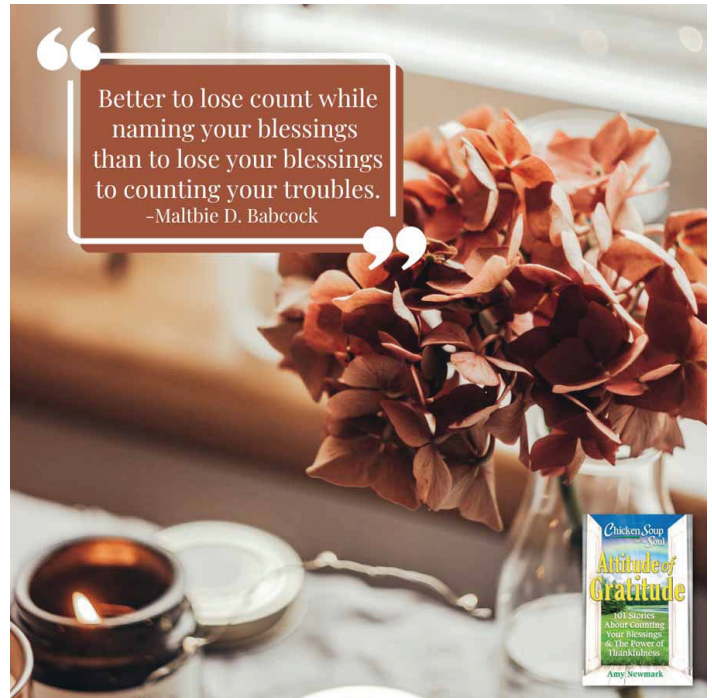


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## Coming up

### Thursday, Nov. 23

THANKSGIVING DAY

Community Thanksgiving Dinner at the Groton Community Center, 11:30 a.m.  
No School - Thanksgiving Break

### Friday, Nov. 24

No School - Thanksgiving Break

### Saturday, Nov. 25

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. 26

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m. (No Sunday school)

St. John's Lutheran: St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.

Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m., GHS Gym

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.

## 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**

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Simon is finalist for 2023 BIG Idea Final Competition

(November 23, 2023, Aberdeen, SD) Sixteen high school finalists have advanced to the 2023 BIG Idea Final Competition. This high school business idea competition encourages students to consider new ideas and opportunities for creating a business in their own region. All students who submitted entries are invited to the Final Competition and Awards Ceremony held December 5-6, 2023. The day will feature student pitches, educational booths, and campus tours. The Award Ceremony keynote speaker is John Meyer of Leadership South Dakota and of course, the awards!

In-state and out-of-state finalists will be judged in two separate competitions, with prizes awarded separately to each competition. The out-of-state finalists will be judged virtually on Tuesday, December 5th, and the in-state finalists will compete in-person on Wednesday, December 6th, at Northern State University.

There were 365 applications submitted from 76 different schools. First round judges include 139 volunteers along with 240 college entrepreneurship and business students. During the BIG Idea Final Competition, finalists will have six minutes to present their idea to a panel of judges and compete for nearly \$50,000 in cash prizes and scholarships. Our in-state finalists are:

### 2023 BIG Idea Finalists

Business Name	Team Members	School Name	School Advisor
Bender's Sports	Kasen Bender	Watertown High School	Tom Lennox
Conservation Covers	Kiara Tulowetzke	Watertown High School	Tom Lennox
Clean Car Detailing Co	Augustus Sieh	Leola High School	Trevor Van Tilburg
Paw's Who Care	Morgan Haselhorst, Brooklyn Bossly, Jersey Deibert-McPartland	Warner High School	Pam Lane
Stoltenberg Tailgate Seating	Dallas Stoltenberg	Northwestern High School	Anne Frericks
Swing and a Miss	Carter Simon	Groton High School	Eric Swenson
SoDak Feeds	Jaidryn Rice	Webster High School	Kaylan Pool
Your Acai*	Emersen Mead	Dakota Valley High School	Justine Sponder
Two Heart Arena*	Kali Young	Dupree High School	Mark Peacock

\*Finalist unable to attend final event

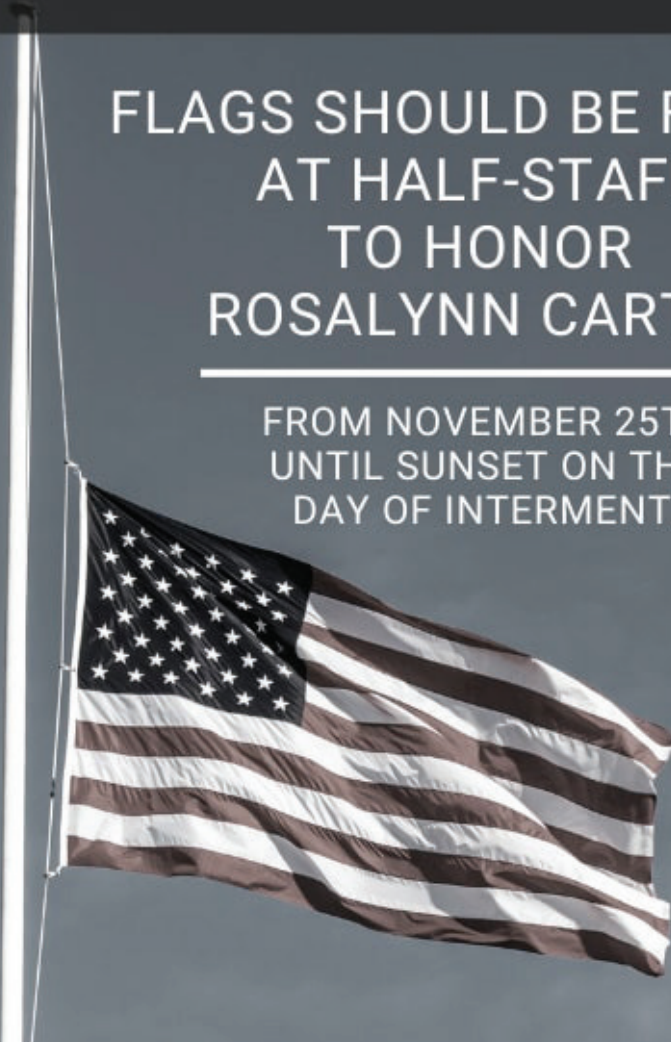
In addition, 212 Marketing Designs were submitted along with 77 Wellness entries, 24 Agriculture Innovation entries, and 120 Hometown Business entries, and 49 Makers entries, a new specialty category in 2023. All category winners, below, will be recognized at the Final Competition. A full list of finalists, category winners and honorable mention entries can be found at [www.bigideasd.com](http://www.bigideasd.com).

## HALF STAFF ALERT

FLAGS SHOULD BE FLOWN  
AT HALF-STAFF  
TO HONOR  
ROSALYNN CARTER

---

FROM NOVEMBER 25TH  
UNTIL SUNSET ON THE  
DAY OF INTERMENT.



**WITTE**   
**EXTERIORS LLC**

**Specializing in Asphalt and Wood Shingles**

Call for an estimate

**Zack Witte ~ 605-695-7874**

Webster, SD

No Contracts!



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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

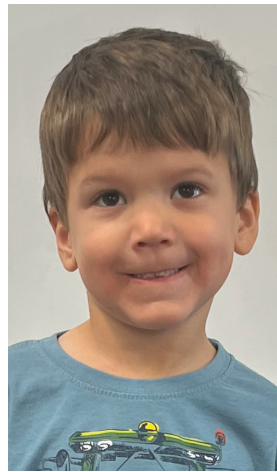
I....

23.) Do not live in Groton city limits and work in Aberdeen

## Groton Area Junior Kindergarten Students are Thankful for Thanksgiving



**Veda Stiegelmeier** is the daughter of Jordan and Whitney Stiegelmeier. I am thankful for food because it fills my tummy up and it tastes good, I really like rice.



**Brecken Swanson** is the son of Scott and Jenna Swanson. I am just thankful for my mom because she let's me go to hotels to go swimming.



**Brooks Vedvei** is the son of Scott and Sara Vedvei. I am thankful for my remote-control car and my mom because she let me get it at the store.



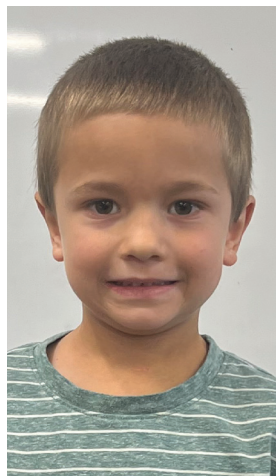
**Zoey Strom** is the daughter of Nicholas and Jenna Strom. I am thankful for my family because I love them, and they are nice to me.



**Clayton Morehouse** is the son of Justin and Amanda Morehouse. I am thankful for family because they are nice to me.



**Mikkal Neel** is the son of Michael and Kayla Neel. I am thankful for my mom and dad because I love them.



**Laiken Neigel** is the son of Tyler and Autumn Neigel. I am thankful for my mom and family because I love them.

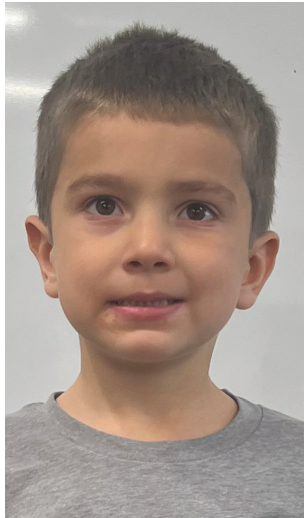


**Dylan Roble-Rodriguez** is the son of Ana Rodriguez. I am thankful for my house and food because I love them.



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**Briggs Eichler is the son of Collin and Emily Eichler. I am thankful for my puppy Max because he chases me.**



**Huntley Frost is the son of Christopher and Samantha Frost. I am thankful for my mom because I love her.**



**BayleeAnn Kupcho is the daughter of Hacob Kupcho and McKenzie Wright. I am thankful for my family because I like playing games with me.**



**Regan Lemke is the daughter of Jonathan and Jordan Lemke. I am thankful for my family because I like them.**



**Beckett Rose is the son of Ian and Karen Rose. I am thankful for my house Because we can live in it and play with toys.**



**Jackson Steffes is the son of Jared and Jennifer Steffes. I am thankful for my grandpa because he loves me, and he took care of me when I was sick.**



**Kyle Tarpein is the son of Ryan and Amanda Tarpein. I am thankful for going swimming because it makes me happy.**



**Ava Wiseman is the daughter of Dustin and Kandi Wiseman. I am thankful for my family because they are my favorite people.**

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**Joseph Bosmoe** is the son of Justin Bosmoe and Gabriella Cutler. I am thankful for my family because I love them so much.

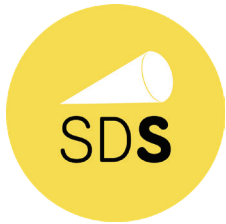


**Jaiden Johnson** is the son of Jerry and Rebecca Johnson. I am thankful for my dad because he plays my favorite game with me.



**Harper Harry** is the daughter of Kristopher and Alison Harry. I am thankful for my mom and my friends because I like them.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

**City leaders fund child care center with tax district typically used for roads, sewer  
'Child care is infrastructure,' economic development director says**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 22, 2023 4:13 PM**

Brooke Rollag cannot work without child care.

The mother of four is the economic development director for the Lake Area Improvement Corporation in Madison.

Her job is to understand what businesses need to locate and expand in the area. And in Madison, those businesses need child care.

"Child care is infrastructure," Rollag said. "When you view it as a necessary means for people to go to work, that's infrastructure."

Madison, a city of over 6,000, does not have any child care centers. It relies solely on in-home providers.

Rollag partnered with the city of Madison to create a tax increment financing (TIF) district with four businesses in the Lakeview Industrial Park. The TIF was approved by Madison city commissioners in May.

TIF districts provide upfront financing for public improvements and then capture the new and higher property taxes generated by a development project to pay off the financing. The public improvements are usually infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, sewer and water lines.

But the new TIF will pay for the construction of a child care center. It's the first time a community in South Dakota has used TIF money for that purpose, Rollag said.

"TIFs are, in my opinion, one of the greatest local tools we have," said Rollag, who's been working on the project for over two years. "The county and the city say, 'We see value in the project you're proposing.' If not for this TIF project, the business would have a hard time moving forward. If not for this TIF, I don't know how we're going to build solutions for child care here."

Sioux Falls-based child care nonprofit Embe will operate the center, set to break ground in spring 2024 and open in 2025. The 14,000 square foot, state-licensed facility will accommodate up to 140 children.

The building — which will cost around \$4 million — will be owned by the Lake Area Improvement Corporation. The TIF will provide about \$1.7 million for constructing the building, conservatively, but could generate up to \$3 million. The rest of the money will be raised in a capital campaign led by Rollag.

The child care center will be built on 1.5 acres of park space in Madison — an underutilized T-ball diamond. Rollag worked with the city; South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks; and the National Park Service to remove the space from protected park status, since the park had previously received federal grant funds to build tennis courts.

While Madison is using a TIF in a new way, local governments across South Dakota are taking steps to support child care and economic development needs in their communities, said Mike Bockorny, CEO of the Aberdeen Development Corporation and chair of the South Dakota Economic Development Professionals Association.

Those local governments have utilized grants, loans and capital campaigns to build child care facilities. Local businesses have also supplemented some child care costs in communities.

"Smaller communities have to have a city or county play a role. Larger communities with larger economic development organizations probably have more resources and can look at taking care of things in different ways," Bockorny said. "There's not a one-size fits all approach, and every community has to come up with creative solutions."

Bockorny has known about child care challenges in Aberdeen for the past eight years. The Aberdeen Development Corporation surveys its partners each year asking what challenges they're facing and how

the organization can help with their needs.

When he first heard the concerns, Bockorny worked with a church to establish a child care center in a building near Aberdeen's five industrial parks. He helped secure the group a low-interest loan through the development corporation's loan fund.

Bockorny has since worked with the Aberdeen YMCA to acquire a low-interest loan and fundraise to build a \$5 million addition to its child care center, and he's working with residential home developers on plans to build child care centers in future developments.

"You as a developer put the building up and we help you find someone to lease the property at a reasonable rate, and then people who move into the community with kids can have a child care center right in the middle of a 200 housing development," Bockorny said.

With the years of work Bockorny and Rollag have put into supporting the dual child care-economic growth needs of their communities, there's still more work needed. Bockorny said a recent study in Aberdeen showed the city is short 500 child care spots, and Rollag estimates Madison will still be short spots despite the new center.

Bockorny expects it'll take several more years until South Dakota and its communities find a balance between child care and economic development.

"If you're missing a group of spokes on a bicycle wheel, you'll have a big bump on your ride and it won't be comfortable. By not having needed child care, we're missing spokes," Bockorny said. "We have to figure out how to build those spokes back into the wheel to make this run smoothly."

*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.*

## **Park Service tightens restrictions on air tours at Rushmore, Badlands**

**BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - NOVEMBER 22, 2023 4:56 PM**

The National Park Service has adopted new restrictions on commercial air tours at Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Badlands National Park.

The tours will have to stay at least a half-mile from each site's boundaries.

The Rushmore plan will "provide a peaceful setting for visitors to enjoy and experience," Mount Rushmore Superintendent Michelle Wheatley said in a news release. Eric Veach, superintendent at Badlands National Park, said in his news release that the Badlands plan is "reflective of the experience desired by visitors."

Annual visitors number more than 2 million at Mount Rushmore and more than 1 million in the Badlands. Thousands of those visitors pay private companies for air tours, mostly in helicopters, to get a novel view of the Black Hills mountain carving and the beautifully eroded Badlands formations. Air tours near the sites may continue, "just at a further distance," Park Service documents say.

The Helicopter Association International opposed the plans.

"Besides closing off opportunities for thousands of visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of the parks, the NPS aims to cut back air-tour flights to such a degree that some tour operations will close," the association said in June.

Noise and other complaints about air tours over Park Service sites nationwide led Congress to adopt the National Parks Air Tour Management Act in 2000. The law requires tour operators to seek permission for flights, and mandates the formulation of air tour management plans or similar agreements to regulate tours and mitigate their negative impacts.

Bureaucratic difficulties and delays stalled compliance with law. The national nonprofit Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility sued in 2018 to force the adoption of air tour management plans. The group ultimately won an order that was upheld by an appeals court in 2020, which led to a wave of plan adoptions at Park Service sites across the country.

When draft versions of the Rushmore and Badlands plans were released in May, Jeff Ruch, of the public employees group, celebrated the move as the culmination of decades' worth of effort.

