathews said.

The night of the raid, Hankison said he saw the shot from Taylor's boyfriend in the hallway after her door was breached. He backed up and ran around the corner of the building, firing shots into the side of the apartment.

"I had to react," he testified. "I had no choice."

The single shot from Taylor's boyfriend hit former police Sgt. Jonathan Mattingly, who dropped to the ground and fired six shots. Another officer, Myles Cosgrove, fired 16 rounds down the hallway, including the bullet that killed Taylor. Mattingly testified as a defense witness for Hankison in the federal trial, while Cosgrove was called to testify by prosecutors.

Cosgrove was fired by Louisville police along with Hankison. Mattingly retired.

Taylor's death didn't initially garner much attention, but after the death of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May 2020 and the release of Taylor's boyfriend's 911 call, street protests over police brutality erupted around the country. Demonstrators in Louisville shouted Taylor's name for months, along with high-profile Black celebrities like Oprah and LeBron James who demanded accountability for the police officers involved in the case.

Taylor's case also cast intense scrutiny on so-called "no-knock" warrants, which were later banned in the city of Louisville. The warrants allow officers to enter a residence without warning, but in the Taylor raid officers said they knocked and announced their presence. The Louisville police chief at the time was subsequently fired because officers had not used body cameras the night of the raid.

Three other former officers involved in drawing up the warrant have been charged in a separate federal case. One of them, Kelly Goodlett, has pleaded guilty to helping falsify the warrant. She is expected to testify against former detective Joshua Jaynes and former Sgt. Kyle Meany in their trial next year.

Goodlett's guilty plea remains the only criminal conviction of a police officer involved in the Taylor case.

## California professor charged with involuntary manslaughter in the death of Jewish demonstrator

By JOHN ANTCZAK and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A Southern California college professor was charged Thursday with involuntary manslaughter and battery in the death of a Jewish protester during demonstrations over the Israel-Hamas war.

Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko said in a statement that both charges have special allegations that Loay Abdelfattah Alnaji, 50, personally inflicted "great bodily injury" on Paul Kessler, 69, during a confrontation at an event that started as a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Thousand Oaks, a suburb northwest of Los Angeles.

Involuntary manslaughter is the unintentional killing of another person.

A man who answered the phone at a mobile number listed for Alnaji in public records said he did not want to comment. He did not give his name.

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Kessler was among a group of pro-Israel demonstrators who showed up at the event that was advertised as a peaceful gathering to support Palestinians, officials said. Kessler died early Nov. 6 at a hospital, a day after the protest.

The district attorney did not explain what evidence they had to support those charges but planned a news conference for Friday.

Ventura County Sheriff Jim Fryhoff told reporters on Nov. 7 that deputies determined Kessler fell backward and struck his head on the ground but that investigators did not have a clear view from video footage of what they described as a physical altercation between the two men before the fall. He asked the public for help in providing additional footage.

Fryhoff at that time said investigators had not ruled out whether it was a hate crime.

The suspect stayed at the scene and told deputies he had called 911, Fryhoff said, adding that authorities later briefly detained him for questioning and searched his home in Moorpark.

Fryhoff said investigators had received conflicting information from witnesses on both sides about what took place, impairing witness credibility and making it difficult to prove a case beyond a reasonable doubt.

The department did not respond to questions Thursday from The Associated Press as to whether additional footage or other evidence prompted the arrest.

A short video clip surfaced showing Kessler on the ground, but there haven't been any videos released showing the actual confrontation.

County Medical Examiner Dr. Christopher Young said at the time that an autopsy found Kessler died from head injuries consistent with a fall. Young also said Kessler had injuries that could be consistent with a blow to the face but that it was unclear what caused his fall.

Before Alnaji was charged, Edward Obayashi, a former San Diego police officer and special prosecutor, said he was not surprised by the arrest on suspicion of involuntary manslaughter, the lowest level charge for a death. Additional charges, including for a hate crime, could still be considered, said Obayashi, who made one of the first arrests in the state under California's hate crime law more than three decades ago.

"We have a very high profile incident, obviously, given the backdrop of what's going on in the world," he said. "So there is a lot of pressure on the authorities. The default position is making an arrest."

Demonstrations have been widespread and tensions are escalating in the United States as the death toll rises in the Israel-Hamas war.

Alnaji, a professor of computer science at Moorpark College, had espoused pro-Palestinian views on his Facebook page and other social media accounts, many of which have since been taken down, according to the Los Angeles Times.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles said in a statement that it was grateful for the work of sheriff's investigators.

"This arrest shows that violence towards our Jewish community will not be tolerated," the federation said.

Hussam Ayloush, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, California, called it "a tragic situation that is indicative of a very unfortunate accident that no one intended to happen."

"We now await the criminal justice system's process and result and wish that truth and justice will prevail," he said. "We reiterate our strong support for the right of First Amendment political debate, protest, and speech and our unequivocal rejection of all violence, antisemitism, Islamophobia, or incitement of hatred."

## Shohei Ohtani, baseball's 2-way star, becomes first 2-time unanimous MVP

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Shohei Ohtani's injury remains mysterious. His dominance is clear.

After captivating baseball with his unprecedented combination of high-level hitting and premium pitching, the two-way star became the first two-time unanimous Most Valuable Player when he won the American League honor on Thursday.

While Ohtani appeared on the televised Major League Baseball Network announcement, with a dog in

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his lap, the prized free agent did not speak on the media call that had been scheduled to follow.

Major League Baseball said Ohtani was not available due to circumstances beyond his control. He has not spoken with reporters since Aug. 9, two weeks before a pitching injury that required surgery and will keep him off a mound until 2025.

Before Ohtani got hurt while playing for the Los Angeles Angels and had right elbow surgery on Sept. 19, there was wide speculation he could gain the first \$500 million contract in baseball history. Ohtani had Tommy John surgery in October 2018 and his agent, Nez Balelo, did not specify complete details after the latest operation.

Ohtani received all 30 first-place votes and 420 points in voting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America. He was a unanimous MVP in 2021 and finished second to the Yankees' Aaron Judge in voting last year.

Atlanta's Ronald Acuña Jr. won the National League honor, and this year marked the first time since the awards began in 1931 that the winner in each league was unanimous. There have been 21 unanimous MVPs.

Corey Seager was second with 24 second-place votes and 264 points, and Texas teammate Marcus Semien was third with five second-place votes and 216 points. Balloting took place before the postseason, when the Rangers won their first World Series title.

Ohtani led the AL with 44 homers and hit .304 with 96 RBIs, eight triples and 20 stolen bases in a season at the plate that ended Sept. 3 because of an oblique injury.

He was 10-5 with a 3.14 ERA in 23 starts on the mound, striking out 167 and walking 55 in 132 innings before tearing the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow on Aug. 23.

Not even Babe Ruth starred at such lofty levels on the mound and at the plate in the same season. Ruth batted .300 with 11 homers and 61 RBIs in 1918 while going 13-7 with a 2.22 ERA for Boston, then hit .322 with 29 homers and 113 RBIs in 1919 while going 9-5 with a 2.97 ERA. He made just five mound appearances in his final 16 seasons.

Ohtani averaged 96.8 mph with his four-seam fastball, 26th among qualified pitchers, and a 94.4 mph exit velocity off his bat, third among qualified batters behind Judge and Acuña. Ohtani led the majors with a 10.0 Wins Above Replacement, according to Baseball Reference.

A left-handed batter and right-handed pitcher, Ohtani is a three-time All-Star. He has a .274 average, 171 homers, 437 RBIs and 86 steals in six major league seasons and is 38-19 with a 3.01 ERA in 86 starts with 608 strikeouts in 481 2/3 innings.

Ohtani won AL Rookie of the Year in 2018 after leaving the Pacific League's Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters to sign with the Angels. He was voted the Pacific League's MVP in 2016.

Seager earned a \$200,000 bonus for finishing second, and Semien got \$150,000 for finishing third.

Seattle's Julio Rodríguez was fourth with 197 points. Houston's Kyle Tucker got one second-place vote and was fifth with 178 points.

## Harbaugh to serve out suspension, Big Ten ends Michigan sign-stealing investigation in settlement

By RALPH D. RUSSO and LARRY LAGE AP Sports Writers

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Michigan announced Thursday that football coach Jim Harbaugh will serve the remainder of a three-game suspension from the Big Ten in return for the conference ending its investigation into a scheme to steal opponents' play-calling signals.

The settlement between the parties is the latest twist in a monthlong saga involving one of college football's most recognizable programs, one of its most successful coaches, and allegations a low-level Michigan staffer purchased tickets to the games of the Wolverines' future opponents and sent people to those games to digitally record teams signaling in their plays.

"Coach Harbaugh, with the university's support, decided to accept this sanction to return the focus to our student-athletes and their performance on the field," Michigan said in a statement. "The conference has confirmed that it is not aware of any information suggesting Coach Harbaugh's involvement in the

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allegations. The university continues to cooperate fully with the NCAA's investigation."

Harbaugh was suspended last Friday by the Big Ten, three weeks after an investigation by the NCAA into the allegations emerged. Michigan hours later asked a court for an injunction and temporary restraining order, but Harbaugh did not coach the team against Penn State on Saturday.

The two sides were expected in court Friday in Ann Arbor, but instead Michigan and Harbaugh dropped the complaint and Harbaugh will miss games at Maryland on Saturday and at home against No. 3 Ohio State on Nov. 25.

He will continue to be permitted to coach the team during the week. The penalty is only for game days.

"The University of Michigan is a valued member of the Big Ten Conference and the Conference will continue to work cooperatively with the University and the NCAA during this process," the Big Ten said in a statement.

No. 2 Michigan is among the favorites to win a national title and is looking for its third straight Big Ten championship and College Football Playoff appearance.

The NCAA investigation surfaced four weeks ago amid allegations that Michigan had used a robust in-person scouting and sign-stealing operation conducted by a recruiting analyst, Connor Stalions, who has since resigned after being suspended by the school. The Big Ten said at the time it was also looking into the allegations.

The NCAA does not have rules against stealing signs, but it does prohibit schools from sending scouts to the games of future opponents and using electronic equipment to record another team's signals.

The NCAA process is slow moving, but the Big Ten's rules gave Commissioner Tony Petitti the opportunity to hand down discipline more quickly. It hit Harbaugh with a three-game suspension, which the school immediately challenged.

University leaders made the decision to settle the case because the Big Ten would not agree to reduce Harbaugh's suspension to two games. The school also didn't want to drag the dispute into court and negotiated for the conference to close its investigation, according to a person familiar with the matter.

That person spoke Thursday with The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to share the school's rationale.

Combined with a previously served school-imposed, three-game suspension for an unrelated NCAA infractions case tied to recruiting, Harbaugh will miss half the Wolverines' regular-season games this season.

He has repeatedly denied any involvement with Stalions' apparent scheme.

Harbaugh called Michigan "America's team" earlier this week for continuing to win under the cloud of the scandal.

"America loves a team that beats the odds, beats the adversity, overcomes what the naysayers and so-called experts think," he said Monday.

Multiple Big Ten schools have records showing ticket purchases under Stalions' name going back as much as three years and video surveillance footage of people in those seats with cell phones pointed toward the field.

Angry and frustrated Big Ten coaches and athletic directors pushed Petitti to punish Harbaugh before the NCAA concluded its investigation.

When the Big Ten did, Michigan claimed the commissioner overstepped his authority and acted outside the conference's bylaws.

Athletic director Warde Manuel released a scathing statement Saturday right before Michigan kicked off at Penn State — a game the Wolverines won 24-15.

"Not liking someone or another university or believing without any evidence that they knew or saying someone should have known without an investigation is not grounds to remove someone from their position before the NCAA process has reached a conclusion through a full NCAA investigative process," Manuel said.

He added: "You may have removed him from our sidelines today, but Jim Harbaugh is our head football coach," Manuel said.

Harbaugh could return if Michigan makes the Big Ten championship game on Dec. 2. The winner of the Michigan-Ohio State game will determine which of the heated rivals plays for the Big Ten championship



and maybe a spot in the playoff.

## Atlanta to host 2025 MLB All-Star Game after losing 2021 game over objections to voting law

By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Major League Baseball will play its 2025 All-Star Game in Atlanta, four years after moving the event from Truist Park to Denver's Coors Field over objections to changes in Georgia's voting rights laws.

Atlanta was awarded the 2021 All-Star Game in May 2019, but MLB moved it in April 2021, just three months before the game was played.

"I made the decision in 2021 to move the event, and I understand, believe me, that people had then and probably still have different views as to the merits of that decision," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Thursday during an announcement that followed an owners' meeting.

Next year's All-Star Game will be at Arlington's Globe Life Field and the 2026 game will be in Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park to mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

"We are thrilled that Major League Baseball has awarded the Atlanta Braves the 2025 All-Star Game," team chairman Terry McGuirk said. "Time and time again, Atlanta has proven to be a world-class destination for the most exciting entertainment and sporting events."

Critics complained in 2021 that the voting rights changes in Georgia were too restrictive. Manfred made the decision to move the All-Star events and the amateur draft from Atlanta after discussions with individual players and the Players Alliance, an organization of Black players formed after the death of George Floyd in 2020.

Civil rights and voting advocacy groups, as well as the U.S. Department of Justice, filed lawsuits challenging the law shortly after it was signed by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican. They accused the Republican majority in the state legislature of trying to deny Black people and other voters of color equal access to the ballot box in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act.

They alleged that Republicans were trying to maintain a tenuous hold on the state after major Democratic wins in 2020. Former President Donald Trump narrowly lost Georgia to Democrat Joe Biden and two Republican U.S. senators were unseated by Democrats in runoff elections.

"Georgia's voting laws haven't changed, but it's good to see the MLB's misguided understanding of them has," Kemp said in a statement Thursday. "We look forward to welcoming the All-Star Game to Georgia."

This will be the third time Atlanta has hosted the All-Star Game — at three different ballparks.

The 1972 Midsummer Classic was held at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, the home of the Braves after the team moved from Milwaukee in 1966.

After Atlanta was awarded the 1996 Summer Olympics, a new stadium was built just south of the original cookie-cutter facility. It was converted into a baseball park known as Turner Field and became the new home of the Braves, welcoming a second All-Star Game in 2000.

The Braves moved to suburban Truist Park in 2017, swayed by a deal clearing them to build an adjacent mixed-use development known as The Battery, which includes hotels, apartments, restaurants and shops. The complex has become a model for other cities looking to build glitzy new stadiums and arenas.

"What's most important is that the Atlanta Braves are a great organization. Truist Park and The Battery are gems in terms of the facilities," Manfred said. "With their great fan base and rich history, Atlanta deserves an All-Star Game and we're really looking forward to being there in 2025."

The voting right litigation is ongoing, but a federal judge last month declined to block several contested portions of the law while the legal challenges play out. U.S. District Judge J.P. Boulee wrote plaintiffs have not proven "at this stage of the proceedings" that any of the provisions have a disparate impact on Black voters or that state lawmakers knew that it would have a disparate impact on minority voters.

That means the challenged portions of the law likely will remain in effect at least through the 2024 election cycle.

## The protests outside DNC headquarters signal the divides in Biden's base over Israel-Hamas war

By WILL WEISSERT, CHRIS MEGERIAN and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — National Democrats this year have insisted the party is united and ready to rally around President Joe Biden heading into next year's election. But a protest outside the Democratic National Committee headquarters signals growing tension within the coalition that has propelled Democrats to victory in recent elections.