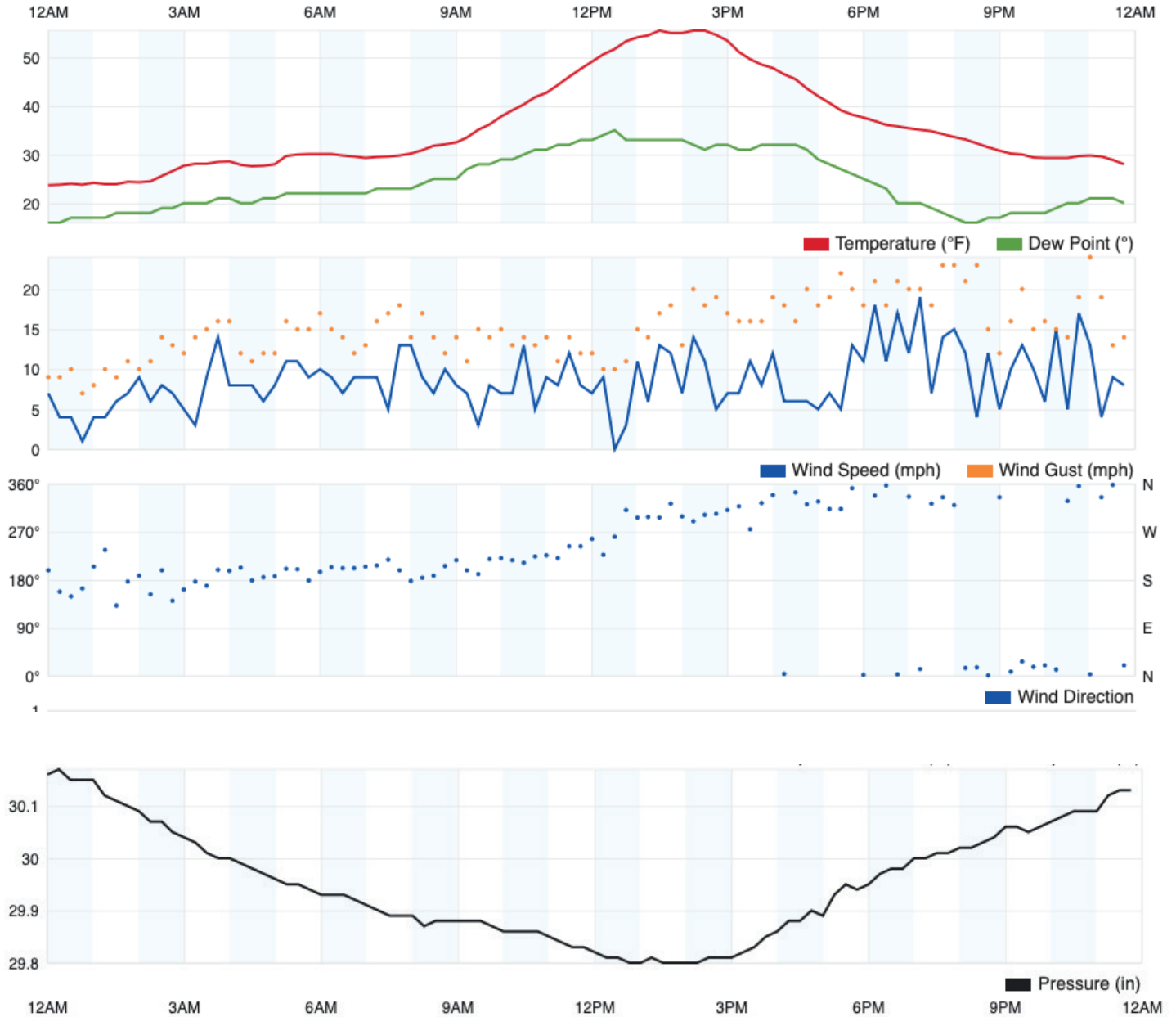
"National parks are now on the verge of reclaiming control over their skies," Ruch said.

There's a 60-day appeal window for each decision.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

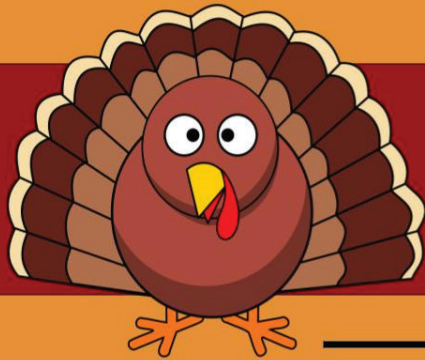




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Thu Nov 23	Fri Nov 24	Sat Nov 25	Sun Nov 26	Mon Nov 27	Tue Nov 28	Wed Nov 29
						
28°F 10°F	27°F 18°F	32°F 20°F	30°F 11°F	31°F 18°F	40°F 21°F	40°F 22°F
N 12 MPH	N 4 MPH	SSW 11 MPH	NW 21 MPH	WNW 9 MPH	S 14 MPH	WNW 14 MPH



## HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

TODAY



26 to 31°

FRIDAY



26 to 30°

SATURDAY



33 to 37°

SUNDAY



28 to 37°



It's going to be a little chilly out there today with highs in the high 20s to low 30s. These cooler temps will continue through the weekend. Clouds are also going to be sticking around, but we are expecting a slight warm up next week. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 56 °F at 2:26 PM

Low Temp: 24 °F at 1:22 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 4:47 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 16 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 59 in 2017

Record Low: -17 in 1985

Average High: 39

Average Low: 16

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.60

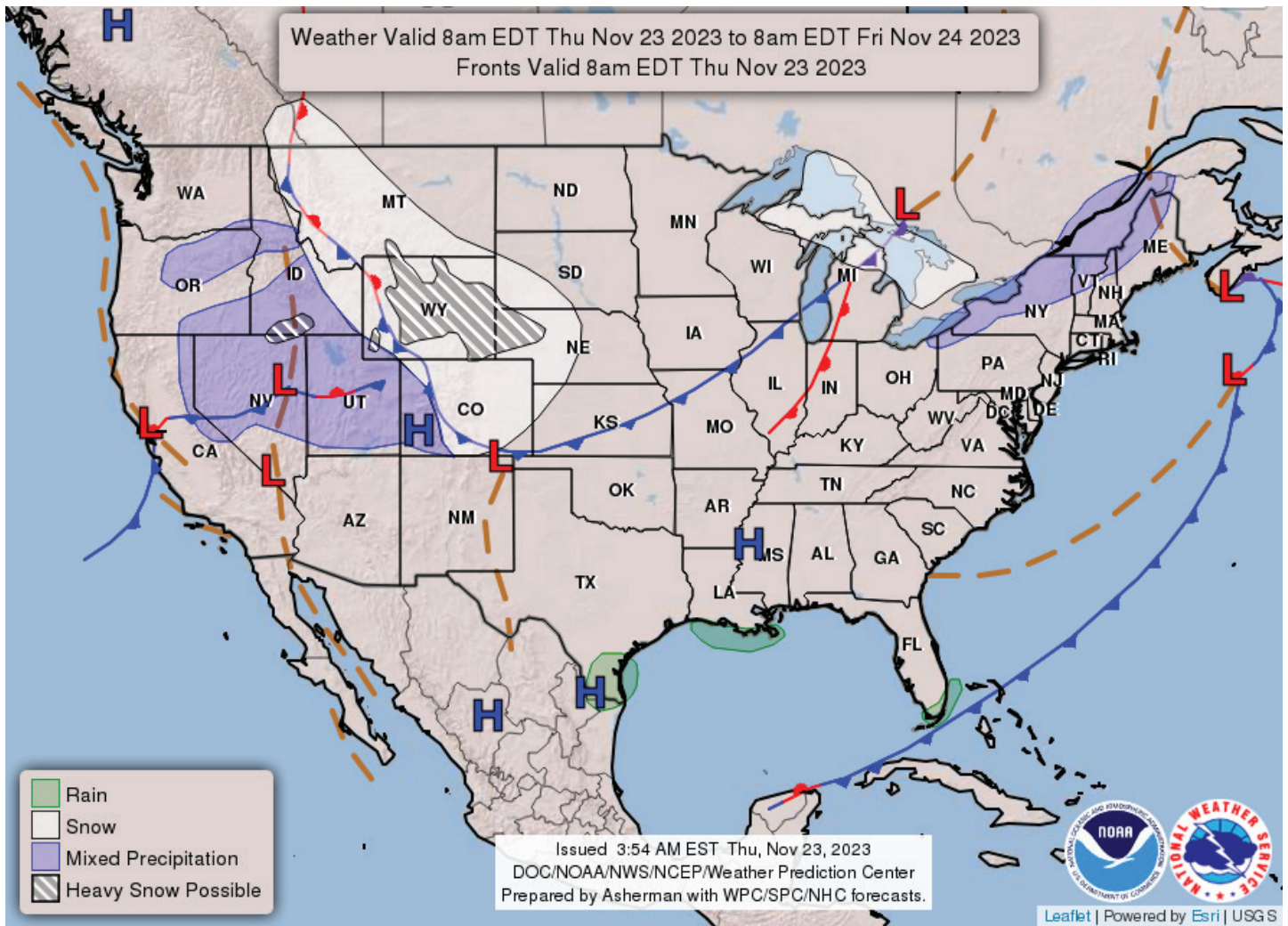
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.19

Average Precip to date: 21.07

Precip Year to Date: 23.17

Sunset Tonight: 4:57:13 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:41:38 AM



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## Today in Weather History

November 23, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across most of northern South Dakota, adding to already significant snow depth. Roads became snow-packed, which hampered travel, resulting in the postponement of many activities. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Aberdeen, Isabel, Roscoe, and Mellette; 7 inches at Eagle Butte, Timber Lake, Selby, Faulkton, Leola, Frederick, Webster, and Sisseton; and 8 inches at Britton, Ipswich, Eureka, and McLaughlin.

1909 - Rattlesnake Creek was deluged with 7.17 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for the state of Idaho. (The Weather Channel)

1912: The Rouse Simmons was a three-masted schooner famous for sinking during a violent storm on Lake Michigan on this day. The ship was bound for Chicago with a cargo of Christmas trees when it foundered off the coast of Two Rivers, Wisconsin, killing all on board.

1943 - Northern New Hampshire was in the grips of a record snowstorm which left a total of 55 inches at Berlin, and 56 inches at Randolph. The 56 inch total at Randolph established a 24 hour snowfall record for the state. In Maine, Middle Dam received a record 35 inches of snow in 24 hours. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Rain and gale force winds prevailed along the Northern Pacific coast. Quillayute, WA, received 1.57 inches of rain in 24 hours, including nine tenths of an inch in six hours. Heavy snow fell over northern Oregon and the Cascade Mountains of Washington State. Temperatures began to moderate in the eastern U.S. following a bitterly cold weekend. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Low pressure crossing the Great Basin brought wintry weather to parts of the western U.S. Up to a foot of snow blanketed Yellowstone Park, and winds gusted to 70 mph at Casper WY, and reached 95 mph near Reno NV. Up to seven inches of rain was reported in the Grass Valley and Nevada City area of California. Paradise CA was soaked with 5.37 inches of rain in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Low pressure tracking across the Carolinas brought heavy rain to parts of the Southern Atlantic Coast Region for Thanksgiving Day, and blanketed the Middle Atlantic Coast States and southern New England with heavy snow. The storm produced up to nine inches of snow over Long Island NY, and up to 14 inches over Cape Cod MA, at Yarmouth. Totals of 4.7 inches at New York City and 6.0 inches at Newark NJ were records for Thanksgiving Day, the 8.0 inch total at Providence RI was a record for any given day in November, and the 6.5 inch total at Strasburg CT was a record for the month of November as a whole. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 - An outbreak of severe thunderstorms produced reports of 54 tornadoes across portions of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama. In Texas's Hardin county, one person was killed with three injured when a tornado struck during the afternoon (Associated Press).



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### PLANNING AND FAITH

Once upon a time, a snail began his challenging climb up the trunk of an apple tree. He saw the small buds and tiny leaves and knew that he was going in the right direction. As he made his way upward, he noticed a worm sticking his head out of his comfortable hole.

"Where are you going?" asked the worm.

"I'm going to get an apple," came the reply.

"How foolish," said the worm. "There are no apples up there!"

"There will be when I get there," said the snail. That snail's determination is a great reminder of the faith of Noah. God gave him instructions to build an ark in the middle of dry land. In obedience to God's guidance, he did what God asked him to do. Although he did not know what a "flood" could possibly be, nor did he understand what God was going to do, he followed His instructions without question. He was ridiculed and condemned by his friends, but he did what God instructed him to do without knowing what would eventually happen.

In the life of every Christian, there are times when we doubt God and have difficulty acting in faith. It makes more sense to use our God-given minds to think logically, plan carefully, and work things out on our own than to trust an unseen God. But that's not what God wants! God wants us to believe that when He asks us to do something, it is for His glory and our good.

Prayer: Give us faith, Lord, to trust You in all things for all things. May we believe, with all of our hearts, that what You call us to do we can do if we trust You completely. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith. Hebrews 11:7



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

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## 2023 Community Events

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

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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

### Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White ..... \$48.99/year
- Colored ..... \$79.88/year
- Colored ..... \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly\* ..... \$31.95/year

\* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

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## Groton Daily Independent

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- 12 Months..... \$53.25

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.21.23

17 22 25 30 38 24

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$308,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 7  
DRAW: Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.22.23

17 19 37 42 45 7

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,400,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 22  
DRAW: Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.22.23

7 31 35 39 43 4

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 37 Mins 10  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.22.23

3 17 28 29 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$65,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 37  
DRAW: Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.22.23

20 21 30 55 56 14

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 6  
DRAW: Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.22.23

20 24 33 39 42 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$340,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 6  
DRAW: Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### Defending champion South Dakota State again appears the team to beat in FCS playoffs

By HANK KURZ Jr. AP Sports Writer

Programs from the Dakotas remain very prominent and in the top tier of the Football Championship Subdivision.

As the playoffs get started with eight games Saturday, defending champion and top-seeded South Dakota State will be among the eight teams with time to get healthier while enjoying a first-round bye.

Conversely, North Dakota State, the most dominant program over the past dozen years with nine national titles, finds itself in an unfamiliar spot in its 14th consecutive tournament — the first round. The Bison (8-3), 45-21 losers to the Jackrabbits in last year's championship, will host playoff newcomer Drake (8-3).

Rather than feeling slighted, Bison coach Matt Entz said his team is excited. Having played for eight straight weeks, momentum is on their side.

"Get in a flow and let's not get out of the flow right now. Let's stay in it," he said while allowing that he'll back off on some practice norms to alleviate the wear and tear of a full regular season and potentially as many as five more games.

The rest of the seeds, in order, are Montana (10-1), which claimed its first Big Sky Conference championship since 2009, South Dakota (9-2), Idaho (8-3), Albany (9-3), Montana State (8-3), Furman (9-2) and Villanova (9-2). Montana State (1984), Villanova (2009), Montana (1995, 2001) and Furman (1988) are former champions.

The Jackrabbits (11-0) sent coach John Stiegelmeier into retirement with their first national title, but new coach Jimmy Rogers has picked up right where Stiegelmeier left off. South Dakota State will take a 25-game winning streak into its second-round game against Gardner-Webb or Mercer, another first-time participant.

The Jackrabbits' last loss was by 7-3 at Iowa to start last season in a game in which two safeties by the Hawkeyes was the difference.

#### BACK AGAIN

Montana leads all teams with 27 appearances in the playoffs, and Furman is next with 20. Delaware, the 2003 champions, is third, making its 19th appearance.

The Bison are making their 14th consecutive appearance, the longest active streak, remarkable since they had never appeared in the playoffs before beginning that streak. The Jackrabbits have the next-longest active streak with 12.

#### FIRST TIMERS

Drake, Mercer and N.C. Central are each making their first appearance in the playoffs. While Drake and Mercer (8-3) have difficult draws, N.C. Central plays at Richmond in one of the more intriguing games of the opening round.

The Spiders (8-3), one of four teams from the Coastal Athletic Association in the field, have won six straight and shared the league title at 7-1 with Villanova and Albany. The Spiders won the national championship in 2008. The Eagles (9-2) of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference have played three teams from the CAA this season and beat them all. None qualified for the playoffs.

Drake, meanwhile, draws a Bison team likely to be highly motivated by not earning their typical bye. The Bulldogs have faced two playoffs teams from the Missouri Valley Football Conference. Neither went well. They lost 55-7 against North Dakota to open the season and 70-7 against the Jackrabbits two weeks later.

That was long ago, Entz said.

"They've won eight games in a row and so they've continued to get better as the season's gone on," he said. "To do that at any level — high school, college, the NFL — that's difficult to keep people locked in and focused like that."

Mercer and Gardner-Webb met last year with Mercer winning 45-14.

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## EXTRA POINTS

North Dakota State was 9-0 in national championship games before losing last season, and has won the title with three different coaches. Craig Bohl guided the 2011, 2012 and 2013 winners, Chris Klieman's teams won in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018 and Entz was the coach in 2019, 2021 and last season. ... Youngstown State, which won the last of its four championships in 1997, is back in the field of 24 for the first time since 2016. The Penguins (7-4) will host Duquesne (7-4), which is in the playoffs for the first time since 2018.

## Stewart puts up 18 as South Dakota takes down Northland 100-48

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Kaleb Stewart's 18 points helped South Dakota defeat Northland 100-48 on Wednesday.

Stewart was 6 of 8 shooting (4 for 6 from 3-point range) for the Coyotes (4-2). Paul Bruns scored 14 points while shooting 5 for 13, including 3 for 6 from beyond the arc, and added nine rebounds. Jake Brack shot 4 of 7 from the field and 5 for 10 from the line to finish with 13 points, while adding 12 rebounds.

The Lumberjacks were led by Langston Flowers, who recorded 12 points. Drew Lindberg added nine points for Northland. In addition, Marvin McBroom finished with six points.

## Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined

Yankton Press & Dakotan. November 20, 2023.

Editorial: Crop Insurance And Climate Change

Farmers are more directly reliant on — or at the mercy of — the vagaries of the weather than perhaps any other component in the Midwest economy. (However, many of those components rely on a strong farm economy to thrive.) Thus, farmers are on the front line of climate change and the impact it has on or lives.

A South Dakota News Watch story in Saturday's Press & Dakotan reported that this is becoming an increasingly expensive proposition.

Since 2001, South Dakota farmers have received \$8.3 billion in payments from the Federal Crop Insurance Corp. "specifically due to weather disasters rising significantly during that time," News Watch said. In fact, South Dakota was among the top states in the nation in receiving such payments due to weather disasters such as floods and drought.

According to environmentalists, this reflects the rising economic toll of climate change.

U.S. farmers received a record \$19.1 billion in crop insurance payments in 2022, well above the \$3 billion paid out in 2002, according to the Environmental Working Group (EWG).

(Also, EWG estimates that about one-third of crop insurance payments goes to "dozen or so big insurance companies and their agents that sell policies and not to farmers who work the land and absorb the risk," News Watch reported.)

This cost is generally supported by U.S. taxpayers, with "nearly 65% of the premiums for the crop insurance program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture ... subsidized with federal funding," News Watch noted.

Could that level of support change?

With a new Farm Bill under consideration, some critics of the current structure believe that less federal funding should be devoted to this effort. They say that lessening that support would compel more farmers to alter their operations in coping with the long-term impact of climate change. With the current safety net, critics imply, farmers may have little incentive to do so.

That argument may make sense to a degree, but it also points to a conundrum.

Without question, the impact of climate change is challenging farmers, so reducing the amount of federal backing of crop insurance may ultimately undercut the nation's ability to feed itself.

"It's so vitally important for the ability of farmers and ranchers to manage their risk," said South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation president Scott VanderWal. "When you're so totally depending on the weather for your livelihood, you have to be able to manage that risk."



In this discussion, "risk" is the operative word, because that's what farmers are facing increasingly as the weather becomes less predictable — when a flood year is followed by a drought year, when farmland that was once reliably productive becomes a gamble year after year.

If farmers don't adjust to changing climate patterns, they become increasingly reliant on insurance payments unless they change. But what significant adjustments can be made when the weather becomes increasingly unpredictable and prone to dramatic outbursts?

Thus, risk is becoming an even greater variable, and that unpredictable variability is a big reason for rising crop insurance payments.

Any action lawmakers consider with these payments must also factor in the heightened risk and variability that comes as climate change increases. Balance is vital, although it may be stubbornly elusive.

Ultimately, crop insurance is "the investment the American public is making to ensure that the industry that raises our food, fiber and fuel remains viable and strong so we don't find ourselves depending on other countries for our food like we do for energy a lot of the time," VanderWal said. "... Because we can feed ourselves, we don't have to worry about getting our food from other countries. That's so incredibly important and part of our national security."

END

## **Dutch election winner Geert Wilders is an anti-Islam firebrand known as the Dutch Donald Trump**

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — He's been called the Dutch Donald Trump. He's been threatened with death countless times by Islamic extremists, convicted of insulting Moroccans, and Britain once banned him from entering the country.

Now Geert Wilders has won a massive victory in a Dutch election and is in pole position to form the next governing coalition and possibly become the Netherlands' next prime minister.

An exit poll revealing his landslide appeared to take even 60-year-old political veteran Wilders by surprise.

In his first reaction, posted in a video on X, formerly Twitter, he spread his arms wide, put his face in his hands and said simply "35!" — the number of seats an exit poll forecast his Party for Freedom, or PVV, won in the 150-seat lower house of parliament.

Wilders, with his fiery tongue has long been one of the Netherlands' best-known lawmakers at home and abroad. His populist policies and shock of peroxide blond hair have drawn comparisons with Trump.

But, unlike Trump, he seemed destined to spend his life in political opposition.

The only time Wilders came close to governing was when he supported the first coalition formed by Prime Minister Mark Rutte in 2010. But Wilders did not formally join the minority administration and brought it down after just 18 months in office in a dispute over austerity measures. Since then, mainstream parties have shunned him.

They no longer can.

"The PVV wants to, from a fantastic position with 35 seats that can totally no longer be ignored by any party, cooperate with other parties," he told cheering supporters at his election celebration in a small bar in a working class suburb of The Hague.

Whether he can piece together a stable coalition with former political foes remains to be seen.

As well as alienating mainstream politicians, his fiery anti-Islam rhetoric also has made him a target for extremists and led to him living under round-the-clock protection for years. He has appeared in court as a victim of death threats, vowing never to be silenced.

Voting Wednesday at The Hague City Hall, Wilders was flanked by burly security guards scanning the cavernous space for possible threats. He has moved from one safe house to another over nearly two decades.

In 2009, the British government refused to let him visit the country, saying he posed a threat to "community harmony and therefore public security." Wilders had been invited to Britain by a member of Parliament's upper house, the House of Lords, to show his 15-minute film "Fitna," which criticizes the Quran

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as a "fascist book." The film sparked violent protests around the Muslim world in 2008 for linking Quranic verses with footage of terrorist attacks.

To court mainstream voters this time around, Wilders toned down the anti-Islam rhetoric and sought to focus less on what he calls the "de-Islamization" of the Netherlands and more on tackling hot-button issues such as housing shortages, a cost-of-living crisis and access to good health care.

His campaign platform nonetheless calls for a referendum on the Netherlands leaving the European Union, an "asylum stop" and "no Islamic schools, Qurans and mosques," although he pledged Wednesday night not to breach Dutch laws or the country's constitution that enshrines freedom of religion and expression.

Wilders is set to become the longest-serving lawmaker in the Dutch parliament later this year. He has been a member of the House of Representatives since 1998, first for the center-right People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, where he mentored a young Rutte before quitting the party and setting up his Party for Freedom. He demonstrated a softer side Wednesday night by thanking his Hungarian-born wife Krisztina for her support.

He also is a staunch supporter of Israel and advocates shifting the Embassy of the Netherlands there to Jerusalem and closing the Dutch diplomatic post in Ramallah, home of the Palestinian Authority.

Wilders is known for his hardline politics, but also for his witty one-liners. And his pets. His two cats, Snoetje and Pluisje, have their own account on X, formerly Twitter, with nearly 23,000 followers.

## In political shift to the far right, anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders wins big in Dutch elections

By MIKE CORDER and RAF CASERT Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The party of anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders won a huge general election victory in the Netherlands, according to a nearly complete vote count early Thursday, that showed a stunning lurch to the far right for a nation once famed as a beacon of tolerance.

The result will send shock waves through Europe, where far-right ideology is on the rise, and puts Wilders in line to lead talks to form the next governing coalition and possibly become the first far-right prime minister of the Netherlands.

With nearly all votes counted, Wilders' Party for Freedom was forecast to win 37 seats in the 150-seat lower house of parliament, two more than predicted by an exit poll when voting finished Wednesday night and more than double the 17 the party secured in the last election.

Wilders got a standing ovation when he met his lawmakers at the parliament building Thursday morning. "Can you imagine it? 37 seats!" he said to cheers.

Other political parties were holding separate meetings to discuss the election's outcome before what is likely to be an arduous process of forming a new governing coalition begins Friday.

Wilders' election program included calls for a referendum on the Netherlands leaving the European Union, a total halt to accepting asylum-seekers and migrant pushbacks at Dutch borders.

It also advocates the "de-Islamization" of the Netherlands. He says he wants no mosques or Islamic schools in the country, although he has been milder about Islam during this election campaign than in the past.

Although known for his harsh rhetoric, Wilders began courting other right-wing and centrist parties by saying in a victory speech that whatever policies he pushes will be "within the law and constitution."

His victory appeared based on his campaign to curtail migration — the issue that caused the last governing coalition to quit in July — and to tackle issues such as the Netherlands' cost-of-living crisis and housing shortages.

"I think, to be honest, very many people are very focused on one particular problem, which is immigration," voter Norbert van Beelen said in The Hague on Thursday morning. "So I think that's what people voted for, immigration and all the other aspects of leaving the European Union looking very inward as opposed to outward are just forgotten. It's all about immigration."

In his victory speech, Wilders said he wants to end what he called the "asylum tsunami," referring to the migration issue that came to dominate his campaign.

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"The Dutch will be No. 1 again," Wilders said. "The people must get their nation back."

Wilders, long a firebrand who lashed out at Islam, the EU and migrants, was in the past labeled a Dutch version of Donald Trump. His positions brought him close to power but never in it.

But to become prime minister of a country known for compromise politics, he must persuade other party leaders to work with him in a coalition government.

That will be tough as mainstream parties are reluctant to join forces with him and his party, but the size of his victory strengthens his hand in any negotiations.

Wilders called on other parties to constructively engage in coalition talks. Pieter Omtzigt, a former centrist Christian Democrat who built his own New Social Contract party in three months to take 20 seats, said he would always be open to talks.

The closest party to Wilders' in the election was an alliance of the center-left Labor Party and Green Left, which was forecast to win 25 seats. But its leader, Frans Timmermans, made clear that Wilders should not count on him as a partner.

"We will never form a coalition with parties that pretend that asylum-seekers are the source of all misery," Timmermans said, vowing to defend Dutch democracy.

The historic victory came one year after the win of Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, whose Brothers of Italy's roots were steeped in nostalgia for fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Meloni has since mellowed her stance on several issues and has become the acceptable face of the hard right in the EU.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who boasts of turning Hungary into an "illiberal" state and has similarly harsh stances on migration and EU institutions, was quick to congratulate Wilders. "The winds of change are here! Congratulations," Orban said.

During the final weeks of his campaign, Wilders somewhat softened his stance and vowed that he would be a prime minister for all Dutch people, so much so that he gained the moniker Geert "Milders."

The election was called after the fourth and final coalition of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte resigned in July after failing to agree to measures to rein-in migration.

Rutte was replaced as the head of his People's Party for Freedom and Democracy by Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius, a former refugee from Turkey who could have become the country's first female prime minister had her party won the most votes. Instead, it was forecast to lose 10 seats to end up with 24.

The result is the latest in a series of elections that is altering the European political landscape. From Slovakia and Spain, to Germany and Poland, populist and hard-right parties triumphed in some EU member nations and faltered in others.

In The Hague on Thursday, Dutch voter Barbara Belder said that Wilders' victory "is a very clear sign that the Netherlands wants something different."

## Temporary cease-fire in Gaza and hostage release now expected to start Friday

By WAFAA SHURAFU and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An agreement for a four-day cease-fire in Gaza and the release of dozens of hostages held by militants and Palestinians imprisoned by Israel appeared to have hit a last-minute snag. A senior Israeli official said it would not take effect until Friday, a day later than originally announced.

The diplomatic breakthrough promised some relief for the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza who have endured weeks of Israeli bombardment, as well as families in Israel fearful for the fate of their loved ones taken captive during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war.

Israel's national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, announced the delay late Wednesday, without providing a reason. Negotiators were still "working to create the appropriate conditions" for the cease-fire and swap, according to Majed al-Ansari, a spokesman from the Foreign Ministry of Qatar, which played a key role in mediating with Hamas.



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The Persian Gulf nation said early Thursday that a new time for the agreement to go into force would be announced "in the coming hours." It was originally set to begin Thursday morning. The U.S. and Egypt also helped negotiate the deal.

## RISING TOLL IN GAZA

The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza, meanwhile, resumed its detailed count of Palestinian casualties from the war, saying over 13,300 have been killed.

The figures do not include updated numbers from hospitals in the north, where services and communication largely broke down earlier this month, and the ministry says some 6,000 people have been reported missing and are feared to be buried under rubble.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and militants in its death tolls. Israel says it has killed thousands of Hamas fighters, though it has presented no evidence for its count.

The ministry stopped publishing casualty counts as of Nov. 11, saying it had lost the ability to do so because of the collapse of the health sector in the north.

## NETANYAHU SAYS TRUCE WON'T END WAR

The truce agreement had raised hopes of eventually winding down the war, now in its seventh week, which has leveled vast swaths of Gaza, fueled a surge of violence in the occupied West Bank, and stirred fears of a wider conflagration across the Middle East.

Air raid sirens sounded across northern Israel on Thursday as Hezbollah said it had fired 48 Katyusha rockets from southern Lebanon. The barrage came after an Israeli strike killed five Hezbollah fighters, including the son of the head of the group's parliamentary bloc.

The Israeli military said it was striking the sources of the launches. Israel and Hezbollah, which fought a monthlong war in 2006, have repeatedly traded fire across the border since the war in Gaza broke out.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war against Hamas after the truce expires, with the goal of destroying the group's military capabilities, ending its 16-year rule in Gaza and returning all of the estimated 240 captives held in Gaza by Hamas and other groups.

"The war is continuing. We will continue it until we achieve all our goals," Netanyahu said, adding that he had delivered the same message in a phone call to U.S. President Joe Biden. Washington has provided extensive military and diplomatic support to Israel since the start of the war.

Israeli troops hold much of northern Gaza and say they have dismantled tunnels and much of Hamas' infrastructure there. Israeli forces on Wednesday revealed what they said was a major Hamas hideout in a tunnel beneath Shifa Hospital.

The territory's largest medical center has been at the heart of a fierce battle of narratives over both sides' allegedly reckless endangerment of civilians. Hamas and hospital staff deny that Shifa was used as a militant command center.

Shifa's director, Mohammed Abu Selmia, was detained by Israeli soldiers, according to Medhat Abbas, the director of the Gaza Health Ministry. There was no immediate comment from the army.

Israel, meanwhile, ordered the full evacuation of the Indonesian Hospital in the north, Dr. Munir al-Boursh, a Health Ministry official inside the facility, told Al-Jazeera. He said hospital officials were trying to organize buses to evacuate some 200 patients, including children with burn injuries. Fighting has raged outside the hospital for days, and hundreds of people have already been evacuated to the south.

Israel has threatened to launch wider operations in southern Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people who fled the north have crammed into overflowing U.N.-run shelters with dwindling food, water and basic supplies.

For Hamas, the cease-fire would provide an opportunity to regroup after weeks of apparently heavy losses. Hamas leader Yehya Sinwar, who is believed to be alive and in hiding in Gaza, is likely to claim the release of Palestinian prisoners as a major achievement and declare victory if the war ends.

## HOSTAGES TO BE FREED IN STAGES

Under the truce deal, 50 hostages are supposed to be freed in stages, in exchange for the release of what Hamas said would be 150 Palestinian prisoners. Both sides are set to release women and children first, and Israel said the truce would be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed.

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The return of hostages could lift spirits in Israel, where their plight has gripped the country. Families of the hostages have staged mass demonstrations to pressure the government to bring them home.

Qatar said the cease-fire would allow a "larger number of humanitarian convoys and relief aid" to enter Gaza, including fuel, but it gave no details on quantities. Israel cut off all fuel imports at the start of the war, causing a territory-wide blackout and leaving homes and hospitals reliant on generators, which have also steadily been forced to shut down.

Netanyahu said the deal includes a provision for the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit hostages remaining in captivity.