Clashing with police Wednesday night were demonstrators calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and criticizing Biden's support of Israel's offensive following the Oct. 7 Hamas attack. Inside the building were Democrats organizing to try to take back the U.S. House next year, including moderates from swing states Biden flipped from former President Donald Trump.

Both the protesters and the members of Congress on Thursday said they were shaken and angry at the other side. Rep. Debbie Dingell of Michigan, a longtime Biden ally, said: "We were so close. I mean, I was just on the other side of that door. I was rattled."

The political symbolism of a violent confrontation outside the DNC isn't lost on some activists who are trying to pressure Biden by warning that he's putting his reelection in danger. Even small cracks in Biden's 2020 coalition could hurt his 2024 chances in what's looking likely to be a rematch with Trump.

"The Democratic Party and the Democratic leadership is not aligned and is not listening to us," said Dani Noble with Jewish Voice for Peace, who helped organize the demonstration and said that 90 participants were injured by police during it.

Biden allies noted that some of the groups who organized the DNC protest are aligned with the far left, outside the party's mainstream. DNC chairman Jaime Harrison posted on X, formerly Twitter: "As Americans we have a right to demonstrate peacefully, but violence is never acceptable."

Biden and first lady Jill Biden called Thursday into a DNC and campaign staff meeting to salute law enforcement for keeping everyone safe and thank "the staffers for all they do," the White House said.

David Eichenbaum, a veteran consultant who worked on Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear's reelection last week in otherwise reliably Republican Kentucky, said he thinks "Americans expect their president to show leadership, and that involves making tough decisions."

"He's led with his values on this," Eichenbaum said of Biden, adding, "You're always better off when you lead and you govern with your values. Voters don't want somebody who tries to please everybody. Because you can't please everybody and then they see through that."

The U.S. is providing weapons and intelligence support to Israel as it mounts an offensive into Gaza with the goal of rooting out Hamas following its Oct. 7 attack, which killed more than 1,200 people. Biden has spoken repeatedly with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and says he's working for the release of Hamas-held hostages, including some Americans.

More than 11,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of whom are women and minors, have been killed since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. About 2,700 people have been reported missing. The mounting death toll has led to calls in parts of the U.S. and the world for a ceasefire. Israel has declined one so far.

The president's handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has sharply divided members of his party, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll released last week. The poll found 50% of Democrats approved and 46% of Democrats disapproved of how the president is handling the conflict. Of those who disapprove, 65% say the U.S. is too supportive of Israel.

Wednesday's violent confrontation came while Biden was in San Francisco for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. He met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and later announced that the two countries had agreed to work together to better combat fentanyl production and reestablish direct military-to-military communications — potentially politically valuable foreign policy wins.

The White House and Biden's re-election campaign also say they're listening to the concerns of both Jewish and Arab voters and staffers.

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A senior White House official involved directly with Arab-American outreach said that a call led every day since Hamas' initial attack by Anita Dunn, one of Biden's top political advisers, discusses the war in Gaza and how to increase engagement with Jewish-American and Muslim-American communities.

The official said that other efforts by the White House include former DNC chair Tom Perez, who is now a senior advisor to the president, calling state lawmakers in Michigan to discuss issues around the war. The person was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

White House spokesperson Andrew Bates said the Biden administration has pushed for humanitarian pauses in the fighting and getting aid into Gaza and that "fighting against the poison of antisemitism and standing up for Israel's sovereign right to defend itself have always been core values for President Biden."

Still, organizers calling for a ceasefire are pledging more demonstrations. That raises the prospect of repeated disruptions at campaign events and next year's Democratic National Convention in Chicago — more than half a century after Vietnam War demonstrations marred the 1968 convention in that city. Democrat Hubert Humphrey would lose that fall to Republican Richard Nixon.

"I thought the Democratic Party was the party of peace and treating people equally," said Eva Borgwardt, a spokesperson for IfNotNow, a group of American Jews who oppose Israeli government policies. Borgwardt said she helped turn out Democratic voters in Arizona, which Biden won in 2020 by just over 10,000 votes.

"I know how crucial motivation and faith in the party is to be able to turn out people to vote," she said. "And right now, I know so many young voters, including Jewish voters, who are looking at the actions of our Democratic leadership and being completely horrified and disillusioned."

But Rep. Hillary Scholten, a first-term representative from Grand Rapids, Michigan, said the protesters on Wednesday "chose violence" and were a "fringe element."

"They chose to trap multiple members of Congress inside of a building to prevent their movement, including members of senior leadership in our Democratic Party," said Scholten, who became the first Democrat to represent Michigan's second-largest city since the mid-1970s. "That is an extreme ratcheting up of the violence and whether that is a continued pattern, I think, remains to be seen."

And Illinois Rep. Sean Casten, who was also inside the DNC during the protest, said that true leadership meant delivering "the greatest good for the greatest number — even if that's unpopular."

"The unanimity of the Democratic Party, broadly speaking, in support of President Biden, reflects a party that's willing to do the right thing in the first instance," he said.

## **MLB owners approve A's move from Oakland to Las Vegas, with a new ballpark to open in 2028**

By STEPHEN HAWKINS and RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writers

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — One of Rob Manfred's first trips after his election as baseball commissioner nine years ago was to Oakland to consult with Athletics owner John Fisher on attempts to keep the team in the Bay Area.

Unable together to make that work, the A's will instead move to Las Vegas and become only the second Major League Baseball team in more than a half-century to shift cities.

All 30 MLB team owners gave their approval Thursday to Fisher's relocation plan, which was endorsed by Manfred.

"There was an effort over more than a decade to find a stadium solution in Oakland. It was John Fisher's preference. It was my preference," Manfred said at a news conference. "This is a terrible day for fans in Oakland. I understand that and that's why we've always had a policy of doing everything humanly possible to avoid a relocation, and truly believe we did that in this case. I think it's beyond debate that the status quo in Oakland was untenable."

After years of complaints about the Oakland Coliseum that predated Manfred's appointment, and an inability to negotiate government assistance for a new ballpark in the Bay Area, the A's plan to move to a stadium to be built on the Las Vegas Strip with \$380 million in public financing approved by the Nevada government. The team plans for the ballpark to open in 2028. MLB approved Clark County as its operating

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territory following the move and Nevada as its television territory.

"I understand that this is an incredibly difficult day for Oakland fans, and I just want to say we gave every effort and did everything we could to try and find a solution there," said Fisher, who didn't take questions. "I'm very excited about the opportunity in Vegas. The fans there are terrific."

Players' association head Tony Clark declined comment on the decision.

Since the Washington Senators became the Texas Rangers for 1972, the only other team to relocate was the Montreal Expos, who became the Washington Nationals in 2005.

The Athletics' lease at the Coliseum runs through 2024, and they will remain next season at the outdated and run-down stadium where they have played since moving to California in 1968. It remains unclear where the team will play after that until a new ballpark opens.

Manfred said a variety of alternatives are being explored, including the A's possibly staying at the Coliseum in the interim period. He said the preference will be to "find an 81-game home" for the team, unlike the unique situation with the Blue Jays in 2021, when pandemic travel restrictions caused MLB to shift home games to the team's spring training facility in Dunedin, Florida, and then its Triple-A ballpark in Buffalo, New York, before going back to Toronto at midseason.

Las Vegas will become the A's fourth city, the most for a MLB team. The A's played in Philadelphia from 1901-54, then moved to Kansas City for 13 seasons before going to California. Before the Coliseum, the team played at Columbia Park (1901-08), Shibe Park (1909-54) and Memorial Stadium (1955-67).

The A's in 2006 proposed a ballpark in Fremont, about 25 miles south in the East Bay, but abandoned the plan three years later. San Jose, 40 miles south of Oakland, was proposed in 2012 but the San Francisco Giants blocked the site because it was part of that team's territory. The A's chose a site in the Oakland area near Laney College, but after it was rejected by the college and neighbors, the franchise focused on the Howard Terminal area of Oakland. Some approvals were gained, but no financial plans ever came into place.

The team announced April 19 it had purchased land in Las Vegas, then a month later replaced that location with a deal with Bally's and Gaming & Leisure Properties to build a stadium on the Tropicana hotel site along the Las Vegas Strip.

"This relocation will bring thousands of new jobs to our state, while also generating historic economic development and providing a return on public investment for the direct benefit of Nevada taxpayers," Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo said in a statement.

Nevada's Legislature and Lombardo approved public financing for a \$1.5 billion, 30,000-seat ballpark with a retractable roof that will be close to Allegiant Stadium, where the NFL's Oakland Raiders moved to in 2020, and T-Mobile Arena, where the current Stanley Cup champion Vegas Golden Knights started play in 2017 as an expansion team.

"The success of the Raiders and the Golden Knights has shown — as well as our own Triple-A team, the Aviators — has shown just how successful professional sports can be in that market," Fisher said.

Oakland traded veterans and finished an MLB-worst 50-112 this season and was again last in average attendance at 10,276 per game. Manfred defended Fisher, who has been harshly criticized by A's supporters.

"I understand the fans' reaction to what happened in 2022 in terms of the moves that were made," Manfred said. "I also understand that when you play in a substandard facility — fan support, it is not as strong as what we have in some other markets that it affects your economics and what you can afford to do. So my answer is over the long haul, yes, I think he's been a good owner."

While San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose is the 10th-largest television market in the U.S., Las Vegas is the 40th. Clark last month questioned whether the shift to a smaller city would put the team on a path of needed perpetual assistance under MLB's revenue-sharing plan.

MLB is able to control city changes because of the sport's antitrust exemption, granted by a 1922 U.S. Supreme Court decision. In the last half-century, the NFL has seen moves by the Raiders (Oakland to Los Angeles, back to Oakland and then Las Vegas), the Colts (Baltimore to Indianapolis), the Cardinals (St. Louis to Phoenix), the Rams (Los Angeles to St. Louis and back to LA), the Oilers (Houston to Nashville)

and the Chargers (San Diego to Los Angeles).

Manfred also announced Thursday that Atlanta will host the 2025 All-Star Game.

## **Beef is a way of life in Texas, but it's hard on the planet. This rancher thinks she can change that**

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

ROSTON, Texas (AP) — The cattle part as Meredith Ellis edges her small four-wheeler through the herd, silently counting the cows and their calves. It's the way she starts most days on her 3,000-acre Texas ranch: ensuring all the cattle are safe, deciding when they should move to another pasture, and checking that the grass is as healthy as her animals.

"We're looking for the sweet spot where the land and cattle help each other," Ellis says as she rumbles down a narrow dirt road to check on another herd. "You want to find that balance."

Much of Ellis' work evolved from the ranching her father practiced for decades. Her parents built this ranch, and it's where Ellis was raised, roaming with her brother through pastures, creeks and hardwood forests as the family added land and cattle over the years.

Now it's Ellis' turn to make the decisions. She's implemented changes her father couldn't dream of — because for her and other ranchers, their livelihoods and the future of the planet are on the line.

For generations, beef has been a way of life in Texas, the most quintessential of American main courses, and a premium protein around the world. It's also the single most damaging food for the planet. Beef is the largest agricultural source of greenhouse gasses worldwide, and it has a bigger carbon footprint than any other type of protein.

Climate scientists say the answer is simple: Eat less beef and raise fewer cattle. But even with the wide availability of plant protein and the popularity of initiatives like Meatless Monday, most people around the world are consuming more beef, not less. And as the population grows and more people move into the middle class, demand is only expected to grow.

**EDITORS' NOTE** — This story is part of The Protein Problem, an AP series that examines the question: Can we feed this growing world without starving the planet? To see the full project, visit <https://projects.apnews.com/features/2023/the-protein-problem/index.html>

Ellis finds herself at ground zero. Texas has by far the most cattle in the U.S., which is the biggest producer of beef in the world. Here, beef has long been a staple of Americana, from cowboy Westerns and cattle drives to barbecue joints and meat judging contests. And it's here that Ellis believes she can make a difference.

"I don't want to do this if it isn't good for the environment," Ellis said. "I want ranching to be part of the climate solution."

Researchers and a growing number of ranchers agree — they believe there are solutions that address climate change and fill demand, for a world in which people can buy, cook and eat beef with a clear conscience. They point to efforts to change how cattle are raised to retain more carbon in the ground, to develop feed supplements that reduce gas releases, and to make genetic breakthroughs so animals digest their food without brewing up harmful gases.

For Ellis, the solution lies in the practice of regenerative ranching. In theory, it's a holistic way to look at the earth, animals, and water — and how they all interact. In practice, it's an exhausting, never-ending process of moving her cattle to different pastures in an effort to restore the soil.

"What I'm looking to do is make a major impact and completely redefine the beef industry," Ellis, 41, said. "I want to take everyone with me."

### THE BASICS OF BEEF

Ellis took over the family ranch, north of Dallas, in 2013. She's faced all the critical questions surround-

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ing the beef industry: How can ranchers keep up with inflation? How can producers wrestle back some control in an industry dominated by multinational slaughterhouse companies? Should herd numbers be reduced amid long-term drought?

But no issue has been more important than beef's contribution to climate change. Cattle belch out serious amounts of greenhouse gases, especially methane — about 220 pounds a year of methane, which is 80 times more harmful than carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas spewed out by cars.

Cattle do it by bathing their swallowed food in about 40 gallons of liquid teeming with microbes. Those little bugs create the energy that feed cattle, but they also ferment the food, brewing up lots of methane, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide that cows release.

Cows are classified as ruminant mammals, which means they regurgitate, chew and rechew the cud until it can be properly digested. Once broken down, another chamber of the stomach, the omasum, filters out everything but water and the finest food particles. When food reaches the final stomach of the cow, the abomasum, the digestion system starts to look very similar to that of other animals, where acids further break down food and allow for the absorption of nutrients.

It's the same with all ruminant animals, from wild deer to domesticated goats and sheep. Cattle get more attention because there are so many of them — 90 million in the U.S. — and because their size means a lot of gas.

Most cattle are fed grain — largely corn — in their final months of life, in feedlots. Growing that grain also produces greenhouse gases, from diesel burned in farm equipment and fertilizer sprayed on fields.

Overall, beef production creates enough carbon that cutting herd sizes by even 10% to 20% could make a difference, experts agree.

They also agree that reducing consumption, particularly in America, is a clear place to start. Americans eat the equivalent of about three hamburgers a week, research shows, and if they cut that in half and instead export U.S. beef to other countries, the world would have a greater chance of meeting demand without cutting forests and expanding cattle grazing lands.

That's because the U.S. beef industry is much more efficient than that of most other countries, thanks to higher-quality feed, better animal genetics and use of feedlots. The U.S. produces 18% of the world's beef with about 6% of its cattle.

## SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

For Ellis, regenerative ranching is not only the most efficient but the most environmentally responsible route. Growing up in the tiny community of Rosston, Ellis dreamed of moving to a big city, far from Texas.

After high school, she studied landscape architecture at the University of New Mexico, but little by little, her dreams changed. The more she learned about land use and design, the more she wanted to preserve and improve her family's land.

"It dawned on me just how very special this land was," she said, "and I realized the importance of coming home and continuing for all of us."

That thinking eventually led her to the theories of regenerative ranching, which harken back to the 30 million bison that once thundered through the Plains states. Herds would seemingly annihilate grasslands by eating all the vegetation and pummeling the ground with their hoofs. The ground looked trashed, but those hoofs stimulated the soil, and the animals coated the ground with nitrogen-rich waste. Then, the animals left for months or even years, allowing grasses to grow and establish deep, sturdy roots.

Regenerative ranchers try to do roughly the same by moving cattle frequently. They're kept in spaces where they can trample the grass and soil and then move on, allowing the land to recover for weeks or months. The goal is to produce more grass that will generate deep roots to take carbon from the air and permanently store it underground.

For Ellis, regenerative ranching means moving her family's herd of 320 cows, calves and heifers plus several bulls through 58 fenced pastures. Ellis and her ranch manager further subdivide those pastures using temporary, electrified line they can quickly string to confine cattle in even smaller areas.

In daily checks, they examine not only the animals but the grass. By building it to be resilient and hardy, Ellis wants not only to store more carbon but to reduce the need for hay or other feed that use up more

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land.

"It's a state of symbiosis to where the cattle benefit from the land and the land benefit from the cattle," said Ellis, whose family in years past left cattle for much longer periods on far larger pastures.

In most ranches, that's still how it's done. Thousands of ranchers are incorporating regenerative practices but only a small percentage have completely transformed their operations because they don't think it's necessary or aren't able to devote the time, labor and land to such an effort.

Ellis has opened her ranch to researchers from the nonprofit Ecosystem Services Market Consortium for readings from hundreds of sites. So far, their study shows Ellis' work is making a difference: Each year the ranch is sequestering about 2,500 tons of atmospheric carbon dioxide — equivalent to the annual emissions from about 500 cars. And that number has inched up as Ellis makes more changes at the ranch.

Randy Jackson, an agronomy professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, cites efforts like Ellis' and argues the U.S. needs more cattle grazing, not less: "Well-managed grazing on perennial grasslands is our best and maybe our only hope of helping to mitigate climate change."

## INDUSTRYWIDE, CHANGE IS UNDERWAY

Even as ranchers like Ellis push ahead with their practices, other efforts are gaining traction to mitigate ranching's effect on climate, with some of the most promising work revolving around genetics.

At Scotland's Rural College, animal genetics professor Rainer Roehe has used breeding based on genetic traits to reduce methane emissions in cattle by 17% for each generation, with those traits passing on to future offspring and cutting methane emissions by 50% over 10 years.

Genetics professor Ann Staiger at Texas A&M University, Kingsville, also is exploring cattle genetics with help from a \$4.7 million federal grant in hopes of determining which breeds produce less greenhouse gases.

"Greenhouse gas emissions are highly correlated with feed intake, so if we can find the cattle that have lower feed intake, we'll also measure their greenhouse gas emissions and hopefully see that tie," Staiger said.

New Zealand has been especially aggressive in seeking ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As the government pursues plans to tax farmers for their animals' methane emissions, researchers are studying everything from genetics to vaccines and supplements.

And at the University of California-Davis and Colorado State University, research centers on supplements that can be fed to dairy cows and beef cattle on feedlots, where most U.S. cattle spend their final four to six months before slaughter.

Feedlots can be ugly, with manure runoff and animals standing on packed dirt with little shade. But they have advantages: Steady feed enables cattle to put on weight more quickly, and the less time a cow lives, the less greenhouse gases produced.

The Colorado State effort, led by a new group called AgNext, hopes to reduce those gases further and delve into other sustainability issues with its testing of cattle supplements at a small feedlot built near its main Fort Collins campus. AgNext is partially funded with money from the beef industry; researchers say they have limited federal funds and want to work closely with producers to implement findings.

At AgNext, the methane, carbon and other gases that cattle breathe out are measured in feeders called green bins, and other equipment keeps track of how much they eat and weigh. It's all an effort to take out the guesswork and analyze how cattle respond to the experimental feeds, or supplements.

AgNext is headed by Kim Stackhouse-Lawson, a professor of animal science whose livestock fascination dates to age 6, when she met her first sheep at a Northern California fair. By high school, she was raising a flock of 400. Now, she wants to lead AgNext and the industry to quick, dramatic improvements.

"It was what was needed," she said of AgNext. "A new way to think about partnering a university with a supply chain, and a new group of people to focus just on innovation, to really transform the way we raise animals."

On an icy March morning, that innovation starts just after dawn with 21-year-old graduate student Maya Swenson.

She oversees one of the first projects at AgNext, and she'll get plenty warm tearing open and lifting

50-pound bags of minerals and supplements, then blending a "cattle casserole" to be mixed in a truck with tons of grass feed.

Alfalfa pellets act as a treat to attract cattle to the green bins and then keep them eating while gas emissions are measured.

The cows — backs covered in snow, breath creating white clouds in the cold air — are important to Swenson, who hopes to bring more sustainable practices to the industry.

"I want to be on that side of: How we are taking what we've learned and giving it to producers so they can improve their operations?" she said.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING"

Ellis has seen how global warming is altering her land. She calls it an "existential crisis," the backdrop to the endless to-do list that comes with regenerative ranching.

After a long day, she likes to take a moment to remember why she does it. Standing with her 6-year-old son on a cool evening, they watch over a gate as dozens of cows graze amid the lush grass and a setting sun.

"I could stand here all evening," she says.

Ellis knows she could make more money selling in a niche market. Others in Texas' regenerative ranching circles have taken to social media to promote their cattle to people who don't know the difference between a heifer and a Holstein. It can be lucrative, leading to consulting deals and top-tier prices for cows sold directly to consumers.

Ellis could find customers, with one of the nation's largest metro areas only an hour's drive away. Plenty of people would pay for beef raised on a ranch like hers — with more than 500 species of plants and animals, and clear streams and shady groves that shelter her cattle from the Texas heat.

But Ellis has other plans.

She's taken a leadership role in a group that wants to see industry-wide change, with animal welfare and land sustainability practices eventually leading to higher prices for ranchers who adapt.

She also knows she could make millions selling her land for development into a subdivision of tidy suburban homes — it's already happening a few miles down the road. But she can't bring herself to do it.

She figures that keeping the land as a ranch and doubling down on her efforts represent a multimillion-dollar investment in the future of the planet.

"That is the most important thing I could possibly do with my life," Ellis said. "At the end of the day, no amount of money or anything could persuade me to do otherwise."

## Man who attacked Pelosi's husband convicted of federal assault and attempted kidnapping charges

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A jury on Thursday convicted the man who broke into former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco home last year of federal charges for seeking to hold her hostage and attacking her husband with a hammer.

Jurors deliberated for about eight hours before finding David DePape guilty of attempted kidnapping of a federal official and assault on the immediate family member of a federal official. DePape, who faces up to 50 years in prison, did not react as the verdict was read.

The attack on then-82-year-old Paul Pelosi that was captured on police body camera video just days before the midterm elections sent shockwaves through the political world.

DePape, 43, admitted during trial testimony that he broke into the Pelosis' home on Oct. 28, 2022, intending to hold Nancy Pelosi hostage and "break her kneecaps" if she lied to him. He also admitted to bludgeoning Paul Pelosi with a hammer after San Francisco police officers showed up at the home, saying his plan to end what he viewed as government corruption was unraveling.

Defense attorneys argued that DePape was motivated by his political beliefs, not because he wanted to interfere with Nancy Pelosi's official duties as a member of Congress, making the charges against him



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invalid. One of his attorneys, Angela Chuang, told jurors during closing arguments Wednesday that DePape was caught up in conspiracies.

At a news conference outside the federal courthouse where the verdict was read, U.S. Attorney Ismail Ramsey told reporters: "People can believe what they want and engage in passionate debate. But this guilty verdict on all counts sends a clear message that regardless of what your beliefs are, what you cannot do is physically attack a member of Congress or their immediate family for the performance of their job."

Defense attorneys did not comment on the verdict.

A sentencing date has not yet been set. A status hearing is scheduled for Dec. 13.

DePape, a Canadian citizen who moved to the U.S. more than 20 years ago, also is charged in state court with assault with a deadly weapon, elder abuse, residential burglary and other felonies. A state trial date will be set during a Nov. 29 hearing, said San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins. She said her office will confer with federal prosecutors and the Pelosis to determine next steps.

During his testimony, DePape echoed right-wing conspiracy theories and told jurors he had planned to wear an inflatable unicorn costume and record his interrogation of Nancy Pelosi to upload it online. Prosecutors say he had rope and zip ties with him. Detectives also found body cameras, a computer and a tablet.

DePape testified that his plan was to get Nancy Pelosi to admit that she had been lying to the American people. "If she lied, I would break her kneecaps," he said. "The choice is on her."

He said he would then move to other targets, including a women's and queer studies professor who testified at the trial, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, actor Tom Hanks and President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden.

Paul Pelosi also testified, recalling how he was awakened by a large man bursting into the bedroom door and asking, "Where's Nancy?" He said that when he responded that his wife was in Washington, DePape said he would tie him up while they waited for her.

"It was a tremendous sense of shock to recognize that somebody had broken into the house and looking at him and looking at the hammer and the ties, I recognized that I was in serious danger, so I tried to stay as calm as possible," Pelosi told jurors.

Pelosi recounted how he managed to call 911 with DePape looking on, urging Pelosi to tell police that he was a friend. Pelosi said he tried to tell police what was happening without aggravating DePape.

Pelosi recalled being thankful when the police arrived, only for DePape to then hit him with the hammer. He said he woke up in a pool of his own blood.

More than a year after the attack, he still hasn't fully recovered, Pelosi said. A neurosurgeon who operated on him testified that Pelosi had two wounds on his head, including a fracture to his skull that had to be mended with plates and screws he will have for the rest of his life. Pelosi also needed stitches on injuries to his right arm and hand, the surgeon said.

A spokesperson for Nancy Pelosi issued a statement after the verdict was announced saying Paul Pelosi "continues to make progress in his recovery" and that the family was grateful for the outpouring of support for him from people across the U.S..

DePape testified he thought Paul Pelosi was dead until he saw he was charged by San Francisco prosecutors with attempted murder.

"He was never my target and I'm sorry that he got hurt," DePape said.

He told jurors he believed news outlets repeatedly lied about former President Donald Trump. In rants posted on a blog and online forum that were taken down after his arrest, DePape echoed the baseless, right-wing QAnon conspiracy theory that claims the U.S. government is run by a cabal of devil-worshipping pedophiles. He repeated QAnon-like conspiracies during his testimony, referring to a cabal and the ruling elite and saying they are eroding Americans' liberty and allowing the abuse of children.

## Longtime Israeli policy foes are leading US protests against Israel's action in Gaza. Who are they?

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

As the Israel-Hamas war rages in Gaza, there's a bitter battle for public opinion flaring in the United States, with angry rallies on many college campuses and disruptive protests at prominent venues in several major cities.

Among the catalysts are Palestinian and Jewish-led groups that have been active for years in opposing Israeli policies toward the Palestinians and who now demand a cease-fire in Gaza. They have clashed with pro-Israel groups in the past, and are again now.

The groups have roots in a movement known as BDS, which calls for the boycott, divestment and sanction of Israel.

That campaign generated heated rhetoric long before Hamas militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7 and Israel launched its counteroffensive. Advocates wrote op-eds for campus newspapers with appeals to protect Palestinian human rights, often accusing Israel of colonialism and racism.

Now groups involved in those earlier efforts are playing a key role protesting the latest fighting, with actions on campuses and beyond. Protests have led to disruptions on Capitol Hill, at a major train station in Chicago and New York City's Grand Central Station.

They also helped organize a demonstration Wednesday night outside Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington which led to clashes between police and protesters.

Who are the groups involved?

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE

Jewish Voice for Peace, founded in 1996, describes itself as "the largest progressive Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the world."

"We're organizing a grassroots, multiracial, cross-class, intergenerational movement of U.S. Jews in solidarity with the Palestinian freedom struggle, guided by a vision of justice, equality, and dignity for all people," the group says on its website.

It claims more than 300,000 supporters, has 1 million followers on X, formerly known as Twitter, and maintains chapters on many U.S. college campuses. Its Columbia University chapter was suspended Friday for allegedly violating university policies on holding campus events.

After the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Chicago-based Rabbi Brant Rosen, co-founder of JVP's Rabbinical Council, said he grieved for fellow Jews who were killed, yet maintained solidarity with Palestinians.

The Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish advocacy group that frequently speaks out against antisemitism and extremism, assails JVP as "a radical anti-Israel and anti-Zionist activist group that advocates for the boycott of Israel and eradication of Zionism."

In its 2021 federal tax returns, JVP reported revenue of nearly \$2.9 million; it says the vast bulk of its income is from individual contributions.

IFNOTNOW

IfNotNow was founded during the 2014 Israel-Hamas war, when more than 2,000 Palestinians were killed as Israeli forces launched airstrikes and a ground invasion in response to rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel.

"Young Jews angered by the overwhelmingly hawkish response of American Jewish institutions came together under the banner of IfNotNow," the group says on its website. Its stated goal: "Organizing our community to end U.S. support for Israel's apartheid system and demand equality, justice, and a thriving future for all Palestinians and Israelis."

In the early days of the current Israel-Hamas war, IfNotNow condemned the killings of civilians on both sides, while reiterating its criticisms of Israeli policy.

"We cannot and will not say today's actions by Palestinian militants are unprovoked," the group said on Oct. 7. "The strangling siege on Gaza is a provocation. Settlers terrorizing entire Palestinian villages, soldiers raiding and demolishing Palestinian homes. ... These are the provocations of the most extreme

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right-wing government in Israel's history."

Eva Borgwardt, IfNotNow's political director, said the group organized prayer services in some cities for Jews who wanted to mourn both Jews and Palestinians killed in the conflict.

The Anti-Defamation League has accused IfNotNow of "extreme" criticism of the Israeli government and "divisive rhetoric, some of which may be offensive to members of the mainstream Jewish community."

IfNotNow claims tens of thousands of members and supporters. According to tax forms, its total revenue in 2021 was just under \$397,000.

## STUDENTS FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE

Students for Justice in Palestine has been on U.S. campuses for decades, with frequent protests urging the liberation of Palestinians and boycotts against Israel.

The loosely connected network, known as SJP, says it has more than 200 chapters across the U.S. and Canada. On its website it says its mission is "to empower, unify, and support student organizers as they push forward demands for Palestinian liberation & self-determination on their campuses." Last month, it joined calls for a national student walkout on college campuses.

The Anti-Defamation League accuses it of anti-Israel propaganda "laced with inflammatory and at times combative rhetoric."

Increasingly SJP has run afoul of college administrators, including at George Washington University, Arizona State University and Brandeis University.

Brandeis President Ron Liebowitz said last week that the secular college, founded by the American Jewish community in 1948, no longer recognized SJP's chapter because of its support for Hamas and "call for the violent elimination of Israel and the Jewish people." Several student were arrested during an ensuing protest, leading to a walkout on Monday.

In a statement after Hamas attacked Israel, SJP said it was a "moral imperative" to support the resilience of the Palestinian people who "have endured 75 years of oppression, displacement, and the denial of their basic rights," and said that includes "armed resistance."

The Brandeis move came after Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis's administration ordered state universities to ban the group, saying it illegally backs Hamas militants who attacked Israel. That effort is stalled amid legal wrangling.

Paul Moore, a former U.S. Department of Education official from the Trump administration, wrote an op-ed this week calling on all colleges to ban the group.