Israel's Justice Ministry published a list of 300 prisoners eligible to be released, mainly teenagers detained over the past year for rock-throwing and other minor offenses.

The war erupted when several thousand Hamas militants stormed into southern Israel, killing at least 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking scores of hostages, including babies, women and older adults, as well as Israeli soldiers. Hamas is expected to demand a large number of high-profile Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the soldiers.

More than 1.7 million people, three-fourths of Gaza's population, have been displaced in the war. Many, if not most, will be unable to return home because of the vast damage and the presence of Israeli troops in the north.

Israel has barred imports to Gaza since the start of the war, except for a trickle of aid entering through Egypt's Rafah crossing. Humanitarian aid groups operating in Gaza said the truce will prove too short and the Rafah crossing's capacity insufficient to meet urgent needs.

## **Hundreds of German police raid properties of Hamas supporters in Berlin and across the country**

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Hundreds of police officers searched the properties of Hamas members and followers in Germany on Thursday morning following a formal ban on any activity by or in support of the militant group.

The German government implemented the ban on Nov. 2 and dissolved Samidoun, a group that was behind a celebration in Berlin of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

Germany's domestic intelligence service estimates that Hamas has around 450 members in the country. Their activities range from expressions of sympathy and propaganda activities to financing and fundraising activities to strengthen the organization abroad.

"We are continuing our consistent action against radical Islamists," German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said. "By banning Hamas and Samidoun in Germany, we have sent a clear signal that we will not tolerate any glorification or support of Hamas' barbaric terror against Israel."

The raids, which mostly took place in Berlin, were meant to enforce the bans and to further investigate the groups, the German interior ministry said in a statement.

A total of 15 properties were searched in Berlin and the states of Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia and Schleswig-Holstein.

In Berlin alone, more than 300 police officers carried out searches at 11 locations in order to seize evidence and assets. Seven searches were related to Hamas and four to Samidoun. The searches mainly took place at the homes of supporters and the premises of a Palestinian association, German news agency dpa reported.

Germany has been clamping down on groups supporting antisemitism in the wake of the latest Israel-Hamas war.

On Tuesday, police raided the homes of 17 people in the southern German state of Bavaria who were accused of spreading antisemitic hate speech and threats targeting Jews online. On Nov. 16, German police raided 54 locations across the country in an investigation of a Hamburg-based organization suspected of promoting the Iranian leadership's ideology and possibly supporting activities of Hezbollah in Germany.

"We are keeping a close eye on the Islamist scene," Faeser said. "Islamists and antisemites cannot and

must not feel safe anywhere here." She said the members and supporters of Hamas in Germany are also committed to influencing the political and social discourse in the country.

Hamas has vowed to annihilate Israel and has been responsible for many suicide bombings and other deadly attacks on civilians and Israeli soldiers. After the group's incursion into Israel in October, Israel vowed to wipe out Hamas.

The U.S. State Department designated Hamas a terrorist group in 1997. The European Union and other Western countries also consider it a terrorist organization.

## **In a shock for Europe, anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders records a massive win in Dutch elections**

By MIKE CORDER and RAF CASERT Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders won a huge victory in Dutch elections, according to a near complete count of the vote early Thursday, in a stunning lurch to the far right for a nation once famed as a beacon of tolerance.

The result will send shockwaves through Europe, where far-right ideology is on the rise, and puts Wilders in line to lead talks to form the next governing coalition and possibly become the first far-right prime minister of the Netherlands.

With nearly all votes counted, Wilders' Party for Freedom was forecast to win 37 seats in the 150-seat lower house of parliament, two more than predicted by an exit poll when voting finished Wednesday night and more than double the 17 he won at the last election.

"I had to pinch my arm," a jubilant Wilders said.

Political parties were set to hold separate meetings Thursday to discuss the outcome before what is likely to be an arduous process of forming a new governing coalition begins Friday.

Despite his harsh rhetoric, Wilders has already begun courting other right and center parties by saying in a victory speech that whatever policies he pushes will be "within the law and constitution."

Wilders' election program included calls for a referendum on the Netherlands leaving the European Union, a total halt to accepting asylum-seekers and migrant pushbacks at Dutch borders.

It also advocates the "de-Islamization" of the Netherlands. He says he wants no mosques or Islamic schools in the country, although he has been milder about Islam during this election campaign than in the past.

Instead, his victory seems based on his campaign to rein-in migration — the issue that caused the last governing coalition to quit in July — and tackle issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and housing shortages.

"Voters said, 'We are sick of it. Sick to our stomachs,'" he said, adding he is now on a mission to end the "asylum tsunami," referring to the migration issue that came to dominate his campaign.

"The Dutch will be No. 1 again," Wilders said. "The people must get their nation back."

But Wilders, who has in the past been labeled a Dutch version of Donald Trump, first must form a coalition government before he can take the reins of power.

That will be tough as mainstream parties are reluctant to join forces with him and his party, but the size of his victory strengthens his hand in any negotiations.

Wilders called on other parties to constructively engage in coalition talks. Pieter Omtzigt, a former centrist Christian Democrat who built his own New Social Contract party in three months to take 20 seats, said he would always be open to talks.

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The historic victory came one year after the win of Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, whose Brothers of Italy's roots were steeped in nostalgia for fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Meloni has since mellowed her stance on several issues and has become the acceptable face of the hard right in the EU.



Wilders was long a firebrand lashing out at Islam, at the EU and migrants — a stance which brought him close to power but never in it, in a nation known for compromise politics.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who boasts of turning Hungary into an “illiberal” state and has similarly harsh stances on migration and EU institutions, was quick to congratulate Wilders. “The winds of change are here! Congratulations,” Orban said.

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The election was called after the fourth and final coalition of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte resigned in July after failing to agree to measures to rein-in migration.

Rutte was replaced by Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius, a former refugee from Turkey who could have become the country’s first female prime minister had her party won the most votes. Instead, it was forecast to lose 10 seats to end up with 24.

The result is the latest in a series of elections that is altering the European political landscape. From Slovakia and Spain, to Germany and Poland, populist and hard-right parties triumphed in some EU member nations and faltered in others.

## **To save the climate, the oil and gas sector must slash planet-warming operations, report says**

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

The oil and gas sector, one of the major emitters of planet-warming gases, will need a rapid and substantial overhaul for the world to avoid even worse extreme weather events fueled by human-caused climate change, according to a report released Thursday.

The current investment of \$800 billion a year in the oil and gas sector will need to be cut in half and greenhouse emissions, which result from the burning of fossil fuels like oil, will need to fall by 60% to give the world a fighting chance to meet its climate goals, the International Energy Agency said. Greenhouse gases go up into the atmosphere and heat the planet, leading to several impacts, including extreme weather events.

The IEA’s report comes just ahead of the United Nations climate conference, or COP28, which begins next week. Oil and gas companies, as well as other people and organizations connected to fossil fuels, often attend the meeting, drawing criticism from environmentalists and climate experts. But others say the sector needs to be at the table to discuss how to transition to cleaner energy.

“The oil and gas industry is facing a moment of truth at COP28 in Dubai,” said Fatih Birol, executive director of the IEA in a press statement on the report’s release. “Oil and gas producers need to make profound decisions about their future place in the global energy sector.”

Last year’s climate conference in Egypt saw 400 people connected with fossil fuel industries attending the event, according to an analysis by The Associated Press. The upcoming meeting has also come under fire for appointing the chief of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company as the talks’ president.

The energy sector is responsible for over two-thirds of all human activity-related greenhouse gas emissions, and oil and gas is responsible for about half of those, according to the IEA. Oil and gas companies are also responsible for over 60% of methane emissions — a gas that traps about 87 times more heat than carbon dioxide on a 20-year timescale.

Oil and gas companies can find alternative revenue from the clean energy economy, including hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels and carbon capture technologies, the report said. Both clean hydrogen — made from renewable electricity — and carbon capture — which takes carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere — are currently untested at scale.

The report looked at climate promises made by countries as well as a scenario where the world had reached net zero emissions by 2050. It found that if countries deliver on all climate pledges, demand for oil and gas will be 45% lower than today’s level by 2050. If the world reaches net zero by then, demand

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would be down 75%, it said.

Earlier this year, another IEA report found that the world's oil, gas and coal demand will likely peak by the end of this decade.

Vibhuti Garg, a New Delhi-based energy analyst with the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said that the need for oil and gas is "bound to decline."

"There are cheaper alternatives that are cleaner, so countries will start using those options and reduce their reliance on these expensive fuels," she said.

## Balloons, bands, celebrities and Santa: Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade kicks off

NEW YORK (AP) — Beloved characters like Snoopy and SpongeBob SquarePants will take to the skies above New York City Thursday while bands march along the streets below as the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade ushers in the holiday season.

The parade starts on Manhattan's upper west side and makes its way alongside Central Park in front of big crowds and a national television audience before ending up in front of Macy's flagship store on 34th Street.

Among the big names performing is Cher, who just released her first Christmas album. The Oscar-, Emmy- and Grammy Award-winner has a prime spot — performing just before the arrival of Santa Claus, which marks the end of the parade.

Other celebrities and musical groups taking part include Jon Batiste, Bell Biv DeVoe, Brandy, Jessie James Decker, Pentatonix and Miss America 2023 Grace Stanke. The parade also includes performances from the casts of some Broadway shows.

New balloons debuting this year include Leo the lizard, a character from a Netflix film, who is more than 40 feet (12.5 meters) tall, as well as ones that have been there before — like SpongeBob, coming in at 44 feet (13.4 meters).

Some characters, like Snoopy, have been in the parade for many years, but this year's balloon is a new Beagle Scout Snoopy version — celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first appearance in the Peanuts comics.

It's "going to be a magical experience, an experience full of spectacle, full of entertainment, full of joy, full of celebration," said Will Coss, executive producer of the parade.

The parade isn't just about what's going on in the skies, though. At street level, the procession includes more than two dozen floats, interspersed with marching bands from around the country and a number of clown crews among the 8,000 people participating, organizers said.

This will be the 97th time the parade has been held since 1924.

The broadcast is hosted by Savannah Guthrie, Hoda Kotb and Al Roker from "Today" and airs on NBC.

## Israel unveils what it claims is a major Hamas militant hideout beneath Gaza City's Shifa Hospital

By VICTOR CAIVANO Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli military on Wednesday unveiled what it claimed was a Hamas military facility under Gaza's largest hospital, showing what appeared to be a subterranean dormitory to a group of foreign journalists who were given a rare glimpse inside the besieged enclave.

Dozens of soldiers escorted journalists through a narrow stone tunnel — which the military said stretched 150 meters (164 yards) — to a series of underground bunkers beneath Shifa Hospital in a shattered Gaza City.

The living quarters, located at the end of the tunnel, had an air conditioner, kitchen, bathroom and pair of metal cots in a room fashioned from rusty white tile. They appeared to be out of use.

Since Israel declared war against Hamas on Oct. 7, it has repeatedly accused the Islamic militant group

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of using Gaza's hospitals as cover for military use. It has paid special attention to Shifa, saying Hamas has hidden command centers and bunkers underneath the hospital's sprawling grounds.

Israel has not yet unveiled this purported center, but the military portrayed the underground hideout as its most significant discovery yet. Hamas and the hospital administration have denied Israel's accusations.

"Shifa Hospital is the hugest hospital in Gaza, and it's also the hugest terror facility of Hamas," said Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military's chief spokesperson, as bombardment thundered nearby. "Hamas battalion commanders were conducting command and control, firing rockets from here."

The Associated Press could not independently verify Hagari's claims.

The AP was allowed access to Gaza on the condition that its journalist stay with the Israeli military convoy throughout the four-hour tour and submit all material to a military censor ahead of publication. There is no other way for foreign journalists to currently access the enclave.

The war was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 cross-border attack that killed some 1,200 people and took 240 others hostage. Israel's intense aerial campaign and devastating ground invasion have leveled entire neighborhoods, and well over 11,000 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, according to health officials in the Hamas-ruled territory.

Bent on toppling Gaza's Hamas rulers, Israel describes the heavy toll as the inevitable cost of fighting militants who use civilians as human shields and fire rockets from densely populated neighborhoods. Israel says at least some of the hostages were brought to Shifa.

On Wednesday, Israeli soldiers showed the foreign journalists weaponry they said they found at Shifa, including dozens of AK-47 assault rifles, 20 grenades and several drones. Hagari said the cache was just a small sample.

The Israeli military has plowed through northern Gaza over the past month, leaving a trail of destruction in its effort to bomb Hamas' tunnel network and other targets. Hamas fighters have used the underground network to ambush Israeli troops. In addition to the tunnel it showed journalists, the army says it had uncovered another two shafts near Shifa.

Although the trip was tightly controlled by the Israeli army, journalists could still catch glimpses of life in Gaza. From outside the hospital gates, at least a couple dozen exhausted Palestinians could be seen gathering their belongings, apparently ahead of an evacuation.

Hundreds of patients and doctors remain stranded at the besieged hospital. Thousands more who had been sheltering in its courtyard fled south last week as Israeli tanks drew close and fighting raged.

At one point, several Palestinians leaning out of a window at Shifa locked eyes with journalists. One man gave a thumbs-up. Others started to yell. Israeli soldiers shepherded the journalists away.

What remained on Gaza City's ghostly streets were the ruins of collapsed buildings, spewing rubble onto streets. The facade of one abandoned building had been blown off, revealing furnished living rooms, glassware in cabinets somehow intact, mirrors still mounted on walls. Fortified bulldozers clawed through sand and gravel to clear the way for more tanks.

About 20 Israeli soldiers sat on the side of a road. They smiled and posed for the journalists' cameras.

"There's a great morale. Everyone's ready to do what has to be done. Everyone's ready to fight for the country," said Staff Sgt. Oren, an Israeli soldier who said he is originally from Los Angeles. "Even when it's hard, you sit with your friends and joke around a little bit. At the end of the day, you know why you're here."

The city's coastal promenade that once bustled with cafes and coffee shops was gone. Instead, there was rubble and a single lifeguard hut. Recent bombing sent black plumes rising into the sky. Gunbattles could be heard rattling in the distance.

In the midst of the devastation, a line of Palestinian evacuees could be seen carrying their bags and other belongings. As the journalists in the Israeli army convoy passed by, they held their ID cards up to the armored personnel carriers. Some of them waved white flags.

## What does Sam Altman's firing — and quick reinstatement — mean for the future of AI?

NEW YORK (AP) — It's been quite a week for ChatGPT-maker OpenAI — and co-founder Sam Altman. Altman, who helped start OpenAI as a nonprofit research lab back in 2015, was removed as CEO Friday in a sudden and mostly unexplained exit that stunned the industry. And while his chief executive title was swiftly reinstated just days later, a lot of questions are still up in the air.

If you're just catching up on the OpenAI saga and what's at stake for the artificial intelligence space as a whole, you've come to the right place. Here's a rundown of what you need to know.

### WHO IS SAM ALTMAN AND HOW DID HE RISE TO FAME?

Altman is co-founder of OpenAI, the San Francisco-based company behind ChatGPT (yes, the chatbot that's seemingly everywhere today — from schools to health care ).

The explosion of ChatGPT since its arrival one year ago propelled Altman into the spotlight of the rapid commercialization of generative AI — which can produce novel imagery, passages of text and other media. And as he became Silicon Valley's most sought-after voice on the promise and potential dangers of this technology, Altman helped transform OpenAI into a world-renowned startup.

But his position at OpenAI hit some rocky turns in a whirlwind that was the past week. Altman was fired as CEO Friday — and days later, he was back on the job with a new board of directors.

Within that time, Microsoft, which has invested billions of dollars in OpenAI and has rights to its existing technology, helped drive Altman's return, quickly hiring him as well as another OpenAI co-founder and former president, Greg Brockman, who quit in protest after the CEO's ousting. Meanwhile, hundreds of OpenAI employees threatened to resign.

Both Altman and Brockman celebrated their returns to the company in posts on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, early Wednesday.

### WHY DOES HIS REMOVAL — AND REINSTATEMENT — MATTER?

There's a lot that remains unknown about Altman's initial ousting. Friday's announcement said he was "not consistently candid in his communications" with the then-board of directors, which refused to provide more specific details.

Regardless, the news sent shockwaves throughout the AI world — and, because OpenAI and Altman are such leading players in this space, may raise trust concerns around a burgeoning technology that many people still have questions about.

"The OpenAI episode shows how fragile the AI ecosystem is right now, including addressing AI's risks," said Johann Laux, an expert at the Oxford Internet Institute focusing on human oversight of artificial intelligence.

The turmoil also accentuated the differences between Altman and members of the company's previous board, who have expressed various views on the safety risks posed by AI as the technology advances.