Meanwhile, attorneys general from 20 states wrote a letter this month mentioning SJP and calling on federal officials to investigate and remove foreign students who have "espoused terrorist activity."

## OTHER GROUPS

Multiple offshoots also are involved in protests.

American Muslims for Palestine, which has coordinated protest activities over the years with IfNotNow, organized a "die-in" over the weekend in downtown Toledo, Ohio.

Last month, the Virginia Attorney General's office announced an investigation into the group over allegations it used funds raised for "impermissible purposes under state law, including benefitting or providing support to terrorist organizations."

Queens College in Brooklyn is investigating the Muslim Student Association over some of its social media posts.

At Brown University this month, 20 students with the group BrownU Jews for Ceasefire Now were arrested after refusing to leave a campus building during a sit-in. The group posted on X that they were calling on the university to promote an "immediate cease-fire and a lasting peace" as well as the divestment of its endowment from companies that "enable war crimes in Gaza."

Even groups like UNICEF and Amnesty International have faced scrutiny. In Scottsdale, Arizona, a presentation by a high school student group about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza prompted state public education chief Tom Horne to urge schools to kick the two international groups off campus.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom demanded in a letter this month that university leaders do more to protect students. And the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, a Jewish legal rights advocacy

group, filed federal complaints alleging the University of Pennsylvania and Wellesley College failed to keep Jewish students safe.

## Key GOP lawmaker calls for renewal of surveillance tool as he proposes changes to protect privacy

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee called Thursday for the renewal of a key U.S. government surveillance tool as he proposed a series of changes aimed at safeguarding privacy.

The proposals by Rep. Mike Turner are part of a late scramble inside Congress and the White House to guarantee the reauthorization of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which allows spy agencies to collect emails and other communications. They emerged from a congressional working group and are expected to form the basis of a legislative package that Turner hopes can be passed before Section 702 expires at the end of the year.

"We believe that before the end of the year, we will have a significant package of reforms that will be unprecedented, and at the same time, we will have the renewal of 702," Turner told reporters.

The section of law at issue permits U.S. officials to collect without a warrant the communications of targeted foreigners who are outside the country and suspected of posing a national security threat. The government also captures the communications of American citizens and others in the U.S. when they're in contact with those targeted foreigners.

The program has come under scrutiny in the last year following revelations that FBI analysts improperly searched the database of intelligence, including for information about people tied to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol and the racial justice protests of 2020.

The changes described by Turner are meant to heighten the penalties for such abuses, including by allowing Congress to trigger a mandatory inspector general review into alleged violations, and to tighten restrictions on queries, especially ones that are politically sensitive. He also called for allowing only a limited group of FBI supervisors and attorneys to authorize queries of people inside the U.S.

Much of the debate so far has centered on whether U.S. officials should be required to obtain a warrant before accessing intelligence on people inside the U.S.

A bill introduced last week by Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden and other lawmakers included a warrant requirement. The White House, however, has said such a proposal would cross a "red line," and FBI Director Christopher Wray told lawmakers at a hearing Wednesday that a mandate for a court order would be legally unnecessary and would snarl vital investigations at a time of rising terrorism threats.

"At a time when the FBI director is claiming that we have the largest threat to national security ... it would be incredibly dangerous and detrimental for us to either allow 702 to expire or to saddle it in a way that it's unusable," Turner said.

Turner said his proposal would require a warrant only when the database query seeks evidence of a specific crime — but not for searches related to national security.

Additional legislative proposals are expected. Asked Thursday about the status of negotiations with Rep. Jim Jordan, the Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Turner said Jordan had indicated that he planned to submit a different proposal.

## Climate change is hastening the demise of Pacific Northwest forests

By NATHAN GILLES, Columbia Insight undefined

SHERWOOD, Ore. (AP) — Deep inside a forest in Oregon's Willamette Valley stands a dead "Tree of Life." Its foliage, normally soft and green, is tough and brown or missing altogether. Nonetheless, the tree's reddish bark, swooping branches and thick, conical base identify it as the Pacific Northwest's iconic western red cedar.

Christine Buhl, a forest health specialist for the Oregon Department of Forestry, plunges a tool called an

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increment borer into the dead tree's trunk. Twisting the handle of the corkscrew-like borer, Buhl extracts a long, thin sample of the tree's inner growth rings.

The rings become thinner over time, indicating the tree's growth slowed before the tree finally died, a sign that this red cedar, like thousands of others in Oregon and Washington, died from drought.

"That's why it's the canary," says Buhl. "Any tree that's less drought tolerant is going to be the canary in the coal mine. They're going to start bailing (out)."

For thousands of years, people have used red cedar to make everything from canoes to clothing.

Red cedar's many uses have earned the species endearing names, including the "Tree of Life." More recently, scientists have started calling this water-loving relative of redwoods by a less flattering name: "the climate canary."

Last year, Buhl and colleagues reported that red cedars were dying throughout the tree's growing range not because of a fungus or insect attack, but due to the region's "climate change-induced drought."

Red cedars aren't alone.

In recent years, at least 15 native Pacific Northwest tree species have experienced growth declines and die-offs, 10 of which have been linked to drought and warming temperatures, according to recent studies and reports.

Many researchers, Buhl included, are now arguing that these drought-driven die-offs are the beginning of a much larger and long-predicted shift in tree growing ranges due to climate change.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is part of a collaboration between The Associated Press and Columbia Insight, exploring the impact of climate on trees in the Pacific Northwest.

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Trees, and plants generally, have growing ranges that are largely determined by climate factors, namely moisture and temperature.

For decades, scientists have argued that as atmospheric warming continues, growing ranges in the Northern Hemisphere will shift upslope in elevation and farther north, leaving many trees stranded in a warmer, drier world.

As climate mismatch sets in, trees are expected to die-off and not grow back, according to predictions.

Daniel DePinte, Forest Service aerial survey program manager, suspects range changes are driving "Firmageddon." A term coined by researchers, including DePinte, "Firmageddon" refers to the more than 1,875 square-mile (4,856-square-kilometer) die-off of five fir species in Oregon, Washington and northern California.

"The forests are moving uphill," said DePinte.

DePinte and colleagues first identified and named the massive, drought-driven fir "mortality event" last year while surveying area forests via airplane.

According to tree-range predictions, climate-induced die-offs are expected to start at the edges of growing ranges, including at lower-elevation locations that are predicted to become too warm and dry for many species.

DePinte's survey revealed that the largest die-offs associated with Firmageddon are occurring at lower-elevation sites.

Buhl and colleagues found a similar pattern with western red cedar. Mortality was greatest at sites less than about 650 feet (200 meters) in elevation west of the Cascade Range, according to their analysis.

Scientists have also observed a similar pattern for Douglas fir, the region's leading commercial timber species. Douglas fir is currently experiencing a 720-square-mile (1,865-square-kilometer) die-off, the majority in the Klamath Mountains near the southern Oregon cities of Ashland and Medford.

The die-off is limited to the lower elevations but is likely to move uphill as temperatures warm in the coming decades, according to a study in the *Journal of Forestry*.

"Our analysis concluded that if climate change continues as predicted, we could see increased Douglas fir mortality at higher elevations," said study coauthor, David Shaw, a professor and forest health specialist at Oregon State University.

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Shaw called the die-off "consistent with predictions for climate change."

But whereas red cedar is believed to be dying from drought alone, the Firmageddon and Douglas fir die-offs have been linked to a combination of drought weakening trees and insect pests moving in for the kill.

"These insects are not normally tree killers," said DePinte. "This is evidence that the forests are reacting to climate change and droughts."

Douglas fir is not considered a true fir and is not officially part of Firmageddon, according to DePinte.

The combination of drought-induced stress and pests, said Patrick Tobin, associate professor of disturbance ecology at the University of Washington, is analogous to a person with a weakened immune system dying from the flu.

"Drought-stress opens a window for biotic agents that might otherwise not be able to overcome a healthy, well-defended tree," said Tobin.

Tobin is a coauthor of a 2021 study in the journal *Forest Ecology and Management* on the widespread decline of big leaf maples in western Washington. Tobin's study was unable to determine whether drought alone or drought in combination with disease-causing fungi was killing the native maples.

As for the climate canary, Buhl believes red cedar is unlikely to disappear from the landscape entirely but probably won't grow back in areas where it's dying off.

"Unless we turn back climate change, there is no reason to hope western red cedar is going to make a comeback," said Buhl.

## **Plant-based meat is a simple solution to climate woes - if more people would eat it**

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writers

THORNTON, Colo. (AP) — Lars Obendorfer says he was "badly insulted" after he first began offering vegan sausage at his stands, dubbed "Best Worscht in Town." He even found himself mediating between customers arguing on social media about what to him was just another menu item.

"There was downright hostility between the meat eaters and the vegans," he said. "And I just couldn't understand it, and I said, 'knock off the arguing.'"

That was six years ago.

Today, his vegan currywurst — a take on the classic German fast food consisting of pork sausage with ketchup and curry power — is no longer a novelty but a menu fixture at his 25 stands across Germany.

Of the 200,000 sausages he sells every year, 15% are plant-based.

"It actually tastes like a normal sausage," customer Yasemin Dural said. "I even had doubts earlier that it might have been a meat sausage, but you really don't notice it at all."

Eating more plants and fewer animals is among the simplest, cheapest and most readily available ways for people to reduce their impact on the environment, climate scientists have long said. According to one University of Michigan study, if half of U.S. animal-based food was replaced with plant-based substitutes by 2030, the reduction in emissions for that year would be the equivalent of taking 47.5 million vehicles off the road.

"We are in a climate crisis, a climate emergency," says Greg Keoleian, a professor of sustainable systems at the University of Michigan who co-authored the study. "We all need to play a role, and these products are one strategy to easily reduce your footprint."

An explosion of new types of plant-based "meat" — the burgers, nuggets, sausages and other cuts that closely resemble meat but are made from soybeans and other plants — is attracting customers all over the world. Even in Germany, where cities like Hamburg and Frankfurt have given their names to iconic meat dishes, plant-based meat is becoming more popular.

This latest innovation in meat substitutes has already made meaningful strides. Between 2018 and 2022, global retail sales of plant-based meat and seafood more than doubled to \$6 billion, according to Euromonitor, a market research firm.

Still, that's dwarfed by global retail sales of packaged animal meat and seafood, which grew 29% in the

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same period to \$302 billion. Plant-based meat and seafood makes up just 2% of the world's global protein consumption. And sales have been uneven. While demand for plant-based meat is growing rapidly in some countries like Germany and Australia, sales have flattened in the U.S.

\_\_\_\_ EDITORS' NOTE — This story is part of The Protein Problem, an AP series that examines the question: Can we feed this growing world without starving the planet? To see the full project, visit <https://projects.apnews.com/features/2023/the-protein-problem/index.html>

## NEW RECIPES TO THE RESCUE?

Plant-based meat has been around for decades. Morningstar Farms, a division of Kellogg Co., introduced soy-based breakfast sausage in 1975. But the current boom began about 10 years ago, when startups like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat began selling burgers that more closely resembled meat and were aimed at carnivores, not just vegetarians and vegans. Beyond Meat's burgers, made with pea protein, even "bleed" with the help of beet juice.

Those products quickly took hold in Germany, a country where meat-heavy dishes like schnitzel and bratwurst are a mainstay of diets but where widespread concern about climate and animal welfare have been driving big changes. Last year, Germans' annual meat consumption fell to a 33-year low of 52 kilograms (114 pounds) per person. At the same time, plant-based meat sales rose 22%, according to Euromonitor, and they have tripled since 2018.

In Australia — where the average person ate around 120 kilograms (264 pounds) of animal meat in 2020, according to the United Nations, putting the country just behind the U.S. in terms of meat consumption — retail sales of plant-based meat have been growing, up 32% between 2020 and 2022.

Sam Lawrence, the vice president of policy for the Asia division of the Good Food Institute, a plant-based advocacy group, said Australia was initially behind Europe and the U.S. in the adoption of plant-based meat. But that's changing fast, in part because of health concerns. In 2018, the country had only around eight plant-based meat companies, he said. Now there are more than 40, many with their sights on the vast Asian market.

But it is the U.S. that represents one of the biggest hopes for a solution: It is the largest market for meat substitutes. It is also one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gases from animal agriculture, weighing in as the second-largest consumer of meat per capita behind Hong Kong, according to 2020 data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Reversing that trend would have a significant impact on global meat consumption, and Tyler Huggins knows it.

Huggins is the co-founder and CEO of the plant-based food company Meati. He comes from a family of bison ranchers, and he still eats meat occasionally. But after studying damage to rangeland ecology with the U.S. Forest Service, he earned a Ph.D. in environmental engineering with a focus on developing new kinds of plant-based meat.

Huggins says it's imperative to wean Americans from their meat-heavy diet because the country is already using most of its arable land.

"How are you going to continue to feed a growing population and an increased demand in meat?" Huggins said. "We have to get more efficient in the way we produce things."

Colorado-based Meati makes chewy, fibrous steak filets and chicken cutlets from mushroom roots and a handful of other ingredients, like chickpea flour. Its chicken cutlet has fewer calories, less cholesterol and nearly as much protein as animal chicken.

Meati collects spores from mushroom roots, feeds them sugar and ferments them in stainless steel tanks full of water. Every 22 hours, the fermented mixture — which resembles applesauce — is drained from a 25,000-liter tank, formed into cutlets and cooked. In four days, a single microscopic spore can produce the equivalent of a whole cow's worth of meat.

Eventually, the company expects to produce more than 40 million pounds of meat annually at its 100,000-square-foot Mega Ranch in Thornton, Colorado. That's about 160 million four-ounce servings, or half the amount of beef served each year at Chipotle, one of Meati's biggest investors.

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## A MATTER OF TASTE

Meati came onto the plant-based meat scene in 2017, around the same time that dozens of others were trying their hand in the space. At least 55 plant-based companies and brands — including entries from big meat producers like Tyson Foods — launched in the U.S. during 2017 and 2020, according to the Good Food Institute. Meanwhile, plant-based meat sales more than doubled in that same period, to \$1.6 billion.

But then sales plateaued, inching up just 2% between 2020 and 2022, according to Euromonitor. At the same time, U.S. animal meat and seafood sales rose 12.7%.

Some contend that the high price of meat alternatives is limiting their appeal. As of April, U.S. plant-based meat and seafood prices were an average of 27% higher than animal meat and seafood in the U.S., according to Euromonitor. That was larger than the 20% gap in Germany.

For Peter McGuinness, the CEO of pioneering plant-based burger maker Impossible Foods, taste — not price — is the biggest issue.

"I think the category is not good enough," McGuinness said. "What is the number one thing people want in food? Taste. If I don't have the taste, they don't care about the cholesterol and the saturated fat."

A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research of U.S. consumers found that about 8 in 10 U.S. adults said taste was an extremely or very important factor when buying food, with its cost and nutritional value following close behind. Americans are much less likely to prioritize the food's effect on the environment (34%) or its effect on animal welfare (30%).

Lisa Feria, the CEO of Stray Dog Capital, which invests in plant-based meat companies, said that even though the initial exuberance in the U.S. market is now thinning out, new brands that emerge from this period will be stronger and better-funded, which will help the plant-based meat market grow at a more sustainable pace.

"We deserve these products that are better for us, for the environment, definitely for animals, that we could eat for generations to come no matter how many people are on the planet," Feria said.