Multiple experts add that this drama highlights how it should be governments — and not big tech companies — that should be calling the shots on AI regulation, particularly for fast-evolving technologies like generative AI.

"The events of the last few days have not only jeopardized OpenAI's attempt to introduce more ethical corporate governance in the management of their company, but it also shows that corporate governance alone, even when well-intended, can easily end up cannibalized by other corporate's dynamics and interests," said Enza Iannopolo, principal analyst at Forrester.

The lesson, Iannopolo said, is that companies can't alone deliver the level of safety and trust in AI that society needs. "Rules and guardrails, designed with companies and enforced by regulators with rigor, are crucial if we are to benefit from AI," he added.

### WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI? HOW IS IT BEING REGULATED?

Unlike traditional AI, which processes data and completes tasks using predetermined rules, generative AI (including chatbots like ChatGPT) can create something new.

Tech companies are still leading the show when it comes to governing AI and its risks, while governments



around the world work to catch up.

In the European Union, negotiators are putting the final touches on what's expected to be the world's first comprehensive AI regulations. But they've reportedly been bogged down over whether and how to include the most contentious and revolutionary AI products, the commercialized large-language models that underpin generative AI systems including ChatGPT.

Chatbots were barely mentioned when Brussels first laid out its initial draft legislation in 2021, which focused on AI with specific uses. But officials have been racing to figure out how to incorporate these systems, also known as foundation models, into the final version.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., President Joe Biden signed an ambitious executive order last month seeking to balance the needs of cutting-edge technology companies with national security and consumer rights.

The order — which will likely need to be augmented by congressional action — is an initial step that is meant to ensure that AI is trustworthy and helpful, rather than deceptive and destructive. It seeks to steer how AI is developed so that companies can profit without putting public safety in jeopardy.

## **Fiery crash kills 2 at Niagara Falls' Rainbow border bridge. Officials say no sign of terrorism**

By CAROLYN THOMPSON, JOHN WAWROW and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (AP) — A vehicle speeding toward a U.S.-Canada bridge from the American side crashed and exploded at a checkpoint in Niagara Falls on Wednesday, killing two people and prompting the closing of multiple border crossings for hours. Authorities weren't sure what spurred the wreck but said there were no signs it was a terror attack.

The FBI's Buffalo office said late Wednesday that it had concluded its investigation: "A search of the scene revealed no explosive materials, and no terrorism nexus was identified," it said in a statement. "The matter has been turned over to the Niagara Falls Police Department as a traffic investigation."

Much remained unclear about the incident at the Rainbow Bridge, which prompted concerns on both sides of the border as the U.S. headed into the Thanksgiving holiday. Both U.S. President Joe Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau were briefed soon afterward, and Trudeau excused himself from Question Period in the House of Commons to get further information, saying officials were "taking this extraordinarily seriously."

A few hours later, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and western New York's U.S. attorney, Trini Ross, both sought to ease fears.

"Based on what we know at this moment," Hochul said at a news conference, "there is no sign of terrorist activity in this crash."

At a separate news conference with Ross nearby in Buffalo, Erie County Sheriff John Garcia said, "We can go on with our lives."

Security camera video released by the U.S. government showed the car race through an intersection on a wet road, hit a low median and vault high into the air in a U.S. Customs and Border Protection area just east of the main vehicle checkpoint. The car flew for yards (meters), twisting, and then crashed into a line of booths out of the camera's view.

Rickie Wilson, a Niagara Falls tour guide, was by his parked car nearby and turned around when he saw something in the air.

"I first thought it was an airplane. It looked like slow motion," he said. "I said, 'My God, it's a car. It's a vehicle, and it's flying through the air.'"

The identities of those in the car weren't released. Hochul said it wasn't clear whether the driver — a western New York resident — was intentionally heading for the bridge, which crosses the Niagara River.

The two people who died were a husband and wife, according to a person briefed on the investigation who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release information about the people who were killed.

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Matthew Miraglia, the FBI special agent in charge in Buffalo, said investigators so far had found no “derogatory” information on the driver.

“We’re scanning his social media. There’s nothing there,” Miraglia said.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer said Wednesday night that he had been in contact with both the FBI and the White House and investigators had found “no connection to any terrorist or criminal group.” Investigators swabbed the scene and found no evidence of chemicals or substances used for explosives, he added.

Officials said the car was traveling at tremendous speed as it approached the bridge at around 11:30 a.m. in downtown Niagara Falls in an area that includes several hotels and a casino.

Hochul said the car ended up “basically incinerated,” with nothing left but the engine. Debris was scattered across a dozen checkpoint booths. The governor, a Democrat, called video of the airborne car “absolutely surreal.”

Photos and video taken by bystanders and posted on social media showed thick smoke, flames on the pavement and a singed security booth. A Customs and Border Protection worker in a checkpoint booth was treated at a hospital for minor injuries and released, Hochul said.

From inside Niagara Falls State Park, Melissa Raffalow said she saw “a huge plume of black smoke” rise up over the border crossing, roughly 50 yards (45 meters) away from the popular tourist destination. Raffalow told AP in a message that police arrived soon after, urging visitors to disperse as they began cordoning off the street.

Raghu Bhattarai said by phone that he was inside his restaurant, the Niagara Tandoori Hut, near the bridge when he heard a sound he described as a “boom.” A few minutes later, he saw black smoke rising.

The Rainbow Bridge — a short span that offers striking views of the falls — and three others between western New York and Ontario were quickly closed as a precaution, though the other three later reopened. The Buffalo-Niagara International Airport began security checks on all cars and told passengers to expect additional screenings.

The safety measures tied up traffic at the airport and elsewhere on one of the busiest U.S. travel days of the year, ahead of the American Thanksgiving holiday.

Sanchit Chatha, his wife Reyshu and their 13-year-old daughter, Trisha, had stopped in Niagara Falls for lunch en route home to Toronto from Buffalo when they started getting news notifications about the explosion. Worried friends called, knowing the family was in the area.

Trisha was concerned at seeing the bridges to Canada shut down, her mother said.

“She has a math test tomorrow,” the mother explained as the family waited to find out when the crossings would open.

In Toronto, about 100 miles (about 160 kilometers) away, police said they were increasing patrols as a precaution. New York City police were monitoring the news from Buffalo but already had boosted security at various spots because of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade on Thursday.

About 6,000 vehicles cross the Rainbow Bridge each day, according to the U.S. Federal Highway Administration’s National Bridge Inventory. About 5% is truck traffic, according to the federal data.

The bridge, constructed in 1941, is just over 1,440 feet (439 meters) long and has a main span constructed of steel, according to the data.

## Israeli official says talks continuing, hostage release won’t take place before Friday

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, TIA GOLDENBERG and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel and Hamas on Wednesday agreed to a four-day cease-fire in the war in Gaza — a diplomatic breakthrough that will free dozens of hostages held by militants as well as Palestinians imprisoned in Israel, and bring a large influx of aid to the besieged territory.

The truce raised hopes of eventually winding down the war, which was triggered by Hamas’ Oct. 7 deadly rampage into Israel. Now in its seventh week, the war has leveled vast swaths of Gaza, fueled a surge

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of violence in the occupied West Bank, and stirred fears of a wider conflagration across the Middle East.

But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a nationally televised news conference that the war would resume after the truce expires. Israel's goals are to destroy Hamas' military capabilities and return all 240 hostages held captive in Gaza.

"I want to be clear. The war is continuing. The war is continuing. We will continue it until we achieve all our goals," Netanyahu said, adding he had delivered the same message in a phone call to U.S. President Joe Biden. He also said he had instructed the Mossad spy agency to hunt down Hamas' exiled leadership "wherever they are."

The cease-fire efforts hit another hurdle when Israel's national security adviser said in a late-night announcement that the deal would not take effect before Friday, a day later than originally expected. Tzachi Hanegbi gave no reason for the delay, but Channel 13 TV said there were still some last-minute details being ironed out.

If implemented, the deal temporarily freezes both sides at a tenuous moment.

Israeli troops hold much of northern Gaza and say they have dismantled tunnels and much of Hamas' infrastructure there. But Israeli officials acknowledge the group's infrastructure remains intact elsewhere. Netanyahu's announcement Wednesday appeared to be aimed at public concerns that a truce will lead Israel to halt its offensive before achieving its goals.

Israel has said it is determined to take its ground offensive into the south. That could be potentially devastating for Gaza's uprooted population, most of which is squeezed into the south with nowhere to go to avoid the assault.

Residents in Gaza City said the fighting intensified overnight into Wednesday, with gunfire, heavy artillery and airstrikes. Palestinian militants continued firing rockets at Israel throughout the day, without causing casualties.

## A DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH

The announcement of the truce capped weeks of indirect, stop-and-go negotiations to free some of the hostages taken by Hamas and other militants during their Oct. 7 raid. Egypt and Qatar, along with the United States, helped mediate the deal.

Fifty hostages will be freed in stages, in exchange for the release of what Hamas said would be 150 Palestinian prisoners. Both sides will let go women and children first.

Israel said the truce would be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed by Hamas. Hamas said hundreds of trucks carrying humanitarian aid — including fuel — would be allowed to enter Gaza.

Netanyahu said the deal also included a provision for the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the hostages in captivity.

The cease-fire is to take effect at 10 a.m. local time (0800 GMT) Thursday, according to Egypt's state-run Qahera TV channel.

Biden welcomed the deal, saying Netanyahu committed to supporting an "extended pause." Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said he hoped it would eventually lead to a permanent cease-fire and "serious talks" on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel's Justice Ministry published a list of 300 prisoners eligible to be released, mainly teenagers detained over the past year for rock-throwing and other minor offenses.

## WILL THE WAR RESUME?

The war erupted when several thousand Hamas militants broke into southern Israel, killing at least 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking hostages.

Weeks of Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, followed by a ground invasion, have killed more than 11,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory. It does not differentiate between civilians and militants, though some two-thirds of the dead have been identified as women and minors.

The ministry said that as of Nov. 11 it had lost the ability to count the dead because of the collapse of large parts of the health system, but says the number has risen sharply since then. Some 2,700 people are missing and believed buried under rubble.

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Israel says it has killed thousands of Hamas fighters, though it has presented no evidence for its count. Hamas, meanwhile, will have a chance to regroup. Hamas leader Yehya Sinwar will likely present the release of the prisoners — seen by most Palestinians as heroes resisting occupation — as a major achievement, and declare victory if the war ends.

## STRIKES CONTINUE

An airstrike overnight hit a residential building in the southern town of Khan Younis, killing 17 people, including children, said Ahmad Balouny, a relative of the deceased. An Associated Press reporter saw the bodies of two children pulled from the rubble.

Outside Khan Younis, workers dug a mass grave for 111 bodies that Israeli authorities handed over after troops took them from Shifa Hospital and other parts of northern Gaza. Israeli troops had taken the bodies apparently for DNA analysis amid the search for hostages in the north.

Strikes also leveled buildings in the Nusseirat refugee camp and the city of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. The city's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital said 128 bodies were brought in overnight after strikes.

In northern Gaza, about 60 bodies and 200 people wounded by heavy fighting were brought into the Kamal Adwan Hospital overnight, hospital director Dr. Ahmed al-Kahlout told Al-Jazeera television Wednesday.

Over 1.7 million Palestinians have been displaced in the war. Many, if not most, will be unable to return home because of the vast damage and the continued presence of Israeli troops in the north. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, said that more than 1 million Palestinians were seeking shelter in 156 of its facilities in Gaza.

The cease-fire deal promises an increase of aid to the south, bringing some relief to hundreds of thousands who have struggled to find food and water. Israel has barred imports to Gaza since the start of the war, except for a trickle of aid entering through Egypt's Rafah crossing.

A Qatari statement said the cease-fire would allow a "larger number of humanitarian convoys and relief aid," including fuel. But it gave no details on actual quantities.

Humanitarian aid groups operating in Gaza criticized the cease-fire, saying the truce was too short and the Rafah crossing's capacity was insufficient to deliver enough aid to meet the urgent demand.

The Palestine Red Crescent aid group and U.N. teams evacuated 190 wounded and sick people, their companions and some medical teams from Shifa Hospital to hospitals in southern Gaza, Wednesday, a Red Crescent spokesperson said.

## DEAL COULD DIVIDE ISRAELIS

The return of hostages could lift spirits in Israel, where their plight has gripped the country. Families of the hostages have staged mass demonstrations to pressure the government to bring them home.

But they could also find themselves divided as some hostages are freed and others not.

Ofri Bibas Levy, whose brother, sister-in-law and two nephews — aged 4 and 10 months — are among the captives, said the deal puts the families in an "inhumane" situation.

"Who will be released, who won't?" she asked. "No matter which way it happens, there will still be families that will remain worried and sad and angry."

## North Korean missile launch after South Korea partially suspended their 2018 agreement likely failed

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea said North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the sea but the launch likely failed Wednesday night, hours after Seoul said it would resume front-line aerial surveillance in response to the North's spy satellite launch.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a brief statement early Thursday a missile was launched from the North's capital region toward the North's eastern waters but that the launch was believed to have ended in failure. It gave no further details such as what type of missile was fired and what happened to it.

The launch was North Korea's first known weapons firing in more than two months. It followed South Korea's announcement earlier Wednesday that it decided to partially suspend an inter-Korean agreement



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and resume flying surveillance aircraft along the border in reaction to the North's satellite launch. North Korea Thursday lambasted the South Korean move, saying it'll deploy more powerful and new weapons at the border in a tit-for-tat measure.

South Korea, the U.S. and Japan have strongly condemned the North's satellite launch on Tuesday night because they believe it was meant to improve the country's missile technology as well as establish a space-based surveillance system. U.N. Security Council resolutions prohibit any satellite liftoffs by North Korea, viewing them as covers for testing its long-range missile technology. The North says it has a sovereign right to launch satellites.

The North's neighbors are trying to confirm whether its satellite launch was successful as it claimed and whether the satellite can perform reconnaissance functions.

South Korea's military said it assessed that the satellite had entered orbit. But it said it needs more time to verify whether it works. Earlier, the Pentagon said it was assessing the success of the launch, while Japan said there had been no confirmation of the North's report on the satellite entering orbit.

North Korea's space agency said its Malligyong-1 satellite was placed in orbit on Tuesday night, about 12 minutes after liftoff. Leader Kim Jong Un watched the satellite launch on site. He later visited the Pyongyang control center of the North's space agency, where he was briefed that the satellite would officially begin its reconnaissance mission from Dec. 1, following a period of fine-tuning, according to state media.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim was presented with satellite photos of Anderson Air Force Base, Apra Harbor and other U.S. military facilities in the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, which it said were taken Wednesday morning.

It didn't publicize the photos, and many experts remain skeptical about whether the North Korean satellite is advanced enough to conduct meaningful military reconnaissance.

In December, when North Korea released black-and-white satellite photos of South Korean cities following a test launch, many experts said the imagery was too crude for surveillance purposes. In 2012 and 2016, North Korea placed Earth observation satellites into orbit, but experts say neither has ever transmitted imagery back to North Korea.

North Korea used the same satellite in its two failed launches in May and August. South Korea's military retrieved debris from the first launch and assessed at the time the satellite wasn't sophisticated enough to perform military reconnaissance.

Before Tuesday's launch, South Korean officials said North Korea was likely receiving Russian technological support for its spy satellite launch program as part of the two countries' push to boost their partnerships.

The U.S., South Korea and others accuse North Korea of shipping conventional arms to support Russia's war in Ukraine in exchange for receiving high-tech Russian technologies to enhance its own military programs. Both North Korea and Russia have denied the accusations.

A spy satellite is among an array of sophisticated weapons systems that Kim wants to acquire. Experts say he would eventually aim to use his enlarged arsenal to win sanctions relief and other concessions from the U.S. when diplomacy resumes.

Some civilian experts said North Korea's Malligyong-1 satellite is likely capable of only detecting big targets like warships or planes. But by operating several such satellites, North Korea could still observe South Korea at all times, they said.

Animosities run high on the Korean Peninsula due to North Korea's series of weapons tests since last year and the expansion of U.S.-South Korean military drills.

When Heo Tae-keun, South Korea's deputy minister of national defense policy, announced the partial suspension of the 2018 inter-Korean agreement, he said South Korea will "promptly and strongly punish" North Korea if it uses the South Korean step as a pretext to launch another provocation. Heo called the North's satellite launch "a grave provocation that threatens our national security."

North Korea's Defense Ministry responded Thursday it will get South Korea to face "searing consequences" over its decision. It said North Korea won't be bound by the 2018 deal any longer and restore all the steps it has taken to ease frontline military tensions under the agreement.

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The North's space agency said the satellite would help improve the North's war readiness in the face of "the enemies' dangerous military moves." The agency said North Korea will soon launch several more spy satellites to better monitor South Korea and other areas.

The 2018 agreement, struck during a short-lived era of reconciliation between the rival Koreas, created buffer and no-fly zones along the countries' heavily fortified border. Under the deal, the Koreas were required to halt front-line aerial reconnaissance and live-fire exercises. They also removed some of their guard posts and land mines at border areas.

The deal invited conservative criticism in South Korea, with critics saying it significantly restricted the operation of the country's aerial surveillance assets, which are much more superior to North Korea's. They also accused the deal of heavily benefiting North Korea, because it only called for mutual reductions of conventional military strength while leaving the North's growing nuclear arsenal intact.

## Argentina's President-elect is racing against the clock to remake the government

By DANIEL POLITI and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentina's President-elect Javier Milei has called for the wholesale reinvention of the government but he has precious little time.

And with less than three weeks until his Dec. 10 inauguration, Milei has no executive experience and few allies in his bullpen.

From the moment of the wild-haired outsider's decisive victory on Sunday night, the clock started ticking. Argentina's presidential transition period is one of the shortest in Latin America; it lasts at least six weeks in Colombia and two months in Brazil. Next year's election in Mexico will feature a six-month handover.

Milei "is new to politics, leads a minor political party and has not built an experienced team. He could use more time to prepare his agenda, recruit advisers and senior officials, and build coalitions in the new Congress," Benjamin Gedan, director of the Latin America Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center, told The Associated Press. "This is especially important because Argentina is on the verge of collapse, so he will have no time for learning on the job."

The key position to appoint is that of economy minister, given Argentina's gaping budget deficit, depleted dollar reserves, and a \$44 billion loan program with the International Monetary Fund that it must continue paying down. Four in 10 Argentines are living in poverty, annual inflation is running at the red-hot rate of 143% and it is likely to continue accelerating, at least in the short term.

The White House said that President Joe Biden spoke with Milei Wednesday about "the strong relationship between the United States and Argentina on economic issues, on regional and multilateral cooperation, and on shared priorities, including advocating for the protection of human rights, addressing food insecurity and investing in clean energy."

During his victory speech on Sunday night, Milei said that "Argentina's situation is critical. The changes our country needs are drastic. There is no room for gradualism, no room for lukewarm measures."

Milei rose to prominence as a television talking head who blasted the political elite as corrupt and self-serving. He parlayed that fame into a lawmaker's seat two years ago with his newly founded political party. Then he defied almost all political experts' predictions when he won the presidency.

A libertarian populist in a country where the state has an outsize presence, he was even more of a novelty. He has said he will halve the number of government ministries, slash public spending with his "chainsaw plan" and privatize each and every state-owned and state-run company that he can. He has also said he will get rid of the Central Bank.

Milei's ambition to shrink the state requires personnel with a deep understanding of its minutiae in order to make decisions that are both bureaucratic and political, said Sergio Berensztein, a Buenos Aires-based political analyst. His official government proposal was thin on details and full of points like making it easier to buy handguns.

"This is planning for a war; you can't just go ahead and without proper strategy start doing the thing. If

you do that, it is going to fail," Berensztein said by phone. "You have to do things correctly, need a plan, need a strategy ... So far, we have no indication whatsoever that is the case."

Milei said in an interview on Nov. 21 that any of his ministers who increase spending will be immediately dismissed. When contacted by the AP, a spokesperson declined to comment on appointee plans.

For now, at least, the market seems to be giving Milei the benefit of the doubt. Argentine stocks and sovereign bonds have risen and the peso has lost a bit of its value, but hasn't taken the plunge many had been expecting.

"The great merit that Milei has is that the market seems to believe him a little more than it seemed to do before the election," said Javier Timerman, Managing Partner at AdCap Asset Management in New York.

Milei said in a statement that he will not make any of his appointments known until Dec. 10 — although he did reveal a few names during his first few interviews as President-elect, like his picks to lead the justice ministry and a new human capital ministry, people whom political columnist Joaquín Morales Solá wrote in newspaper La Nación on Wednesday are "people with a proven aptitude for public function."

In order to triumph in the runoff, Milei struck an alliance with center-right former President Mauricio Macri that provided him with the national network needed to bring in votes.

"I talk a lot with him, and he contributes a lot from his experience," Milei has said of Macri.

Berensztein said, however, that "he used Macri to win the election and now he is enlarging his coalition and Macri is not going to have as much influence as he thought."

Macri, however, could play a key role in helping Milei fill the lower-ranking roles.

As if he had time to spare, Milei has said he plans to travel to Miami, New York and Israel before he takes power. Still, he does appear to recognize the enormity of the challenge ahead; on the day after his victory, he said had been working through the night without sleep. On Nov. 21, he said in an interview broadcast on YouTube that, after he's sworn in, he won't even waste time on the helicopter rides to and from the presidential palace; instead, he will become the world's first fully operational work-from-home head-of-state.

"Since I am a workaholic, the thing is I wake up directly, go to the desk, start working, and I continue working until I finish. If I need any minister, I will call them and have them come," Milei told Neura Media in the interview.

## Record Thanksgiving travel rush off to a smooth start despite snowy forecast

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

The late crush of holiday travelers picked up steam Wednesday, with about 2.7 million people expected to board flights and millions more planning to drive or take the train to Thanksgiving celebrations.

Airline officials say they are confident they can avoid the kind of massive disruptions that have marred past holiday seasons, such as the meltdown at Southwest Airlines over last Christmas. As of Wednesday evening that appeared to be the case.

U.S. airports reported 59 flight cancellations into, out of or within the U.S. Wednesday and 2,750 flight delays, according to FlightAware, a tracking service. FlightAware said anything less than 300 cancellations and 4,000 delays per day is considered very good.

Buffalo Niagara International Airport in New York said it was checking all vehicles arriving at the airport and performing additional security screenings after a car crashed and exploded at a nearby checkpoint on the U.S.-Canada border. But the airport said it remained open and fully operational. All four border crossings in the area were closed, the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission said.

Snow showers could snarl traffic in other parts of the country. The National Weather Service was predicting accumulating snow in northern New England Wednesday, including up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snowfall in northern Maine. Snow was also expected to hit the northern Rocky Mountains on Thanksgiving Day, bringing up to 1 foot of snow to parts of Wyoming by Friday.

Security lines at airports could be long. Delta Air Lines is telling passengers to arrive at the airport at

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least two hours before their flight if they are traveling within the United States, three hours early if they're flying overseas — and maybe earlier on Sunday and Monday.

Jordan Sessions heeded that advice and got to the airport early Wednesday for a flight from Portland, Oregon, to Oakland, California. But the Portland airport wasn't crowded and the check-in lines were short, so he wound up waiting a bit for his flight.

That wasn't the case for Brittany Dandridge, who found lines out the door when she arrived for her flight from Dallas to Oakland.

"Luckily I was traveling with my dog and they allowed me to skip the line," she said.

The Transportation Security Administration said it screened more than 2.6 million passengers Tuesday and it expected another 2.7 million passengers to come through airport security on Wednesday. On Sunday, it expects to screen 2.9 million passengers, which would surpass a previous record set on June 30.

Lines ebbed and flowed all morning Wednesday at Moynihan Train Hall in New York. Some travelers said they opted to travel by train for convenience or lower prices. Others said they just wanted to avoid any chaos at the airport.

Matthew Hudnall and Abby Greenbaum were traveling from Atlanta to New York to Boston to visit family with their 5-year-old daughter. By the time they reach Boston, they will have taken a total of nine trains, they said.

"I think we thought it would be calmer and less stressful than flying. So, far that's true," Greenbaum said.

Amtrak said it was expecting 750,000 passengers between Nov. 19 and Nov. 26. The company said travelers could see some boarding delays this weekend because of high passenger volumes.

The holiday will also test the Federal Aviation Administration, which faces shortages of air traffic controllers at key facilities that caused reductions in flights to the New York City area this summer and fall.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said during a news conference Monday that the government prepared for holiday travel by hiring more air traffic controllers, opening new air routes along the East Coast and providing grants to airports for snowplows and deicing equipment.

Airlines have also added tens of thousands of employees in the last couple of years, and Southwest says it bought more winter equipment to keep planes moving even during sub-freezing temperatures.

AAA predicts that 55.4 million people will travel at least 50 miles (80 kilometers) from home between Wednesday and Sunday, the third-highest forecast ever by the auto club. AAA says most of them — 49.1 million -- will drive.

Drivers will get a break from last year on gasoline prices. AAA says the nationwide average for gas was down to \$3.28 a gallon on Wednesday, compared with \$3.63 a year ago.

Charging stations — not gas prices — were on the mind of Guy Maughan as he set out last week in his Tesla on a 13-day Thanksgiving road trip that will take him from his home near Seattle to his brother's home in Los Angeles and then to his parents in Phoenix.

Maughan said he and his travel companion — a 7-month-old golden doodle named Nala — expect to spend only about \$150 to charge the car along the 3,000-mile (4,800-kilometer) route.

"I love driving, I love road trips, and the car takes care of all the heavy lifting," said Maughan, who is a real estate agent. "I just put in the destinations and it tells me where we're going to stop. I'm thoroughly enjoying it."

Air travelers will enjoy lower prices too. Airfares in October were down 13% from last year, according to government figures, and fares around Thanksgiving have been about 14% lower than a year ago, according to the travel site Hopper.

Even so, the high cost of rent, food, health care and other expenses were weighing on people's travel plans.

Jason McQueary, a 25-year-old social worker and graduate student, said rent and other essentials eat up most of his paycheck and he was grateful for his credit card points, which brought down the cost of his roundtrip flight from Denver to Chicago from \$450 to \$150.

"I was just like, 'Man, I'm glad I only come home once a year,'" said McQueary, who was waiting to get



picked up Tuesday after arriving to Chicago O'Hare International Airport to spend Thanksgiving with family in his hometown of Byron, Illinois.

## Shadowy Hamas leader in Gaza is at top of Israel's hit list after last month's deadly attack

By BASSEM MROUE and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

The mastermind of the Hamas attack on Israel that triggered the worst Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed in generations is a secretive figure, feared on both sides of the battle lines.

In Gaza, no figure looms larger in determining the future trajectory of the war than Yehya Sinwar. Obsessive, disciplined and dictatorial, he is Hamas' top leader inside the Palestinian territory, a rarely seen veteran militant who learned fluent Hebrew during years in Israeli prisons and carefully studied his enemy.

Israeli officials have vowed to kill him and crush the militant group that has ruled Gaza since 2007. But seven weeks into the war, the 61-year-old Sinwar remains alive, in hiding and at the helm of Hamas' fighters as they battle Israeli forces. He also controls the group's negotiations over the fate of nearly 240 hostages that militants captured during the Oct. 7 attack.

With the devastating toll from Israel's bombardment and ground invasion, Sinwar's political fate may now depend on how the war ends and whether Palestinians feel they gained anything from their immense losses.

If he can win the release of all Palestinian prisoners and the lifting of the 16-year blockade of Gaza, people will feel they obtained something, said Hani al-Masri, a veteran Palestinian analyst. Otherwise, "it will be a big problem" for Sinwar personally "because people will say that there was destruction, and we got nothing in return."

Sinwar was able to claim an apparent political victory — although one that came at a staggering cost in Palestinian lives — with the announcement Wednesday of plans for a temporary cease-fire and a hostage-for-prisoner exchange between Hamas and Israel.

The exchange, which had been scheduled to begin Thursday, was then postponed until at least Friday. Israel offered no immediate explanation for the delay.

The wiry, grey-haired Sinwar is believed to have engineered the surprise Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel, along with the even more shadowy Mohammed Deif, head of Hamas' armed wing.

The attack caught Israel's military and intelligence establishment off guard and shattered the image of Israeli invincibility, as militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in scenes of brutality.

Hamas said it launched the attack in retaliation for increasing Israeli depredations against Palestinians and the continuing occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza — and to push the Palestinian cause back onto the world agenda.

What it brought was devastating Israeli retaliation, killing thousands and leveling swaths of Gaza.

To Israelis, Sinwar is a nightmarish figure. The Israeli army's chief spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, called him a murderer "who proved to the whole world that Hamas is worse than ISIS," referring to the Islamic State group.

Among fellow Palestinians, some respect Sinwar for standing up to Israel and for remaining in impoverished Gaza, in contrast to other Hamas leaders living more comfortably abroad.

In a show of defiance two years ago, Sinwar ended one of his few public speeches by inviting Israel to assassinate him, proclaiming, "I will walk back home after this meeting." He then did so, shaking hands and taking selfies with people in the streets.

But he is also deeply feared for his iron grip in Gaza, where public dissent is suppressed.

In contrast to the media-friendly personas cultivated by some of Hamas' political leadership, Sinwar has not sought to build a public image. He is known as the "Butcher of Khan Younis" for his brutal approach to Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel.

Sinwar was born in 1962 in Gaza's Khan Younis refugee camp to a family that was among thousands of Palestinians driven from what is now the city of Ashkelon during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

He was an early member of Hamas, which emerged from the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brother-

hood in 1987, when the coastal enclave was under Israeli military occupation.

Sinwar convinced the group's founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, that to succeed as a resistance organization, Hamas needed to be purged of spies for Israel. They founded a security arm, then known as Majd, which Sinwar led.

Arrested by Israel in the late 1980s, he admitted under interrogation to having killed 12 suspected collaborators. He was eventually sentenced to four life terms for offenses that included the abduction and killing of two Israeli soldiers.

Michael Koubi, a former director of the investigations department at Israel's Shin Bet security agency who interrogated Sinwar personally, recalled the confession that stood out to him the most: Sinwar recounted forcing a man to bury his own brother alive because he was suspected of working for Israel.

"His eyes were full of happiness when he told us this story," Koubi said.

But to fellow prisoners, Sinwar was charismatic, sociable and shrewd, open to detainees from all political factions.

He became the leader of the hundreds of imprisoned Hamas members. He organized strikes to improve conditions. He learned Hebrew and studied Israeli society.

"Being a leader inside prison gave him experience in negotiations and dialogue, and he understood the mentality of the enemy and how to affect it," said Anwar Yassine, a Lebanese citizen who spent about 17 years in Israeli jails, much of the time with Sinwar.

Yassine noted how Sinwar always treated him with respect even though he belongs to the Lebanese Communist Party, whose secular principles conflict with Hamas' ideology.

In 2008, Sinwar survived an aggressive form of brain cancer after treatment at a Tel Aviv hospital.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released him in 2011 along with about 1,000 other prisoners in exchange for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier captured by Hamas in a cross-border raid. Netanyahu was harshly criticized for releasing dozens of prisoners held for involvement in deadly attacks.

Back in Gaza, Sinwar closely coordinated between Hamas' political leadership and its military wing, the Qassam Brigades. He also cultivated a reputation for ruthlessness. He is widely believed to be behind the unprecedented 2016 killing of another top Hamas commander, Mahmoud Ishtewi, in an internal power struggle.

In 2017, he was elected head of Hamas' political bureau in Gaza. Sinwar worked with Hamas' leader in exile, Ismail Haniyeh, to realign the group with Iran and its allies, including Lebanon's Hezbollah. He also focused on building Hamas' military power.

For Hamas, surviving the war in any form would defy Israel and offer a victory of sorts. Sinwar himself may not survive.

"I'm sure we will eventually kill him," Koubi said. "But to destroy the ideology he planted, that's not so easy."

## **JFK assassination remembered 60 years later by surviving witnesses to history, including AP reporter**

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Just minutes after President John F. Kennedy was fatally shot as his motorcade rolled through downtown Dallas, Associated Press reporter Peggy Simpson rushed to the scene and immediately attached herself to the police officers who had converged on the building from which a sniper's bullets had been fired.

"I was sort of under their armpit," Simpson said, noting that every time she was able to get any information from them, she would rush to a pay phone to call her editors, and then "go back to the cops."

Simpson, now 84, is among the last surviving witnesses who are sharing their stories as the nation marks the 60th anniversary of the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination on Wednesday.

"A tangible link to the past is going to be lost when the last voices from that time period are gone," said Stephen Fagin, curator at The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, which tells the story of the assassina-

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tion from the Texas School Book Depository, where Lee Harvey Oswald's sniper's perch was found.

"So many of the voices that were here, even 10 years ago, to share their memories — law enforcement officials, reporters, eyewitnesses — so many of those folks have passed away," he said.