But it will take some convincing. An hour north of Meati's Mega Ranch is the U.S. headquarters of JBS, one of the world's largest meat producers. JBS launched Planterra Foods, a U.S. plant-based brand, in 2020 but closed it two years later. JBS, which still makes plant-based meat in Europe and Brazil, didn't respond to a request for comment.

## FOR THE SAKE OF THE PLANET

The meat industry has sown its own doubts about its plant-based rival. The Center for Consumer Freedom — which says it's funded by restaurants and food companies but won't say which ones — has run Super Bowl and newspaper ads criticizing plant-based meat, saying it has "chemicals and ultra-processed ingredients that you can't pronounce."

Indeed, questions about the healthiness of plant-based meat have weighed on sales. Plant-based foods have some benefits over meat; they have no cholesterol, for example, and may have less fat and more fiber. But plant-based foods can also be higher in sodium, to better mimic meat's flavor, and they don't always have as much protein.

Beyond Meat, another pioneer in the market, is focused on improving the health of its products. The company notes that its Beyond Steak beef tips were recently certified as a heart-healthy food by the American Heart Association.

But Beyond Meat's founder and CEO Ethan Brown says that in places like Germany — unlike in the U.S. — concerns about health are outweighed by concerns about the environment.

"In the European Union, there's clearly a desire to do something meaningful about climate," Brown said. "Here in the United States, it's unfortunately become politicized."

For Adrienne Stevson, it's all about the environment. A graphic designer from Johnson, Vermont, Stevson was a heavy meat-eater for most of her life. She has a family cookbook filled with meaty recipes, and she even worked for a time as a prep cook preparing meat.

So when her partner became a vegan, she was skeptical. But the more she learned about the benefits to the climate, the more she warmed to plant-based meat.



Stevson still uses her family cookbook, but she swaps out the meat for Beyond Meat ground beef, Impossible sausage and other products, like tofu. In an ideal world, she says, she wouldn't have to do that. "I think in an ideal world we could live with eating dairy products and meat products," Stevson says. "But there's way too many people on the earth and we haven't solved the problem of animal agriculture for that many people in a sustainable way."

## **Xi-Biden meeting seen as putting rocky relations back on course, though main differences remain**

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Perhaps just shaking hands and sitting down together can be enough sometimes. At their four-hour meeting Wednesday, U.S. President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping didn't resolve any of the vital geopolitical issues dividing the world's two largest economies and chief rivals for global influence, but they struck a conciliatory tone that came as a relief to other countries, especially China's neighbors.

The two leaders met at a northern California country estate, holding talks, lunching and taking a garden stroll designed to show that while the two countries are global competitors, they're not locked in a winner-take-all faceoff.

"Planet Earth is big enough for the two countries to succeed," Xi told Biden.

Biden emphasized the need to avoid miscommunication. "We have to ensure competition does not veer into conflict," he said.

The leaders' first face-to-face encounter in a year appears to have put a floor under a relationship that at times has seemed to be in freefall over various issues, from trade and technology to U.S. support for Taiwan, China's human rights record and even the source of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry appeared to welcome the warming of relations, noting the U.S. had again laid down the bottom line that China must use peaceful means in dealing with the self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own territory, to be taken by force if it deems it necessary.

"We express our affirmation and welcome for President Biden again making use of the venue of a meeting with the leader of China to again openly press the strict U.S. position insisting on peace in the Taiwan Strait," spokesperson Jeff Liu said.

South Koreans watched the meeting with a mixture of hope and skepticism. Living with a growing nuclear threat from rival North Korea, the South primarily focuses on ensuring its security through its crucial military and diplomatic ally, the U.S. Seoul has chafed at Beijing's unwillingness to back stronger sanctions and pressure on Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programs at the U.N. Security Council.

But South Korea's largest trading partner is China, and the Biden's administration's steps to restrict sales of advanced chip technologies to China set off furious lobbying to minimize the impact on South Korean semiconductor makers like Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

In an editorial on Thursday, South Korea's Kookmin Ilbo newspaper said a meaningful improvement in U.S.-China relations would have major consequences to global supply chains and the "composition of the new Cold War between North Korea-China-Russia and South Korea-U.S.-Japan."

During this year's summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, being held in San Francisco, Japanese officials have focused more on trying to arrange a meeting between Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Xi to help persuade Beijing to lift a ban on imports of Japanese seafood due to the release of treated wastewater from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Seafood exports are just one element in Tokyo's often fraught ties with China, where anti-Japan sentiment left over from before and during World War II is at times fanned to promote loyalty to the ruling Communist Party. Tokyo and Beijing have long feuded over ownership of unpopulated East China Sea islands and underwater mineral deposits.

Before leaving for California, Kishida told reporters a meeting with Xi had not yet been decided on.

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"We plan to have various forms of communication," he said.

Back in China, the state-run media curated Xi's talks with Biden to highlight China's stature as a global equal to the United States, said Madoka Fukuda, a professor of international politics and China studies at Tokyo's Hosei University.

"China is stressing to its own people that the country is a global power that serves an important role in the international community, prompting their nationalism at home," she said.

The aura of goodwill generated by the meeting was marred somewhat, however, by a comment by Biden. When pressed by a reporter to say whether he trusted Xi, he said he believed in trusting but verifying, and conceded that China's leader is a dictator.

"He is a dictator in a sense," Biden said.

That drew a stout response from a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Mao Ning, who said, "Such a remark is extremely wrong and is irresponsible political manipulation."

"It needs to be pointed out that there have always been people with ill intentions who try to sow discord and undermine the China-U.S. relations," she said.

Mao reaffirmed China's position that the U.S. should not provide Taiwan with armaments or back its independent role in international affairs. But she affirmed that the meeting in San Francisco was an important step to "enhance trust, dispel misgiving, control differences and expand cooperation between China and the U.S."

"It is also an important meeting to inject certainty and enhance stability into a turbulent and changing world," she said. "But San Francisco is not the end, and it should become a new starting point."

Beijing residents asked about the meeting said they hoped for a relaxation of tensions with the U.S., where tens of thousands of Chinese students travel to study each year and an untold number have settled down for work.

"I feel that China-U.S. relations have eased, and maybe the next step will be cooperation," said Xu Jianguang a 31-year-old firefighter. He echoed a comment by Biden that only by sitting face-to-face can potential adversaries find common ground and said he hoped the tete-a-tete would be "a great help."

Tensions with the United States have the "biggest impact on ordinary people," said Gao Kexin, 23, a Beijing hospital worker. "I hope the relationship can be eased, so that people can live a happier life," he said.

While tensions appear to have cooled, the two sides remain in contention over which is calling the shots in the relationship, said Zhao Minghao, a professor of international relations at Shanghai's prestigious Fudan University.

"The Biden administration has been attempting to exhibit that they are the dominator of the pace of China-U.S. relations, making the outside world feel that it is China that doesn't want to cooperate and communicate," Zhao said.

"There has been a big change this time and China hopes to show that Beijing is committed to responsibly managing China-U.S. relations," Zhao said.

## **Russian artist who protested Ukraine war gets 7 years in prison in latest crackdown on free speech**

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — A Russian court on Thursday convicted an artist and musician for swapping supermarket price tags with antiwar messages, sentencing her to seven years in prison in one of the highest-profile cases involving the recent crackdown on free speech.

Sasha Skochilenko was arrested in her native St. Petersburg in April 2022 and charged with spreading false information about the military after replacing price tags with ones that decried Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"The Russian army bombed an arts schools in Mariupol. Some 400 people were hiding in it from the shelling," one read. Another said, "Russian conscripts are being sent to Ukraine. Lives of our children are

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the price of this war.”

A customer at the supermarket who found the slogans reported them to authorities.

Skochilenko’s arrest came about a month after authorities adopted a law effectively criminalizing any public expression about the war that deviates from the official Kremlin line. The legislation has been used in a widespread crackdown on opposition politicians, human rights activists and ordinary citizens critical of the Kremlin, with many receiving lengthy prison terms.

Skochilenko, 33, has not denied replacing the price tags but rejected the accusation of spreading knowingly false information.

She did not intend to disparage the military, but rather wanted to stop the fighting, her lawyer Yana Nepovinnova told The Associated Press last week.

“She is a very empathetic, peace-loving person. To her, in general, the word ‘war’ is the most terrible thing imaginable, as is the suffering of people,” Nepovinnova said.

Russian independent news site Mediazona quoted Skochilenko as saying in her final statement in court Thursday that the case against her was “weird and ridiculous” — so much so that officials in the facility where she is detained “open their eyes widely and exclaim: ‘Is this really what people are being imprisoned for now?’”

She also alleged that an investigator working on her case even quit his job, telling one of her lawyers that he “didn’t join the Investigative Committee to work on cases like (the one) against Sasha Skochilenko.”

Addressing the judge in a courtroom full of supporters, Skochilenko said: “Everyone sees and knows that it’s not a terrorist you’re trying. You’re not trying an extremist. You’re not trying a political activist, either. You’re trying a pacifist.”

Her supporters applauded, Mediazona reported, adding that after the verdict was announced and Skochilenko was led away, they gathered in a hallway, chanting her name.

Skochilenko has been held for nearly 19 months before her trial, meaning that her overall term will be reduced by more than two years, since every day served in a pre-trial detention center counts as 1.5 days of time served in a regular penal colony.

But she has struggled while in custody due to health problems, including a congenital heart defect, bipolar disorder and celiac disease, requiring a gluten-free diet, her lawyers and her partner have said.

While she was held in St. Petersburg, it was possible for her to get visits from outside doctors, but what will happen if Skochilenko is transferred to a more remote penal colony remains uncertain, said her partner, Sofya Subbotina.

“There’s a huge fear that Sasha will end up without medical help,” she added.

Russia’s most prominent human rights group and 2022 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Memorial, has declared Skochilenko a political prisoner.

According to OVD-Info, another prominent rights group that monitors political arrests and provides legal aid, a total of 19,834 Russians have been arrested between Feb. 24, when the war began, and late October 2023 for speaking out or demonstrating against the war.

Nearly 750 people have faced criminal charges for their antiwar stances, and over 8,100 faced petty charges of discrediting the army, punishable by a fine or a short stint in jail.

Long terms have been handed out in the highest-profile cases. Prominent opposition figure Ilya Yashin received 8 1/2 years in prison on similar charges, as has Moscow student activist Dmitry Ivanov. Yashin’s colleague on a Moscow municipal council, Alexei Gorinov, got seven years.

Similar sentences were handed to Russians convicted in absentia, like cookbook author Veronika Belotserkovskaya or TV journalist and former lawmaker Alexander Nevzorov and several others.

Also Thursday, opposition politician Vladimir Milov was convicted in absentia of spreading false information about the army and sentenced to eight years. Milov, who once was Russia’s deputy energy minister and is now an ally of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny, has left Russia.

The prosecution in Skochilenko’s case had asked for eight years in prison. In an interview with St. Petersburg news outlet Bumaga, the pensioner who reported her to authorities had seemed surprised by

that, saying: "For bits of paper, it should have been, of course, less."

## **Demand for seafood is soaring, but oceans are giving up all they can. Can we farm fish in new ways?**

By VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

If it still seems strange to think of fish growing on farms, it shouldn't.

Aquaculture has been the fastest growing food sector in the world for decades, and people now eat more farmed fish than wild fish.

The industry has had to grow. Demand for seafood is soaring and will continue to rise. But the oceans are giving up all they can: Production of wild fish has been flat since about 1990.

Fish farming and shellfish production usually spew far less greenhouse gas emissions than production of beef and other animal protein, but aquaculture can still cause serious environmental problems.

**EDITORS' NOTE** — This story is part of The Protein Problem, an AP series that examines the question: Can we feed this growing world without starving the planet? To see the full project, visit <https://projects.apnews.com/features/2023/the-protein-problem/index.html>

And as it has grown, the problems with large-scale farming have grown with it. Many are like problems that face massive chicken, pig and cattle operations. The farms and the waste from them can degrade and pollute nearby ecosystems, diseases can quickly sweep through the tightly packed fish, and gathering the feed for the animals can cause distant environmental problems.

Faced with stinging criticism and tighter regulations — and eager to meet demand — fish farmers are trying new ways to boost production and minimize harm.

### **AQUACULTURE VILLAGES IN INDONESIA**

Indonesia's rise to become the world's third-largest producer of farmed seafood brought destruction to nearby shorelines. Mangroves, which protect the coast and act as nurseries for a host of aquatic species, were ripped out.

Untreated waste polluted watersheds. Massive fish die-offs shook local economies.

"Every year we faced the same problem, especially when seasons changed," said Jono, an aquaculture farmer who like many Indonesians only uses one name. "We had so many dead fish."

Jono was trained as part of a larger plan by the Indonesian government that will establish over 100 aquaculture "villages" around the country that are designed to reduce the impact of fish farming and expand production.

He's learned how to better prevent and treat disease, new feeding techniques, better pond construction and proper waste disposal.

"Previously we used to harvest every eight or nine months, now it can be every four to five months," he said.

### **CHINA TAKES FISH FARMING OFFSHORE**

China, by far the world's biggest aquaculture producer, is also trying to lessen the environmental impacts of fish farming.

One way: Take it offshore, where currents can deliver clean water and waste can dissipate quickly.

Two kilometers (1.2 miles) off the coast of the city of Yantai in northeast China, three round cages 80 meters (260 feet) across sit below the surface of the sea.

Sea bream, Korean rockfish and other fish wiggle and swim in a mesh made of a durable, lightweight plastic that can withstand extreme weather and keep barnacles at bay.

The facility's platform is equipped with a monitoring system that constantly senses water temperature, water quality and oxygen levels, said Zhang Zhuangzhi, who is in charge of fish farming at Shandong Ocean Harvest Corporation, which runs the operation.

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So far, costs and technical challenges have slowed wide adoption.

## A SALMON FISHERY IN A FLORIDA WAREHOUSE

In a warehouse near Miami, large indoor tanks are designed to mimic the natural environment of salmon by establishing the right temperature, the right salinity and the right lighting.

The idea: Grow the salmon indoors to reduce exposure to parasites, warming waters and algae blooms that threaten the fish grown in farms in open waters near shore — and in turn reduce the fish's impact on the shoreline.

The technology "removes some of the downside that you could have in nature," said Damien Claire, the chief sales and marketing manager of Atlantic Sapphire, the parent company of Bluehouse Salmon.

Claire said the company doesn't need to vaccinate or medicate their salmon and has lowered the mortality rate of the fish to around 3% — much lower than the industry average of 20%.

Raising fish in an indoor, tightly controlled environment has also led to other benefits, he said.

The company produces about 3 million salmon a year and hopes to eventually produce 65 million.

It's a promising model, but not easy to follow because the system relies on an uncommon feature of the groundwater near the warehouse's location: Salmon need both fresh and salt water, and both are found nearby.

## FRENCH FLY FACTORY

When the fish grown in farms are fed wild-caught fish such as sardines and anchovies, a major benefit of fish farms — less stress on ocean ecosystems — can evaporate.

At Innovafeed, based in France, protein-rich black soldier flies are being raised as a feed alternative.

The company chose the fly for three main reasons: It doesn't get sick, eats almost anything and has a short lifecycle that allows it to be bred and harvested quickly.

"There's a joke saying that black soldier fly larvae will eat everything except concrete and steel," said Nizar El Alami, chief business officer at Innovafeed.