Simpson, former U.S. Secret Service Agent Clint Hill and others are featured in "JFK: One Day in America," a three-part series from National Geographic released this month that pairs their recollections with archival footage, some of which has been colorized for the first time. Director Ella Wright said that hearing from those who were there helps tell the "behind the scenes" story that augments archival footage.

"We wanted people to really understand what it felt like to be back there and to experience the emotional impact of those events," Wright said.

People still flock to Dealey Plaza, which the presidential motorcade was passing through when Kennedy was killed.

"The assassination certainly defined a generation," Fagin said. "For those people who lived through it and came of age in the 1960s, it represented a significant shift in American culture."

President Joe Biden, who was in college when Kennedy was killed, recalled on Wednesday being "glued to the news in silence" along with his fellow students.

"On this day, we remember that he saw a nation of light, not darkness; of honor, not grievance; a place where we are unwilling to postpone the work that he began and that we all must now carry forward," Biden said in a statement.

On the day of the assassination, Simpson had originally been assigned to attend an evening fundraising dinner for Kennedy in Austin. With time on her hands before she needed to leave Dallas, she was sent to watch the presidential motorcade, but she wasn't near Dealey Plaza.

Simpson had no idea that anything out of the ordinary had happened until she arrived at The Dallas Times Herald's building where the AP's office was located. Stepping off an elevator, she heard a newspaper receptionist say, "All we know is that the president has been shot," and then heard the paper's editor briefing the staff.

She raced to the AP office in time to watch over the bureau chief's shoulder as he filed the news to the world, and then ran out to the Texas School Book Depository to track down more information.

Later, at police headquarters, she said, she witnessed "just a wild, crazy chaotic, unfathomable scene." Reporters had filled the hallways where an officer walked through with Oswald's rifle held aloft. The suspect's mother and wife arrived, and at one point authorities held a news conference where Oswald was asked questions by reporters.

"I was just with a great mass of other reporters, just trying to find any bit of information," she said.

Two days later, Simpson was covering Oswald's transfer from police headquarters to the county jail, when nightclub owner Jack Ruby burst forth from a gaggle of news reporters and shot the suspect dead.

As police officers wrestled with Ruby on the floor, Simpson rushed to a nearby bank of phones "and started dictating everything I saw to the AP editors," she said. In that moment, she was just thinking about getting out the news.

"As an AP reporter, you just go for the phone, you can't process anything at that point," she said.

Simpson said she must have heard the gunshot but she can't remember it.

"Probably Ruby was 2 or 3 feet away from me but I didn't know him, didn't see him, didn't see him come out from the crowd of reporters," she said.

Simpson's recollections are included in an oral history collection at the Sixth Floor Museum that now includes about 2,500 recordings, according to Fagin.

The museum curator said Simpson is "a terrific example of somebody who was just where the action was that weekend and got caught up in truly historic events while simply doing her job as a professional journalist."

Fagin said oral histories are still being recorded. Many of the more recent ones have been with people who were children in the '60s and remembered hearing about the assassination while at school.

"It's a race against time really to try to capture these recollections," Fagin said.

## OpenAI brings back Sam Altman as CEO just days after his firing unleashed chaos

By MATT O'BRIEN and HALELUYA HADERO AP Business Writers

The ousted leader of ChatGPT maker OpenAI will return to the company that fired him just days ago, concluding a short but chaotic power struggle that shocked the tech industry and underscored the conflicts around how to safely build artificial intelligence.

The San Francisco-based company said late Tuesday that it "reached an agreement in principle" for co-founder Sam Altman to return as CEO under a different board of directors.

The agreement followed intense negotiations that began Saturday between Altman's side and the board members who pushed him out. The discussions included disagreements about Altman's future role and who would stay on the board, according to a person familiar with the talks who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to speak publicly about such sensitive matters.

An independent investigation into Altman and the events that led to his ouster, announced earlier this week, will continue, according to the person, who described board members' slow erosion of trust in the OpenAI leader without pointing to any serious wrongdoing. The company previously made unspecified allegations that Altman had not been candid with the board.

The lack of transparency surrounding Altman's firing led to a weekend of internal conflict at the company and growing outside pressure from the startup's investors, particularly Microsoft, which on Monday hired Altman and a key ally, OpenAI co-founder and president Greg Brockman, and opened its doors to any of the other more than 700 employees who wanted to join them.

The turmoil accentuated the differences between Altman — who has become the face of generative AI's rapid commercialization since ChatGPT's arrival a year ago — and board members who have expressed deep reservations about the safety risks posed by AI as it gets more advanced.

One of the four board members who participated in Altman's ouster, OpenAI co-founder and chief scientist Ilya Sutskever, was involved in the negotiations over the weekend. But that changed when he publicly expressed regret about the decision Monday morning and joined the call for the board's resignation.

The person familiar with the talks said board members did not want the company to tank or employees to defect to Microsoft. At the same time, they did not want to acquiesce to demands that they all step down, nor did they want to reinstate Altman and Brockman on the board or install new members who might not stand up to them, the person said.

In the end, most of them did step down.

The new board will be led by former Salesforce co-CEO Bret Taylor, who chaired Twitter's board before Elon Musk took over the platform last year. The other members will be former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers and Quora CEO Adam D'Angelo, the only member of the previous board to stay on.

"The OpenAI episode shows how fragile the AI ecosystem is right now, including addressing AI's risks," said Johann Laux, an expert at the Oxford Internet Institute focusing on human oversight of artificial intelligence.

Before the board was replaced, venture capitalist Vinod Khosla, a vocal Altman supporter whose firm is an OpenAI investor, wrote in an opinion column at The Information that board members had set back the "tremendous benefits" of AI by misapplying their "religion of 'effective altruism.'"

Some of OpenAI's board members over the years have had ties to effective altruism, the philanthropic social movement that prioritizes donating to projects that will have the greatest impact on the largest number of people, including humans in the future.

While many effective altruists believe AI could offer powerful benefits, they also advocate for mitigating the technology's potential risks.

Helping to drive Altman's return and the installation of a new board was Microsoft, which has invested billions of dollars in OpenAI and has rights to its existing technology.

While promising to welcome OpenAI's fleeing workforce, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella also made clear in a series of interviews Monday that he was open to the possibility of Altman returning to OpenAI as long



as the startup's governance problems were solved.

"We are encouraged by the changes to the OpenAI board," Nadella posted on X late Tuesday. "We believe this is a first essential step on a path to more stable, well-informed and effective governance."

In his own post, Altman said that with the new board and with Satya's support, he was "looking forward to returning to OpenAI and building on our strong partnership" with Microsoft.

Gone from the OpenAI board are its only two women: tech entrepreneur Tasha McCauley and Helen Toner, a policy expert at Georgetown's Center for Security and Emerging Technology, both of whom have expressed concerns about AI safety risks.

The leadership drama offers a glimpse into how big tech companies are taking the lead in governing AI and its risks, while governments scramble to catch up. The European Union is working to finalize the world's first comprehensive AI rules.

In the absence of regulations, "companies decide how a technology is rolled out," said Oxford's Laux.

Co-founded by Altman as a nonprofit with a mission to safely build AI that outperforms humans and benefits humanity, OpenAI later became a for-profit business — but one still run by its nonprofit board of directors.

This was not OpenAI's first experience with executive turmoil. Past examples including a 2018 falling out between board co-chairs Altman and Musk that led to Musk's exit, and a later exodus of top leaders who started the competitor Anthropic.

It's not clear yet if the board's structure will change with its new members.

Under the current structure, all profit beyond a certain cap is supposed to go back to its mission of helping humanity. The board is also tasked with deciding when AI systems have become so advanced that they are better than humans "at most economically valuable work." At that point, Microsoft's intellectual property licenses no longer apply.

"We are collaborating to figure out the details," OpenAI posted on social media. "Thank you so much for your patience through this."

Nadella said Brockman, who was OpenAI's board chairman until Altman's firing, also will have a key role to play in ensuring the group "continues to thrive and build on its mission."

As for OpenAI's short-lived interim CEO Emmett Shear, the second temporary leader in the days since Altman's ouster, he posted on X that he was "deeply pleased by this result" after about 72 "very intense hours of work."

"Coming into OpenAI, I wasn't sure what the right path would be," wrote Shear, the former head of Twitch. "This was the pathway that maximized safety alongside doing right by all stakeholders involved. I'm glad to have been a part of the solution."

The Associated Press and OpenAI have a licensing and technology agreement allowing OpenAI access to part of the AP's text archives.

## The 'Oppenheimer' creative team take you behind the scenes of the film's key moments

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Impossible is often just a starting point on a Christopher Nolan film and "Oppenheimer," about the father of the atomic bomb, was no exception. In fact, it's often where inspiration was born.

During one especially stressful stretch, filmmakers lost their White House set five days before they had one day to shoot with Gary Oldman, who was flying in to play President Harry S. Truman. The wild scramble to find and construct a new Oval Office is detailed in a making-of documentary included in the newly available home entertainment release.

Looking back on that moment now, producer Emma Thomas can't help feeling bad about the timing. But she marveled at what the crew accomplished. She told them at the time that if there were ever a zombie apocalypse, they were the people she'd want to be with.

"There's nothing film crews can't do. They will move mountains if they have to," Thomas told The As-

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sociated Press. "Every day there's something that happens and you have to figure out a way out of it. But that's where the magic happens."

For some, like production designer Ruth De Jong, that would involve building Los Alamos and finding Washington D.C. in New Mexico. For others, like cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema and editor Jennifer Lame, it was making an "opera of faces and emotions" compelling for three hours.

Key craft department heads spoke to the AP about the challenges and triumphs of making this film, which has earned more than \$950 million at the box office.

"Because Chris holds himself to the same standards, everyone's willing to go there with him," Thomas said.  
**YOU CAN'T HIDE IN IMAX**

Aging 18 principal actors across multiple decades is hard enough, but as makeup lead Luisa Abel and head of hair design Jaime Leigh McIntosh quickly learned, there is no hiding in IMAX. There would be no help from CGI, either.

"We were in the elements a lot and a lot of the actors have prosthetic pieces on. Even younger actors have pieces on before they were meant to be older because I think everybody looks a lot younger now than people did in that era," Abel said.

They mapped out detailed aging diagrams for each character, which helped enormously in a non-chronological shoot. And Nolan was involved in it all — down to Cillian Murphy's haircuts.

"He really pays attention to every detail for every department," McIntosh said. "As an artist it's incredibly helpful to have a director who is communicative and can give you feedback."

## A LAST MINUTE REQUEST

For as precisely planned as "Oppenheimer" was there were still some last-minute fits of inspiration. A day before they shot Oppenheimer's post-Trinity test speech in the auditorium, Nolan asked costume designer Ellen Mirojnick to put the audience in bright colors.

Luckily, she was able to get her assistant to pull a big batch of 1940s clothes, in reds, yellows, greens and blues in Los Angeles and ship them to New Mexico within 20 hours. It wasn't part of the plan but, Mirojnick said, it was the right note for this disorienting scene where Oppenheimer starts having horrific visions about his creation.

"I can't imagine what it would be if it wasn't that, because it feels like this kind of crazy dream ... and an insight into his state of mind," Thomas said. "Who would have thought that the color of the costumes could do that? But they do."

## LEANING INTO THE CLAUSTROPHOBIA OF ROOM 2022

There was old tape on one of the walls of the narrow, dingy room De Jong found in a shaving company's old headquarters in Southern California used for Oppenheimer's security clearance hearing. It was the perfect claustrophobic, unglamorous and period-specific setting for a humiliating ordeal designed to make Oppenheimer feel small.

"Don't clean this up," Nolan said. They didn't.

It was tight, and hot, and the only people who could fit in the room were the actors (usually at least 6 at any given time), Nolan and van Hoytema.

"We like shooting in small spaces with these cameras," van Hoytema said, recalling the small boat hulls in "Dunkirk." "All clumped up together is our favorite modus operandi."

And those scenes ended up being some of Lame's favorite to edit.

"There's nothing more interesting than to watch amazing actors sitting in a room. I find it challenging but also immensely satisfying," Lame said. "It's amazing what Hoyte and Chris did with room 2022. Every time you went in there, it felt like a totally different kind of scene: It had a different feeling to it, or it had slightly different lighting or the shots were more menacing on certain characters."

Someone told her that they could have watched Kitty's testimony, a big moment for actor Emily Blunt near the end of the film, for "20 minutes." That moment also provided an opportunity for musical innovation with Ludwig Göransson's score, blending blends Kitty's theme — a piano and cello — with Oppenheimer's — a violin.

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"It's a waltz," he said. "It's like they're dancing together."

WHEN PERFECT ISN'T RIGHT

For Göransson, "Oppenheimer" was a personal journey that's allowed him to work alongside his wife, violinist Serena Göransson, and also one that challenged him in unexpected ways.

On the first recording of "Can You Hear the Music," which has 21 big tempo changes, they did it eight bars at a time. When he glued it all together, it sounded perfect — but perfect felt wrong.

"What I wanted to capture was the energy that I'd seen in the visuals, when I sat there with Andrew Jackson and Chris Nolan in the IMAX theater and they showed me the first visual experiments — like the molecules going around and the energy of being on the brink of discovery," he said.

They went back and recorded the piece in one take.

"It was like night and day," he said. "There's a there's an energy and a flow that comes in that room of four to six string players playing together and changing tempo together."

That song alone has been streamed almost 60 million times and viewed 1.5 billion times on TikTok.

BIG EXPLOSIONS AND TINY ELECTRONS

Nolan knew that the Trinity test, the first detonation of a nuclear weapon, would have to be the show-stopper for the film both visually and sonically. He even built in about 30 seconds of near-silence before the sound of the explosion hits the spectators, at three different distances.

It was a high-pressure moment for sound designer Richard King, who knows that explosions are uniquely hard to record.

"You can rarely get them to sound as impressive as you want them to sound," he said. "I knew it should have a unique quality to it, something you've never heard before. It needed to be like a wall hitting you, like a cosmic door slamming."

Knowing Nolan's preference for practical visuals and sounds recorded during production, King challenged himself to use only those derived from the real world. Visual effects lead Andrew Jackson was similarly strict with himself to stay rooted in reality even when creating the most otherworldly effects.

And the mushroom cloud isn't even his proudest achievement.

"The huge explosions are very effective, but for me it's the smaller things," Jackson said. "I loved the spinning electrons. They're simple but effective and I think they're really beautiful."

The electrons show a glimpse into Oppenheimer's mind — visions which would also provide thematic bookends in his journey. Göransson said it was only on a recent watch that he noticed how the chilling end moments of the film parallel the "Can You Hear the Music" montage from earlier with Lane's quick cuts. But instead of "innocent dreams about adventure and science," it's now the end of the world. And that's reflected in the music too.

"With a slight change in tone, you can have music that's so uplifting and inspiring" he said. "At the end, it's full of dread."

## Nearly half of Americans think the US is spending too much on Ukraine aid, an AP-NORC poll says

By SEUNG MIN KIM and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As lawmakers in Washington weigh sending billions more in federal support to Kyiv to help fight off Russian aggression, close to half of the U.S. public thinks the country is spending too much on aid to Ukraine, according to polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Those sentiments, driven primarily by Republicans, help explain the hardening opposition among conservative GOP lawmakers on Capitol Hill who are rebuffing efforts from President Joe Biden to approve a new tranche of Ukraine aid, arguing that the money would be better spent for domestic priorities.

Yet opposition to aid is down slightly from where it was a month ago in another AP-NORC poll. Now, 45% say the U.S. government is spending too much on aid to Ukraine in the war against Russia, compared with 52% in October. That shift appears to come mostly from Republicans: 59% now say too much is spent on Ukraine aid, but that's down from 69% in October.

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Nonetheless, the Republican resistance to continued Ukraine aid remains strong.

"I understand the citizens need help, but I feel like we're spending way too much money on Ukraine when we have our issues here, on our own soil, that we need to deal with," said Eric Mondello, 40, from Fountain, Colorado. Pointing to needs such as health care for veterans and homelessness in communities, Mondello added: "I understand the U.S. has been an ally to others, but I feel like, let's take care of our people first."

More than one-third (38%) of U.S. adults say that current spending is "about the right amount," which is up slightly from last month (31%). Among Republicans, nearly 3 in 10 (29%) say the current spending is about right, up from 20% last month.

Paula Graves, 69, is among those who says the amount of spending for Ukraine is the right amount.

"Putin, he's straight up evil. I don't think there should be any question in anyone's mind," said Graves, of Clovis, California. "He's a dictator. He's infringed on human rights, he's a very scary person and if Ukraine falls to him, who's next? What country's next?"