The company's fly protein is feeding salmon, sea bream, shrimp and other species with food producers across Europe, the Americas and Southeast Asia, according to Alex Diana, a product manager at Innovafeed. It has two factories now and is planning 10 more by 2030 that will produce insect protein for fish, chicken and even pets.

"We are trying to reproduce what happens in nature, but at industrial scale," he said. "We're trying to minimize the impact of the food chain on the planet's resources."

## Poverty is killing the Amazon rainforest. Treating soil and farmers better can help save what's left

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

TEKOHAW, Brazil (AP) — At dawn in this small Amazonian village in Brazil's Para state, flocks of noisy green parrots soar overhead as children run and play between wooden homes, kicking up sandy soil — in places white and bare as a beach.

The ground reveals one of the paradoxes of the rainforest.

Renowned for its beauty and biodiversity, the life-giving nutrients of the forest are mostly stored in the trees and other plants, not the soil.

When the forest is cleared — for a cattle ranch, soybean field or even a small cluster of village homes — the combination of scorching Amazonian sun and intense rainfall combine to leach scarce nutrients from the soil in just a few years, leaving behind surprisingly barren ground. Soil rich in organic matter is black, but here it's sometimes the color of bone. Some ecologists call it a "wet desert."

This impoverished dirt makes it difficult to sustain agriculture in one place.

And in a region with some of the highest poverty levels in Brazil, people with few options have often just abandoned degraded fields and cleared more forest — hastening the cycle of deforestation that threatens the planet's climate and the millions of species unique to the Amazon.

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"The biodiversity is rich, but so many people are very poor," said Judson Ferreira Valentim, a soil scientist for the government's agricultural research agency, Embrapa. "We can't protect the rainforest without addressing the poverty of the Amazon."

**EDITORS' NOTE** — This story is part of The Protein Problem, an AP series that examines the question: Can we feed this growing world without starving the planet? To see the full project, visit <https://projects.apnews.com/features/2023/the-protein-problem/index.html>

The only way to meet both goals is to find more paths for people to make a living in the Amazon without further destroying the rainforest, say experts who have long worked in the region. That means using already deforested land more efficiently — to reduce pressure to clear more forest — as well as supporting businesses that sustainably harvest native products such as açai and cacao.

Valentim, who works in the northern state of Acre, where he's lived for four decades, points from the window of his truck to areas of abandoned farmland: some are patches of bare soil or red clay; some are overgrown with dark shrubby weeds.

The scale of abandoned farm and pastureland across the Brazilian Amazon is massive — covering an area larger than Portugal, according to an AP analysis of data derived from satellite imagery by the Brazilian research collaboration Mapbiomas.

Other researchers estimate that ranching, which accounts for between 60% and 80% of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, is only a third as productive as it should be, and that increasing the efficiency on the same land area would more than meet increasing demands for meat through 2040. Brazil is a major exporter of beef to global markets, and currently 43% of Brazil's cattle are raised within the Amazon region, according to an AP analysis of government data.

"You have to enforce laws against deforestation, but that's only part of the solution. You also have to give people alternatives" to improve their livelihoods, said Rachael Garrett, a researcher at Cambridge University who's conducted fieldwork in the Amazon since 2006.

There are 28 million people living in just Brazil's portion of the Amazon — including Indigenous farmers, ranchers who migrated from other parts of the country, and settlers forcibly relocated decades ago when the government took their old land for infrastructure projects like the Itaipú Dam.

"You can't ignore that millions of people are living there," Garrett said. "The more their needs are ignored, the worse some problems get."

## SUPERCHARGING THE SOIL

Nearly everyone in the Amazon starts work early, aiming to finish before the worst of the midday sun. Valentim is on the road at dawn to visit families who've tried new techniques to squeeze more production out of the soil.

Dairy farmer Edson Cesar de Oliveira waves from his porch. The son of a subsistence rubber tapper from Acre, his family lives in a small wooden home that he built himself.

Chickens cluck in the yard, and clothes flap on a laundry line. Cleonice Farina de Oliveira, his wife, offers black espresso and slices of homemade cheese to visitors.

For the past few years, the family has been experimenting with planting a native legume called forage peanuts alongside grass in their pastures. This plant attracts bacteria to its roots that can pull nitrogen from the air into the ground, essentially acting as a low-cost natural fertilizer.

While grass-only pastures may degrade in just two or three years, adding legumes may extend the soil's fertility to ten or more years. It's also higher in protein than grass alone, which helps livestock grow faster. And it's easier than grass alone on the cattle's digestive system, reducing their methane emissions.

De Oliveria, who said he can't afford chemical fertilizers, has noticed that pastures with forage peanuts don't turn as yellow during the dry season. And cows that graze there for at least two nights produce about 20% more milk, he said.

That increases the amount of cheese that the family can make to sell in local markets.

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"We always sell out of our cheese," said Cleonice, as she pulled on rubber boots to go milk the cows. After coaxing the first three animals into wooden pens, she, her husband and their 22-year-old son Thalisson each took a milking station. The family provides all the labor on their small farm.

On another day, Valentim visits a larger family ranch owned by Luiz Augusto Ribeiro do Valle. Do Valle said the last year he cleared new forest to expand the ranch was 2007. Now he's focused on improving productivity. In addition to planting forage peanuts in his pastures, he has changed the way he grazes cattle.

Holding up a detailed map of his ranch, he said, "You take a large pasture, divide it into smaller areas and rotate where the cattle graze." The goal is to keep cattle always feeding on new grass, while other areas regrow — the new growth is more nutritious and easier to digest.

Cows bray in the distance and dragonflies buzz at his feet as he strolls up a hill, periodically bending to inspect the grass. "You have to keep checking the plan against the reality on the ground," he said. By combining rotational grazing and forage peanuts, he said he can keep between 20% and 40% more cattle on the same amount of land.

## HARD REALITIES OF THE RAINFOREST

But even these simple innovations can be hard for some poor ranchers in the Amazon to implement.

In a region with poor roads and spotty internet and cell-phone service, it's hard to spread information about better farming practices.

Many small ranchers can't afford fertilizers, tractors and other modern farming supplies. And drug trafficking, illegal mining and violence also make it difficult to work on the Amazon frontier.

Of the nearly 1 million farms in Brazil's Amazon region, 83% are small family farms and ranches, according to government figures. Many operate on shoestring budgets.

As President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government ramps up enforcement of environmental laws — reversing the policies of Jair Bolsonaro and so far curbing overall deforestation by 22%, according to Brazil's national space agency — some experts say it's small-scale ranchers and farmers that are still most at risk for clearing rainforest.

"When you have fewer choices, you take bigger risks," said René Pocard-Chapuis, an agronomist at the French agricultural research agency CIRAD who has worked in the region for three decades.

Like Valentim, he's focused on helping farmers and ranchers — especially small operators — find low-cost solutions to improve their livelihoods.

In Para state, in the eastern Amazon, Lucas dos Santos has a very modest ranch. He can't afford a horse to ride or hired labor, but moves the cattle between pastures himself, holding a cattle prod in one hand.

He said he was unable to afford the price of new fencing to start rotational grazing for his small herd of 22 cattle. Then CIRAD researchers showed him how to use branch clippings from native trees in place of commercial fence posts.

The clippings, taken from trees on his property, put out new roots quickly, so he only had to pay for wires — and can now rotate his cattle.

## TASTES OF THE RAINFOREST: AÇAÍ AND CACAO

César De Mendes is trying to grow a business in the rainforest without cutting any trees at all.

Walking through the forest along a tributary of the Amazon in Pará, he points out bright yellow fruits that sprout, sometimes in pairs, from the middle of tree trunks.

It's cacao, the plant responsible for one of the world's great joys: chocolate.

His company, De Mendes Chocolates, uses cacao harvested from virgin rainforest.

He's hoping customers will appreciate how different microclimates and soil conditions across the region subtly impact the flavor of the chocolate.

"You can taste the different environments," he said.

His small business sells mostly to upscale groceries and tourist shops. One of six employees at this location, Neilanny Maia, fulfills online orders by hand, devoting a room of her home to storing seed bags and finished chocolate bars.

The idea of harvesting rainforest fruits is simple, but scaling up a sustainable business isn't always easy. Just getting fruit to market before it spoils can be a huge challenge. Last year during the rainy season,

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one road was closed for 90 days. One solution is to build small processing factories near the forest, as the longstanding agricultural collective Projeto RECA has done in Brazil's northern state of Rondônia.

One afternoon, light breaks through the canopy of virgin rainforest as 37-year-old açai picker Edson Polinario tilts his head backward, squinting, looking for promising trees.

Once he's chosen his target, he propels himself up the narrow palm trunk, using bands to grip the trunk securely.

With a stroke of his machete, he slices off a rack of açai berries that resemble dark beads on a chandelier. Then he slides down the trunk like it's a firepole.

Every day a worker comes to Polinario's house to collect bags of açai, then hauls them back to Projeto RECA's campus on the back of a motorcycle.

Açai berries spoil quickly and are practically worthless if not processed and frozen within two days.

At the factory, they're transformed into jams, syrups and frozen fruit pulp, ready to be shipped to supermarkets.

But there are other challenges to locating the business on the Amazon frontier. If factory equipment breaks, the team must disassemble it and drive parts several hours for repair. "We are too far from the big cities" for on-site maintenance, said Hamilton Condack de Oliveira, the president of the collective of about 200 households.

But still, they've managed to survive since the collective was founded in 1989.

They harvest from both virgin rainforest and agroforests planted on abandoned pastureland. Planting an agroforest — essentially a large orchard of mixed native tree species — doesn't aid biodiversity and climate as much as simply retaining old-growth forest, but it's much better than tending pasture or monoculture row crops.

"People will visit and say, 'Oh that's beautiful,' but it's a lot of work," he said.

'THE FOREST SUSTAINS US'

The impacts of climate change are already being felt locally in the Amazon region, forcing other adaptations.

For as long as their stories tell, the Indigenous Tembé people of Tekohaw village have used fire to clear small plots of land to grow cassava, beans and other subsistence crops. After farming for three years, they'd clear new land.

Because their plots were small, the overall impact on the forest was minimal. But now the village chief wants to find other ways to manage the soil's fertility.

"We don't want to use fire anymore in the forest because we can lose control of the fire, and it can burn the forest," said Kaparái Tembé. This wasn't always as much of a risk, he said. But deforestation from ranching and soy farming for animal feed across the state of Pará has removed moisture from the air, and now the dry season has become longer and drier — heightening the risk of uncontrolled wildfires.

"We want to improve agriculture here, in one specific place, not keep burning fields and pushing nature back," he said, setting his hoe on the ground and mopping the sweat from his brow. "We need to nurture the soil."

Earlier this year, the villagers treated the field with a powder made from grinding up limestone. It's a technique to reduce the natural acidity of the Amazonian soil. Today Tembé and two other men are planting a different legume, called the pigeon pea, to add nitrogen to the soil.

Later, as he walked back to the village, Tembé heard the raucous shriek of a scarlet macaw.

"It's a reminder of where I am," he said. "The forest sustains us, the animals, the plants — we want to protect it."



## Meat made from cells, not livestock, is here. But will it ever replace traditional meat?

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

A familiar aroma wafted through the Believer Meats test kitchen earlier this year as Research and Development Chef Andres Voloschin flipped sizzling strips of chicken conjured from cells.

Scientists, not farmers, produced this chicken. More than 150 startups are chasing an ambitious goal: meat that doesn't require raising and killing animals that is affordable and tastes and feels like the meat we eat now. They are part of a young industry aiming to use cell biology to reduce the environmental impact of the world's ever-increasing demand for meat and change global protein production the way electric cars are shaking up the auto industry.

"We are addicted to meat as a species. It's part of our evolution. It's part of our culture," said Believer founder Yaakov Nahmias, whose country, Israel, is an industry hub along with California and Singapore. But "we thought about quantity rather than the environment, rather than sustainability."

**EDITORS' NOTE** — This story is part of The Protein Problem, an AP series that examines the question: Can we feed this growing world without starving the planet? To see the full project, visit <https://projects.apnews.com/features/2023/the-protein-problem/index.html>

Companies making so-called "cultivated," or "cultured" meat, which is also popularly known as "lab-grown" meat, are trying to scale up quickly — partnering with traditional meat companies, drawing more and more investors and breaking ground on new production facilities in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Wide adoption of meat from cells is nowhere near assured, however. This meat is expensive to make. There are scientific challenges, such as learning how to mimic the complex structure of steak. Government regulation is another obstacle. Only Singapore and the U.S. allow sales of cultivated meat.

And while many people who have tried it say they like it, others find the idea distasteful. An Associated Press-NORC poll found that half of adults in the meat-hungry U.S. would be unlikely to try it. A majority of those who said they wouldn't said "it just sounds weird."

Even Nahmias' 10-year-old son Oren says he will only eat traditional meat. "I feel bad" for the animals, he said, "but they are yummy!"

### HOW CELLS CAN BE TURNED INTO A CUTLET

The science behind this new meat comes from the medical world. The process starts with cells. Depending on the company, the cells may come from a piece of tissue, a fertilized egg or a cell "bank." Various sorts can be used; scientists choose cells that can self-renew and turn into the muscle and fat cells that make up meat tissue. From starter cells they create "cell lines" so they don't have to keep going back to animals.

These cells are placed inside vessels of various sizes called bioreactors and bathed in a nutrient-rich broth where they multiply. Thick, structured meat also requires a scaffold that helps cells organize into a shape. Changes in the composition of the broth, or media, and cues from the scaffolding, tell immature cells to turn into muscle, fat and connective tissue.

Producing meat this way could dramatically reduce the impact of meat on the environment because it would reduce the need for land for the animals and for feed.

"The most important thing is that this field move forward and start reducing the destruction to our environment associated with current animal agriculture techniques," said Glenn Gaudette, a biomedical engineering specialist at Boston College.

But transforming the ecosystem is a distant vision. Scientists and industry experts say cultivated meats have a way to go before they're indistinguishable from conventional meats, especially when it comes to the texture of products other than burgers or nuggets.

There are vexing scientific hurdles. Gaudette said scientists are still trying to find the best scaffolds for structured meat, which must include a way for oxygen to get to all the cells. Options include animal-based scaffolds such as gelatin and, increasingly, decellularized vegetables like spinach.

Experts expect scientists to overcome the remaining scientific hurdles. But they say shaping human perception may be more difficult.

## MEAT GROWN IN A LAB JUST SOUNDS STRANGE

Most people connect meat production with farms rather than science labs — which influences how they view these new products.

In the AP-NORC poll, just 18% of U.S. adults said they are extremely or very likely to try cultivated meat, and 30% said they are somewhat likely. Those under 45 years old are more likely than older adults to try it and men are more likely than women. When those unlikely to try it were asked to choose from a list of reasons why, half said they didn't think it would be safe.

That's a concern for respondent Nora Bailey, 31, a mother of three in rural Arkansas.

"I would obviously want to do more research as far as the long-term effects," since early products deemed safe may later be found to be unsafe, she said.

A World Health Organization report noted several potential safety issues, such as microbial contamination at various points in the process, biological by-products and scaffolding that some people might be allergic to. Experts acknowledged a lot more safety testing is needed but noted that conventional meat carries significant food-safety risks, such as potential bacterial contamination during slaughter.

At this point, relatively few people have tried cultivated meat. But since its approval in the U.S. this summer, a small number of diners are eating it for the first time at particular restaurants and special events. People who recently tried cultivated chicken at U.S. company Good Meat's headquarters in Alameda, California, said they liked it and would eat it again.

Karen Hunt, who joined the taste test because she works nearby said she's not bothered by how it's made, especially when she thinks about how traditional chicken is made.

"When you bite into it, it was moist. It wasn't dry. It did have that kind of feel of chicken, taste of chicken," she said. "I was pleasantly surprised, and it tasted great."

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A familiar aroma wafted through the Believer Meats test kitchen earlier this year as Research and Development Chef Andres Voloschin flipped sizzling strips of chicken conjured from cells.

Through glass walls, he could see the large tanks where the cells grow.

Scientists, not farmers, produced this chicken. Some entrepreneurs, consumers and experts expect a lot more of the world's meat to be made this way in the future.

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Wide adoption of meat from cells is nowhere near assured, however. This meat is expensive to make. There are scientific challenges, such as learning how to mimic the complex structure of steak. Government regulation is another obstacle. Only Singapore and the U.S. allow sales of cultivated meat.

And while many people who have tried it say they like it, others find the idea distasteful. An Associated Press-NORC poll found that half of adults in the meat-hungry U.S. would be unlikely to try it. A majority of those who said they wouldn't said "it just sounds weird."

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## HOW CELLS CAN BE TURNED INTO A CUTLET

The science behind this new meat comes from the medical world. Nahmias, a bioengineer, launched his company after going to lunch with a Tyson Foods executive at a conference and scribbling his method for making cultivated meat on a napkin.

Unlike traditional agriculture, this process starts with cells. Depending on the company, the cells may come from a piece of tissue, a fertilized egg or a cell "bank." Various sorts can be used; scientists choose cells that can self-renew and turn into the muscle and fat cells that make up meat tissue. From starter cells they create "cell lines" so they don't have to keep going back to animals.

These cells are placed inside vessels of various sizes called bioreactors and bathed in a nutrient-rich broth where they multiply. Thick, structured meat also requires a scaffold that helps cells organize into a shape. Changes in the composition of the broth, or media, and cues from the scaffolding, tell immature cells to turn into muscle, fat and connective tissue.

Once the bioreactor is full at Rehovot-based Believer, the paste of cells is harvested and mixed with plant proteins, then pressurized and pushed out to create meat fibers, Nahmias said.

Believer now makes cultivated chicken and lamb and has plans for beef, which is harder to make because it's more difficult to create genetically-stable cell lines from bigger animals.

Other companies are pursuing cultivated beef anyway. It's the focus of Believer's Rehovot-based competitor Aleph Farms, where a scientist has scribbled a cow's face on a piece of lab equipment. The cell line for their product started with a fertilized egg from a Black Angus cow named Lucy living on a California farm.

Producing meat this way could also dramatically reduce the impact of meat on the environment because it would reduce the need for land for the animals and for feed. Multiple studies show that traditional livestock production is responsible for about 10% to 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.

"The most important thing is that this field move forward and start reducing the destruction to our environment associated with current animal agriculture techniques," said Glenn Gaudette, a biomedical engineering specialist at Boston College.

## IT'S NOT SO EASY TO BUILD A STEAK

But transforming the ecosystem is a distant vision. At this point companies are still perfecting their products.

Scientists and industry experts say cultivated meats have a way to go before they're indistinguishable from conventional meats, especially when it comes to the texture of products other than burgers or nuggets.

"When I get a steak, I want to see a steak," said Jon Medved, CEO of the Israeli investing platform OurCrowd. "And we're just not there yet."

Price is also a problem. Production costs for the first cultivated beef burger, created a decade ago by Mark Post at Maastricht University in The Netherlands, were estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, the university says, the company he helped found, Mosa Meat, has reduced that to about \$10 as it works toward commercialization.

For cultivated meat to take hold, such trends must continue, said Bruce Friedrich, president and founder of the Good Food Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit advocacy group focused on plant-based and cultivated proteins. "If we don't have products that taste the same or better and cost the same or less, people are not going to switch," he said.

But there are vexing scientific hurdles. Gaudette said scientists are still trying to find the best scaffolds for

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structured meat, which must include a way for oxygen to get to all the cells. Options include animal-based scaffolds such as gelatin and, increasingly, decellularized vegetables like spinach. Gaudette said scientists are also working on challenges like getting the cells to adhere to scaffolds and align in the right way.

Cell food, the most expensive part of the cultivated meat process, presents different dilemmas. Some media includes expensive fetal bovine serum, which is derived from the blood of a cow fetus. Other types are serum-free but include costly ingredients. Startups are exploring less expensive non-animal alternatives, such as food-grade, rather than pharmaceutical-grade, "growth factors," substances that stimulate cells to divide and grow in number.

Experts expect scientists to overcome the remaining scientific hurdles. But they say shaping human perception may be more difficult.

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"When you bite into it, it was moist. It wasn't dry. It did have that kind of feel of chicken, taste of chicken," said Karen Hunt, who joined the taste test because she works nearby. "I was pleasantly surprised, and it tasted great."

She said she's not bothered by how it's made, especially when she thinks about how traditional chicken is made. The cultivated meat process seems clean, controlled, environmentally safe and more humane, she said.

Kenzo Khoo, a nutritional science student at the University of California, Berkeley, said he would eat it regularly instead of traditional chicken if it became just as affordable.

"I would definitely buy it knowing that it will be more sustainable ... because I think climate change is a really big problem," he said after trying it. "I personally don't taste any, like, difference."

## WHEN WILL CULTIVATED MEAT BE WIDELY AVAILABLE?

Experts say a lot more people will be trying cultivated meat soon. A recent report from the Good Food Institute found cultivated meat investments tripled on average each year from 2016 to 2022. About 70 traditional meat and food companies are involved with cultivated meat in some way. And regulatory approvals in the U.S. are expected to be followed by many more elsewhere.

With all of that pushing them forward, some cultivated meat companies are growing as fast as their cells. Good Meat has nearly completed a production facility in Singapore and plans a large-scale U.S. plant. Believer broke ground on its own large-scale plant last December in North Carolina.

Management consultant firm McKinsey & Company predicts cultivated meat could provide billions of pounds of the world's meat supply by 2030. Still, that's only around half a percent, and not nearly enough to offset rising consumption of meat from animals.

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Though no one expects cultivated meat to transform human diets any time soon, some experts say population and climate pressures may make traditional meat production impossible in the long term — making cultivated meat a potential solution for a growing, fragile world.

## **Pastoralists have raised livestock in harsh climates for millennia. What can they teach us today?**

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL, KRISTA LARSON and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press  
SUKHBAATAR, Mongolia (AP) — The half-crescent moon glowed in the predawn Mongolia sky as Agvaan-togtokh and his family began preparing for yet another big move with their animals.

On horseback, he rode to a well with nearly a thousand sheep and goats. Occasionally, he and his wife, Nurmaa, stopped to help struggling young ones, weak after a harsh winter — putting a lamb in the warm comfort of a van and hand-feeding a foal rejected by its mother. The animals would need strength for the trek eastward across vast, hilly grasslands.

Thousands of miles away in Senegal, Amadou Altine Ndiaye's family led livestock through a sparse African savannah dotted by acacia trees and brush. Horses and donkeys pulled a four-cart caravan along dirt paths in sweltering heat. Cattle followed behind. Ndiaye brought up the rear, wearing a traditional conical hat and contorting his mouth to make sounds only he and his animals could understand.

They were traveling from the town of Nayde in the northeast to a village even further east — they believed it would be richer with vegetation. Ndiaye, a member of the Muslim Fulani ethnic group, learned the ways of animal herding alongside his elders.

"I was born into pastoralism, and since then I've known only that. There were cattle and sheep present at my birth," the 48-year-old said. "It's a source of pride."

More than 50 million people in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere practice and treasure this way of life. As nomadic pastoralists, they keep domestic animals and move with them to seek fresh pastures — often selling some of their livestock for meat.

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Although nomadic pastoralism has sustained these populations for millennia, it faces mounting pressures from deteriorating environments, shrinking rangelands, and new generations who seek a less grueling and tenuous life. At the same time, pastoralism is modernizing, with groups leveraging new technology to better care for their animals.

But the practice has survived for so long because it is designed to adapt to a changing environment — pastoralists move with their animals to find fresh pasture and water, leaving behind fallow land to heal and regrow. "The broad view is that having mobile animals enables you to leave places that are overused or that have scarce water or food resources and move to places where there are more resources," said Forrest Fleischman, who researches natural resource policy at the University of Minnesota. "And that means you're not going to hammer the one place you're stuck in."

Experts say it is a lesson that could help those who raise livestock at much larger scales adapt and reduce the impact of animal agriculture on the environment. Pastoralists aren't only trying to outrun climate change; they're combatting it.

"They have the Indigenous knowledge," said Edna Wangui, a geography professor who studies the practice at Ohio University. "There is a lot we can learn."

'WE NEED MORE RAIN'

Perhaps more than any other place, Mongolia is known for pastoralism. The practice is enshrined in the nation's constitution, which calls its 80 million camels, yaks, cows, sheep, goats and horses "national wealth" protected by the state.

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For families like Agvaantogtokh's, pastoralism is more than a profession. It's a cultural identity that connects generations across time. And at its heart is the human connection to animals.

Agvaantogtokh and his family sell animals for meat. They also sell dairy products such as yogurt and hard cheeses. While they consider the animals their property, they also see them as living beings working alongside them for a common purpose.

Researchers say herders believe in "animal agency." Agvaantogtokh lets his livestock pick what grass, flowers or herbs they eat, and find their own water. To him, fencing an animal and asking it to eat the same thing every day is like putting a person in prison.

Weather extremes are a part of life in Mongolia, and managing them is increasingly difficult as the environment changes. When Agvaantogtokh thinks about climate change, he worries about what it means for humans and livestock.

One spring day, he felt the wind whip up and watched blue skies turn menacingly dark. In the distance, he spotted a wall of dirt rushing toward him.

"Dust storm," he muttered. His father, Lkhaebum, left a bowl of soup half-eaten on the table. Both set off on motorbikes to make sure their animals were safe.

"We need more rain," said Lkhaebum, who like other Mongolians uses only his given name. "If the grass isn't growing, it is very challenging for us."

Chronic drought plagues Mongolia. So does warming. Since 1940, the country's government says, average temperatures have risen 2.2 degrees Celsius (nearly 4 degrees Fahrenheit) — a measure that may seem small, but for global averages, scientists say every tenth of a degree matters, and a warming world brings more weather extremes.

And dzuds — natural disasters unique to Mongolia caused by droughts and severe, snowy winters — have grown harsher and more frequent and can keep livestock from accessing water or food.

A dzud pushed Agvaantogtokh and his family to move out of a southwestern province after a disastrous winter killed 400 of their animals. They've been in the eastern province of Sukhbaatar since 2020.

The family lives simply. They have a sink with a rubber pump to limit water use. They live in a tent called a ger, which has wooden circular frames insulated with sheepskin and felt, and doors facing east to let in the morning sun.

Nurmaa, who married into this way of life, uses a boiler fired with horse dung to cook and stay warm.

"Year by year," she said, "I have learned a lot of things." Herding and birthing animals. Helping set up camp. Cooking big meals of breads, stews, milk tea and homemade wine.

But every place the family moves its ger, she has a sense of a settled life.

Each belonging is systematically placed in the same spot — something stable and predictable in a world of constant change.

## SURVIVING ON THE EDGE OF THE SAHARA

In Senegal, caravans carry the comforts of a furnished home, such as a metal bed frame and mattress, and water for people and animals.

With the rainy season approaching earlier this year, Ndiaye, his son-in-law Moussa Ifra Ba and the rest of the family prepared for a 170-kilometer (106-mile), 16-day trek.

Water and plentiful grass have become harder to come by. "One of the main difficulties related to pastoralism is the lack of grazing," Ndiaye said. "The livestock are hungry, and you sometimes have trouble selling one because it is so thin."

"Many varieties of tree have disappeared, and even our children are unaware of certain species," Ba said. "The best varieties of grass no longer grow in certain areas, and the most widespread grass is more like rubber: It fills the belly but doesn't nourish the animals."

Meals for Ndiaye's family rarely include meat and are carefully planned. Only when they pass through certain villages can they stock up on food — vegetables, rice and other essentials.

Overall, per-person meat consumption in Senegal is among the lowest in the world; rates are more than six times higher in Mongolia.

Ndiaye's family doesn't sell their animals regularly because meat is mostly for special occasions: weddings,

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or holidays such as Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr. When they do, a few head of cattle can provide enough money to get married, buy rice or even emigrate.

The family has the same deep respect for their animals that Mongolian pastoralists do. Ba is especially drawn to the sheep. He's noticed that the rams cry when they move away from him, remember the names he gives them and come when they're called.

"It's a real friendship," Ba said.

In their four-cart caravan, young people and young animals both get special care.

Ndiaye's 5-year-old daughter, Aminata, and 2-year-old granddaughter, Aissata, ride atop one cart with the women. In another, baby sheep too young to walk for long in the heat are bound together with netting.

Ba said he can't imagine any other life: "A village without cows has no soul."

## ANCIENT PRACTICE, NEW TECHNIQUES

To keep their practice alive, pastoralists around the world are looking for ways to modernize.

In Mongolia, Lkhaebum recently began using a motorbike to more easily search for horses, which are never kept fenced. One nippy morning, his calf-length tunic billowed around him as he began a search, stopping occasionally to peer through binoculars toward a herd grazing on a faraway hill.

The family also has a solar-powered battery that runs a television and washing machine, a karaoke machine, and a cellphone to keep track of weather and access Facebook groups where herders exchange information.

"We now have 4G cellular data, and it helps us a lot in communicating and getting forecasts," Nurmaa said. "It really helps us a lot with communicating with our children because they're far away."

Their 18-year-old daughter studies medicine in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Their two younger children, a 13-year-old son and a 9-year-old daughter, are in school. The son spoke about becoming a herder when he was in his early teens. But not anymore.

"I won't regret anything if my child won't be a herder," Nurmaa said. "I would like them to do what they aspire to do."

Her view is not unusual.

"If you asked parents, very few of them want their children to grow up to be pastoralists," professor Wangui said. "They want their children to be something else because they're seeing the life of pastoralists is a tough life."

## KEEPING UP IN A CHANGING WORLD

Though modern tools promise to make things easier, many pastoralists run into obstacles. Those in Senegal, for example, often struggle to find signals for their cell phones. They rely mostly on older technology and methods.

One evening, Ndiaye's grown daughter, Houraye, peeled onions for the family's meal, stirring a pot of rice illuminated by the glowing embers of her fire. When it was ready, her seven relatives gathered under the stars with small flashlights and turned on the handheld radio they charge off their solar panel. The bleating of sheep nearly drowned out the traditional melodies.

An important advancement in infrastructure has helped the family: water towers known as forages that have sprung up with government assistance. Previously, finding water could require a 35-kilometer (22-mile) trek. Now, the family plots trips along the path of these towers, where they can refill their jugs and replenish their animals in long troughs.

Still, some leaders don't offer help to pastoralists. Conflicts between herders and settled farmers also can erupt surrounding land use and access to water.

A few advocacy groups advise pastoralists to choose settled lives for their own good. In Senegal's Sahel region — where the United Nations estimates 65% of meat and 70% of milk sold at local markets come from pastoralists — the head of the Association for Promoting Livestock Farming in the Sahel and Savannah suggests people put their children in school and diversify incomes.

"Climate change has caused enormous damage, and people are not aware of the dangers that lie ahead," said Moussa Demba Assette Ba. "If you invest all your income in livestock and disaster strikes, you lose everything, and that's what climate change can do."

The former pastoralist built a home in 2006 that has since turned into a sprawling compound that provides solar power to neighbors. He encourages others to settle down as he has and seek ways to increase the quality, not quantity, of their animals.

But perhaps the biggest threat to pastoralism comes from within, as the next generation chooses other paths.

Four of Ndiaye's seven living children don't travel with their parents. He relies on help from Ba and a paid family friend to direct the animals to their destination.

Ba, 28, and his wife Houraye, 20, have a 2-year-old daughter and want to expand their family. They mused about a future in which at least one child stays in pastoralism while at least one goes to school.

"I'd like my children to keep up with the changing world," Ba said.

## Eating less meat would be good for the Earth. Small nudges can change behavior

By JONEL ALECCIA and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Preston Cabral eats meat nearly every day at home, but his favorite meals at school are served on "Meatless Mondays" and "Vegan Fridays."

"Today I ate chips, tangerines and this thing that looked like chili but without the meat — just beans," the 12-year-old said after lunch on a Friday at I.S. 318 Eugenio Maria De Hostos.

The Monday and Friday lunches have inspired Preston's family to make more vegetarian meals at home, sparking what experts say is a healthy shift for them — and for the planet.

Programs like these are among the few proven to work for one of the thorniest problems of the 21st century: How to get people to eat less meat.

**EDITORS' NOTE** — This story is part of The Protein Problem, an AP series that examines the question: Can we feed this growing world without starving the planet?

A new poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that most U.S. adults said they eat meat at least several times each week. About two-thirds (64%) said they eat chicken or turkey that often, and 43% eat beef that frequently.

But experts agree that the urgency of climate change and the demands of a surging global population call for an overhaul of how humans get their protein.

"There has arguably never been a more important time in human history to transform our food system for the sake of humans and nature," a coalition of United Kingdom climate scientists concluded in a 2020 analysis.

That will require changing consumer behavior around meat, particularly in rich countries, experts said. From a health perspective, people in places like the U.S., Canada and Europe eat far more meat, especially red meat and processed meat, than recommended. That puts them at risk for obesity, heart disease, stroke and other problems plaguing wealthy nations.

Scientists say the average U.S. adult consumes about 100 grams of protein, mostly meat, each day — about twice the recommended amount. That adds up to more than 328 pounds of meat per person each year, including 58 pounds of poultry, 37 pounds of beef, 30 pounds of pork and 22 pounds of fish and seafood, according to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

At the same time, meat production is a key driver of climate change. The livestock sector is responsible for at least 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions and is the single greatest source of methane, a top threat to Earth's climate, according to the Food and Agriculture Association of the United Nations.

There's no question that cutting back on meat consumption could have real and lasting effects.

Researchers at the University of Oxford recently reported that vegans have 30% of the dietary environmental impact as people who eat high amounts of meat. Vegans produced 25% of greenhouse gas



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emissions and land use impact, 46% of water use, 27% of water pollution and 34% of the impact on biodiversity than the top meat-eaters.

Significantly, even low-meat diets contributed only about 70% of the environmental impact of high-meat diets, wrote Keren Papier, a co-author of the study.

"You don't have to go full vegan or even vegetarian to make a big difference," Papier said.

Younger people could be key. They may be open to new ways of eating because they're more aware of climate change and the environmental costs of our current eating patterns, said Dr. Martin Bloem, an environmental health professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

But he's worried about the pace of change: "I think it goes too slow."

Changing human behavior, especially regarding something as important and intimate as the food we eat, is challenging, no matter a person's age.

Eating meat is an ingrained, habitual part of daily life in most parts of the world, said Julia Wolfson, who studies nutrition at Johns Hopkins University. Meat consumption is "orders of magnitude higher" in the U.S. than in low-income countries, and meals are often centered around it. She recalled a well-known advertisement from the mid-1990s that resonated across the country: "Beef: It's What's for Dinner."

Besides its central role in U.S. and other cultures, there are firm perceptions that meat is necessary, especially for "young boys to grow up healthy and strong," she said.

At the same time, research shows most people are reluctant to even learn about the negative impacts of eating meat and they're stymied by the so-called "meat paradox." That's the term scientists use to describe the psychological conflict that occurs in people who like to eat meat but don't like to contemplate the animals that died providing it.

The AP-NORC poll illustrates that conundrum.

About 8 in 10 U.S. adults said taste was an extremely or very important factor when buying food, with its cost and nutritional value following close behind. Americans are much less likely to prioritize the food's effect on the environment (34%) or its effect on animal welfare (30%).

Despite those hurdles, certain interventions can cut meat consumption, research shows.

Stressing the connection between meat and animals seems to work. For instance, experiments that displayed photos of meat dishes on restaurant menus alongside pictures of the animals that they came from have consistently proven to reduce meat consumption, according to researchers at Stanford University.

Another strategy is to emphasize animal welfare. Research subjects exposed to information about it are more likely than control groups to buy or eat less meat or to say they intended to eat less meat, studies show.

Interventions described as "nudges," or small choices aimed at influencing behavior, appear to be among the most effective at cutting meat consumption. Many are designed to help make healthy choices more convenient.

They can be as simple as decreasing portion sizes of meat and boosting veggies at home and in restaurants. Or they can involve positioning vegetarian offerings more prominently in grocery stores and buffet lines. In a 2021 study in the *Journal of Public Health*, vegetarian choices surged from as low as 2% to nearly 90% when researchers made non-meat meals the default option on conference menus.

Some nations are mulling more drastic measures. In the Netherlands, the agriculture minister proposed introducing a tax on meat, an idea that is still being debated. The city of Haarlem, outside of Amsterdam, is set to ban advertising of "industrialized meat" in public spaces starting in 2025.

Those options wouldn't go over well in the U.S., according to the AP-NORC poll. About 7 in 10 U.S. adults said they would somewhat or strongly oppose raising taxes on the sale of meat and 43% would oppose banning public advertising for meat on government property.

Meanwhile, meat-free menu days are becoming more common, with Meatless Monday programs taking root around the world.

"Meatless Monday has had a lot of success in raising awareness and starting a conversation just about small changes that one can make that make it seem not overwhelming to people," Wolfson said.

It seems to be working at Preston Cabral's school. Ricardo Morales, a cook ambassador, said more kids get school lunch on Fridays than any other day of the week.

"Vegan day is just the biggest day we serve right now," he said. "It's bigger than hamburger and even pizza day."

## **Plant-based meat is a simple solution to climate woes - if more people would eat it**

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writers

THORNTON, Colo. (AP) — Lars Obendorfer says he was "badly insulted" after he first began offering vegan sausage at his 25 German stands, dubbed "Best Worscht in Town." He even found himself mediating between customers arguing on social media.

"There was downright hostility between the meat eaters and the vegans," he said.

That was six years ago. Today, 15% of the 200,000 sausages each year are plant-based.

"It actually tastes like a normal sausage," customer Yasemin Dural said.

Eating more plants and fewer animals is among the simplest, cheapest and most readily available ways for people to reduce their impact on the environment, climate scientists have long said. According to one University of Michigan study, if half of U.S. animal-based food was replaced with plant-based substitutes by 2030, the reduction in emissions for that year would be the equivalent of taking 47.5 million vehicles off the road.

An explosion of new types of plant-based "meat" — the burgers, nuggets and other cuts that closely resemble meat but are made from soybeans and other plants — is attracting customers all over the world. Between 2018 and 2022, global retail sales of plant-based meat and seafood more than doubled to \$6 billion, according to Euromonitor, a market research firm.

Still, that's dwarfed by global retail sales of packaged animal meat and seafood, which grew 29% in the same period to \$302 billion.

And sales have been uneven. While demand for plant-based meat is growing rapidly in some countries like Germany and Australia, sales have flattened in the U.S.

### **NEW RECIPES TO THE RESCUE?**

Plant-based meat has been around for decades. Morningstar Farms, a division of Kellogg Co., introduced soy-based breakfast sausage in 1975. But the current boom began about 10 years ago, when startups like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat began selling burgers that more closely resembled meat and were aimed at carnivores.

Those products quickly took hold in Germany, where widespread concern about climate and animal welfare have been driving big changes. Last year, Germans' annual meat consumption fell to a 33-year low of 52 kilograms (114 pounds) per person. At the same time, plant-based meat sales rose 22%, according to Euromonitor.

In Australia — where the average person ate around 120 kilograms (264 pounds) of animal meat in 2020, according to the United Nations — retail sales of plant-based meat have also been growing, up 32% between 2020 and 2022.

Sam Lawrence, the vice president of policy for the Asia division of the Good Food Institute, a plant-based advocacy group, said health concerns are changing Australians' habits.

But it is the U.S. that represents one of the biggest hopes for a solution: It is the largest market for meat substitutes. It is also one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gases from animal agriculture, weighing in as the second-largest consumer of meat per capita behind Hong Kong, according to the United Nations.

Reversing that trend would have a significant impact on global meat consumption, and Tyler Huggins knows it.

Huggins is the co-founder and CEO of the plant-based food company Meati. He comes from a family of bison ranchers and he still eats meat occasionally. But he says it's imperative to wean Americans from

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their meat-heavy diet because the country is already using most of its arable land.

Colorado-based Meati makes chewy, fibrous steak filets and chicken cutlets from mushroom roots. Its chicken cutlet has fewer calories, less cholesterol and nearly as much protein as animal chicken.

Meati collects spores from mushroom roots, feeds them sugar and ferments them in stainless steel tanks full of water. In four days, a single microscopic spore can produce the equivalent of a whole cow's worth of meat.

## A MATTER OF TASTE

Meati came onto the plant-based meat scene in 2017, around the same time that dozens of others were trying their hand in the space. US. plant-based meat sales more than doubled to \$1.6 billion between 2017 and 2020. But then sales plateaued, inching up just 2% between 2020 and 2022.

Some contend that the high price of meat alternatives is limiting their appeal. But Peter McGuinness, the CEO of pioneering plant-based burger maker Impossible Foods, says taste is the biggest issue.

"I think the category is not good enough," McGuinness said. "What is the number one thing people want in food? Taste. If I don't have the taste, they don't care about the cholesterol and the saturated fat."

A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 8 in 10 U.S. adults said taste was an extremely or very important factor when buying food, with cost and nutritional value following close behind. Americans are much less likely to prioritize the food's effect on the environment (34%) or its effect on animal welfare (30%).

## FOR THE SAKE OF THE PLANET

The meat industry has sown its own doubts about its plant-based rival. The Center for Consumer Freedom — which says it's funded by food companies but won't say which ones — has run Super Bowl and newspaper ads criticizing plant-based meat, saying it contains "chemicals and ultra-processed ingredients."

Plant-based foods have some benefits over meat; they have no cholesterol, for example, and may have less fat and more fiber. But plant-based foods can also be higher in sodium.

Beyond Meat, another pioneer in the market, is focused on improving the health of its products. But Beyond Meat's founder and CEO Ethan Brown says that in places like Germany — unlike in the U.S. — concerns about health are outweighed by concerns about the environment.

That's not the case for Adrienne Stevson. A graphic designer from Johnson, Vermont, Stevson was a heavy meat-eater for most of her life. So when her partner became a vegan, she was skeptical. But the more she learned about the benefits to the climate, the more she warmed to plant-based meat.

"I think in an ideal world we could live with eating dairy products and meat products," Stevson says. "But there's way too many people on the earth and we haven't solved the problem of animal agriculture for that many people in a sustainable way."

## Today in History: November 17

### Arnold Schwarzenegger becomes governor of California

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Nov. 17, the 321st day of 2023. There are 44 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 17, 2003, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Austrian-born actor who had become one of America's biggest movie stars of the 1980s and '90s, was sworn in as the 38th governor of California.

On this date:

In 1800, Congress held its first session in the partially completed U.S. Capitol building.

In 1869, the Suez Canal opened in Egypt.

In 1917, French sculptor Auguste Rodin (roh-DAN') died at age 77.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman, in an address to a special session of Congress, called for emergency aid to Austria, Italy and France. (The aid was approved the following month.)

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In 1969, the first round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the United States and the Soviet Union opened in Helsinki, Finland.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon told Associated Press managing editors in Orlando, Florida: "People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I'm not a crook."

In 1979, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini (ah-yah-TOH'-lah hoh-MAY'-nee) ordered the release of 13 of the 66 American hostages being held at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

In 1989, the Walt Disney animated feature "The Little Mermaid" opened in wide release.

In 1997, 62 people, most of them foreign tourists, were killed when militants opened fire at the Temple of Hatshepsut (haht-shehp-SOOT') in Luxor, Egypt; the attackers were killed by police.

In 2002, Abba Eban (AH'-bah EE'-ban), the statesman who helped persuade the world to approve creation of Israel and dominated Israeli diplomacy for decades, died near Tel Aviv at age 87.

In 2012, a speeding train crashed into a bus carrying Egyptian children to their kindergarten, killing 48 children and three adults.

In 2013, Doris Lessing, an independent and often irascible author who won the Nobel Prize in 2007, died in London at age 94.

In 2018, Argentina's navy announced that searchers had found a submarine that disappeared a year earlier with 44 crewmen aboard; the government said it would be unable to recover the vessel.

In 2020, President Donald Trump fired the nation's top election security official, Christopher Krebs, who had refuted Trump's unsubstantiated claims of electoral fraud and vouched for the integrity of the vote.

In 2022, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she would not seek a leadership position in the new Congress, a pivotal realignment making way for a new generation of leaders after Democrats lost control of the House to Republicans in the midterm elections.

Today's Birthdays: Sen. James Inhofe (IHN'-hahf), R-Okla., Singer-songwriter Bob Gaudio (GOW'-dee-oh) is 82. Movie director Martin Scorsese (skor-SEH'-see) is 81. Actor Lauren Hutton is 80. Actor-director Danny DeVito is 79. "Saturday Night Live" producer Lorne Michaels is 79. Movie director Roland Joffe is 78. Former Democratic National Chairman Howard Dean is 75. Former House Speaker John Boehner (BAY'-nur) is 74. Actor Stephen Root is 72. Rock musician Jim Babjak (The Smithereens) is 66. Actor Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is 65. Actor William Moses is 64. Entertainer RuPaul is 63. Actor Dylan Walsh is 60. Former National Security Adviser Susan Rice is 59. Actor Sophie Marceau (mahr-SOH') is 57. Actor-model Daisy Fuentes is 57. Blues singer/musician Tab Benoit (behn-WAH') is 56. R&B singer Ronnie DeVoe (New Edition; Bell Biv DeVoe) is 56. Rock musician Ben Wilson (Blues Traveler) is 56. Actor David Ramsey is 52. Actor Leonard Roberts is 51. Actor Leslie Bibb is 50. Actor Brandon Call is 47. Country singer Aaron Lines is 46. Actor Rachel McAdams is 45. Rock musician Isaac Hanson (Hanson) is 43. Former MLB outfielder Ryan Braun is 40. Musician Reid Perry (The Band Perry) is 35. Actor Raquel Castro is 29.