Graves, who says she is not affiliated with a political party but leans more conservative, said she believes the U.S. has a leadership role on the global stage and added: "I think we definitely need to put America first, but I don't think that needs to be first and only."

The White House has been repeatedly pressing lawmakers to pass Biden's nearly \$106 billion emergency spending package that he proposed in October, which includes more than \$61 billion specifically for the war in Ukraine. The rest of Biden's request has aid for Israel as it battles Hamas, money for various priorities in the Indo-Pacific region and additional resources to help manage migration at the southern border.

On Ukraine, the Biden administration is increasingly warning that the well of aid is running dry. In an unannounced visit to Kyiv on Monday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Ukraine's effort to defeat Russian forces "matters to the rest of the world" and pledged that U.S. support would continue "for the long haul."

That message was reinforced at the White House.

"As President Biden has said, when aggressors don't pay a price for their aggression, they'll cause more chaos and death and destruction," John Kirby, spokesman for the National Security Council, told the White House press briefing Monday. "They just keep on going, and the cost and the threats to America and to the world will keep rising."

But Congress has rebuffed the White House efforts at bolstering Ukraine support at least twice in recent months. First, it ignored a roughly \$40 billion supplemental request before a Sept. 30 funding deadline. Then last week, it passed a stopgap funding measure that keeps the government operating through early next year, but with no additional Ukraine aid.

In the Senate, a small bipartisan group is working on legislation that would combine fresh Ukraine assistance with stricter border measures to address concerns from Republicans that the U.S. was focused on needs abroad at the expense of issues closer to home. A broad majority of senators remains supportive of Ukraine aid, with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., being one of the most stalwart supporters despite the isolationist strain in his party.

South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, said lawmakers will continue to work on the Ukraine-border package over the Thanksgiving break and won't wait until mid-January — when Congress faces another government funding deadline — to act on Ukraine.

The big question mark is in the House, where still-new Speaker Mike Johnson — who had voted against Ukraine aid as a rank-and-file conservative — has spoken broadly of the need to counter Russian aggression yet faces unruly GOP lawmakers who have shown more hostility to continued support for Kyiv.

Johnson, too, is insisting that additional Ukraine aid be paired with tougher border measures, although it is far from certain that any immigration agreement that clears the Democratic-led Senate could pass the GOP-controlled House.

Half of U.S. adults are extremely or very concerned that Russia's influence poses a direct threat to the United States. Democrats (53%) and Republicans (51%) are similarly concerned about Russian power — but Democrats are more likely than Republicans to see Ukraine as a nation of shared values to the U.S. and to support more aid for Ukraine.



About half of the public (48%) endorses providing weapons to Ukraine (57% among Democrats, 42% among Republicans). About 4 in 10 favor sending government funds directly to Ukraine (54% for Democrats, 24% for Republicans).

Americans have grown slightly more likely to say the U.S. should take "a less active role" in solving the world's problems, compared with a September poll from AP-NORC and Pearson. Slightly fewer than half (45%) now say the U.S. should be less involved, up from 33% in September. Just 16% of Democrats now say the U.S. should take a more active role, down from 29% in September.

Peter Einsig, a Republican from Tulsa, Oklahoma, said he still believes the U.S. has a role to play abroad, but that he remains concerned about excessive government spending and federal debt.

Yet Einsig said he would be more inclined to support aid to Ukraine if there were more oversight into how the money was being used abroad, as well as a timeline of how much longer the U.S. would be providing support.

"We don't have transparency on where the money is really, really going," said Einsig, 40. "It's a big lump sum."

Four in 10 U.S. adults say Ukraine is an ally that shares U.S. interests and values. That view is most common among Democrats (53%), who are much more likely than independents (28%), Republicans (29%) and Americans overall to see Ukraine as a nation with similar values and needs. About half of Republicans say Ukraine is a partner that the U.S. should cooperate with, but say it is not a nation that shares U.S. values.

## **Fund to compensate developing nations for climate change is unfinished business at COP28**

By GAURAV SAINI and SIBI ARASU, Press Trust of India undefined

NEW DELHI (AP) — Sunil Kumar watched helplessly in July as his home and 14 others were washed away by intense monsoon rains lashing the Indian Himalayas.

"All my life's work vanished in an instant. Starting over feels impossible, especially with my three children relying on me," said Kumar, a waste collector in the village of Bhiuli, in the mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh.

This year's monsoon season in India was devastating, with local governments estimating 428 deaths and more than \$1.42 billion in property damage in the region. But India was just one of many developing nations to suffer from extreme weather made worse or more likely by climate change, caused largely by greenhouse gas emissions that result from the burning of fossil fuels.

Tropical storm Daniel hammered Libya with massive flooding in September, and Cyclone Freddy battered several African nations early in the year. Activists say all three disasters show how poorer nations, which historically have contributed less to climate change because they have emitted fewer planet-warming gases than developed countries, are often hit hardest by the impacts of global warming.

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Developing nations had long sought to address the problem, and finally broke through with an agreement at last year's annual United Nations climate talks, known as COP27, to create what's known as a loss and damage fund. But many details were left unresolved, and dozens of contentious meetings were held in the year since to negotiate things like who would contribute to it, how large it would be, who would administer it, and more.

A draft agreement was finally reached earlier this month, just a few weeks before this year's COP28 talks open Nov. 30 in Dubai. The agreement will be up for final approval at the climate talks, and dissatisfaction from both wealthy and developing nations could block approval or require additional negotiations.

"For us, it's a matter of justice," said New Delhi-based Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at

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Climate Action Network International, a group that spent the past decade lobbying to compensate those nations. "Poor communities in developing countries are losing their farms, homes, and incomes due to a crisis caused by developed countries and corporations."

A recent report by the United Nations estimates that up to \$387 billion will be needed annually if developing countries are to adapt to climate-driven changes. Even if details of a loss and damage fund are worked out, some are skeptical that it will raise anything close to that amount. A Green Climate Fund that was first proposed at the 2009 climate talks in Copenhagen, and began raising money in 2014, hasn't come close to its goal of \$100 billion annually.

Chandra Bhushan, head of New Delhi-based climate think tank International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology, said he doesn't expect countries to contribute more than a few billion dollars to the loss and damage fund.

"Developing countries should be ready to manage these events independently, as seen with COVID-19. They can't always rely on others," Bhushan said.

The draft agreement calls for the World Bank to temporarily host the fund for the next four years. It lays out basic goals for the fund, including its planned launch in 2024, and specifies how it will be administered and who will oversee it, with a requirement that developing countries get a seat on the board.

The agreement asks developed countries to contribute to the fund but says other countries and private parties can, too. It says allocations will prioritize those most vulnerable to climate change, but any climate-affected community or country is eligible.

Developing nations were disappointed that the agreement didn't specify a scale for the fund, and wasn't more specific about who must contribute.

They also wanted a new and independent entity to host the fund, accepting the World Bank only reluctantly. They see the organization, whose president is typically appointed by the United States, as part of a global finance system that has often saddled them with crushing loans that make it more difficult to cope with the costs of climate change. They have long argued that there is a need for a larger, better coordinated pool of money that's available without deepening debt crises.

"This arrangement won't provide the new fund with true independence, will obstruct direct access to vulnerable communities, and will lack full accountability to governments and those most affected by climate change," said RR Rashmi, a former climate negotiator with the Indian government who is now a distinguished fellow at New Delhi-based think-tank The Energy Resources Institute.

Meanwhile, wealthy nations sought to limit countries eligible for payments from the fund to the most vulnerable, like Afghanistan and Bangladesh in Asia, several African countries as well as island nations such as Kiribati, Samoa and Barbados. They also said all nations should contribute, particularly rapidly growing countries like China and Saudi Arabia.

"It's important that the fund focuses on the poorest and most vulnerable. Those who have the strength and resources to contribute should do so," said Dan Jørgensen, Denmark's minister for global climate policy.

The U.S. State Department expressed disappointment that the draft agreement didn't specifically describe donations as voluntary despite what it said was broad consensus among negotiators.

Brandon Wu is director of policy and campaigns at ActionAid USA, a nonprofit that pressed the U.S. to help reach a recommended agreement that could be taken to COP28. He said that unhappiness could still lead to discussions on the fund being re-opened in Dubai, but negotiators are under heavy pressure to deliver.

"Many believe this COP will be judged a success or failure based on whether or not it happens," Wu said. "The UAE presidency has a huge interest in ensuring it does."

Representatives from developing countries say it was critical to get the draft agreement in early November, and failure to approve it at COP28 would be the worst outcome.

Samoa's U.N. ambassador, Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru, also chairs the Alliance of Small Island States. He said the world's most industrialized nations have a "moral responsibility" to move as quickly as possible on loss and damage.

"We cannot continue with the path that we have taken over the last 30 years," he said.

## Meet the influential women behind Argentina's President-elect Javier Milei

By DÉBORA REY Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — When right-wing populist Javier Milei became Argentina's president-elect, he dedicated his victory to "The boss," the nickname he uses for his enigmatic sister, Karina Milei. She is the most important of a trio of influential women surrounding the fiery outsider who shot to the presidency of South America's second-largest economy.

Karina Milei, who barely speaks in public, was tasked with introducing her brother Sunday night after he won a presidential runoff election with 55.7% of the vote, the highest percentage in a general election since the return of democracy in 1983.

"Without her, none of this would have been possible," Milei told the crowd that chanted "Olé, olé, boss, boss."

Milei enjoyed a meteoric rise to the presidency, making the leap from television commentator to lawmaker two years ago. Lacking a group of well-known political advisers, he has surrounded himself with a group of women who are set to be key players in his administration.

Milei rose to the presidency advocating for several unconventional measures, including a proposal to eliminate the Central Bank of Argentina and replace the country's currency with the U.S. dollar.

In interviews, Milei has characterized his sister Karina as "the great architect" of his campaign. She raised funds and oversaw the entire operation, managing her brother's daily schedule. More importantly, she was part of the negotiations with former President Mauricio Macri to seal an alliance with the country's largest center-right coalition ahead of the runoff.

It is unclear whether Karina, who has a degree in public relations, will hold a formal position in her brother's government, but few doubt that she'll continue to play a key role.

A more public presence in Milei's administration might be Fátima Flórez, an actress and dancer who gained fame for her impersonation of former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the outgoing vice president. Milei has been in a relationship with Flórez for a few months.

Flórez's role in the administration is unclear and she has said she has no plans to abandon the stage.

"I can combine my artistic career with the role of first lady," she said after Milei's victory.

The president-elect has said he has no plans to ask Flórez to abandon her career, saying in an interview that "I don't see why I should be so selfish as to deprive Argentines of seeing a show of such magnitude as Fátima's."

Also set to play a key role is Vice President-elect Victoria Villarruel, one of the most controversial figures in the new government for her opposition to abortion and marriage equality. She has spoken up in favor of reopening the discussion that led Argentina to legalize abortion in 2020.

Villarruel, a lawyer, has also questioned the legal processes that led to the conviction of former officers for crimes against humanity during the country's last brutal military dictatorship that ended in 1983.

The daughter of an Army colonel, Villarruel has worked for years to change the narrative about the last military dictatorship. She founded an organization that defended former military officers who were put on trial and participated in rallies involving relatives of victims of terrorist attacks committed in the 1970s by leftist guerilla groups.

During the campaign, Villarruel accompanied Milei in several television interviews, taking the floor to explain several of his proposals. "She is a brilliant woman," he has said about her.

Milei has said Villarruel will be in charge of the defense and security policies of the future government, saying that "obviously, she will not have a decorative role."

## A population of hard-to-eradicate 'super pigs' in Canada is threatening to invade the US

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — An exploding population of hard-to-eradicate "super pigs" in Canada is threatening to spill south of the border, and northern states like Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana are taking steps to stop the invasion.

In Canada, the wild pigs roaming Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba pose a new threat. They are often crossbreeds that combine the survival skills of wild Eurasian boar with the size and high fertility of domestic swine to create a "super pig" that's spreading out of control.

Ryan Brook, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan and one of Canada's leading authorities on the problem, calls feral swine, "the most invasive animal on the planet" and "an ecological train wreck."

Pigs are not native to North America. While they've roamed parts of the continent for centuries, Canada's problem dates back only to the 1980s when it encouraged farmers to raise wild boar, Brook said. The market collapsed after peaking in 2001 and some frustrated farmers simply cut their fences, setting the animals free.

It turned out that the pigs were very good at surviving Canadian winters. Smart, adaptable and furry, they eat anything, including crops and wildlife. They tear up land when they root for bugs and crops. They can spread devastating diseases to hog farms like African swine fever. And they reproduce quickly. A sow can have six piglets in a litter and raise two litters in a year.

That means 65% or more of a wild pig population could be killed every year and it will still increase, Brook said. Hunting just makes the problem worse, he said. The success rate for hunters is only about 2% to 3% and several states have banned hunting because it makes the pigs more wary and nocturnal — tougher to track down and eradicate.

Wild pigs already cause around \$2.5 billion in damage to U.S. crops every year, mostly in southern states like Texas. And they can be aggressive toward humans. A woman in Texas was killed by wild pigs in 2019.

Eradication of wild pigs is no longer possible in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Brook said. But the situation isn't hopeless everywhere and a few U.S. states have eliminated them. The key, he said, is having a detection system that finds them early and fast, and then responding quickly.

Brook and his colleagues have documented 62,000 wild pig sightings in Canada. Their aerial surveys have spotted them on both sides of the Canada-North Dakota border. They've also recorded a sighting in Manitoba within 18 miles (28 kilometers) of Minnesota.

"Nobody should be surprised when pigs start walking across that border if they haven't already," Brook said. "The question is: What will be done about it?"

Brook said Montana has been the most serious about keeping wild pigs out. It banned raising and transporting wild pigs within the state.

"The only path forward is you have to be really aggressive and you have to use all the tools in the toolbox," Brook said.

That could include big ground traps with names like "BoarBuster" or net guns fired from helicopters. Some states and provinces embrace crowdsourced "Squeal on Pigs" tracking programs. Scientists have also studied poisons such as sodium nitrite, but they risk harming other species.

Minnesota is among states trying to prevent the swine from taking hold. The state's Department of Natural Resources is expected to release a report in February identifying gaps in its management plan and recommend new prevention steps. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is using aircraft and drones to beef up surveillance along the northern border.

Minnesota was declared an eradicated state after USDA Wildlife Services shot and killed a group of pigs in 2016 that wandered off a farm and turned feral in the far northwest corner of the state — but not before they began to reproduce and root up a wildlife preserve. Gary Nohrenberg, the Minnesota director of Wildlife Services, said as far as he knows, no truly wild pigs have made their way to his state — yet.



Feral swine have been reported in at least 35 states, according to the USDA. The agency estimates the the swine population in those states totals around 6 million.

Since launching the National Feral Swine Management Program in 2014, the USDA has provided funding to 33 states, said Mike Marlow, an assistant program director. He said their goal is to eradicate wild pigs where populations are low or emerging, and to limit the damage where they're already established such as Texas and southeastern states.

The program has had success in some states that had small populations like Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Washington, he said. The animals are spotted occasionally and quickly killed off in North Dakota.

"I think we're making great strides toward success," Marlow said. "But eradication is not in the near future."

## **Timekeepers no more, rank-and-file Jehovah's Witnesses say goodbye to tracking proselytizing hours**

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known for proselytizing door-to-door and handing out their literature on city streets. Less known to the general public, their adherents have been required for the past century to make regular reports to their congregation's leaders on how many hours they put into such ministry.

Those hourly reports were a key metric for a congregation's spiritual vitality and a factor in deciding who rose to leadership. Former adherents tell of pressure to meet these quotas and guilt when they didn't.

But in a historic shift, that practice ended this month.

For the first time since 1920, leaders of the Jehovah's Witnesses have removed the hours-reporting requirement for rank-and-file adherents.

"Our ministry involves much more than counting time," Samuel Herd, a member of the denomination's Governing Body, said in announcing the policy change to applause at the October annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, a legal entity central to the Jehovah's Witnesses' work.

Herd said the Governing Body is "confident that you dear ones will continue to render whole-souled service," motivated not by obligation but devotion to God, whom they call Jehovah. But he acknowledged leaders would have to adapt.

"You will have to know the flock well," he said. "Evaluating a congregation's spiritual health or a brother's qualifications to serve (in leadership positions such) as an elder or ministerial servant will not simply be a matter of computing averages, time spent in the ministry, literature placements and so forth."

The video of the meeting, held in Newburgh, New York, was publicly posted by the organization in early November, though leaked recordings circulated for weeks earlier on unofficial websites.

"This is one of the biggest changes I ever remember" in the organization, said former elder Martin Haugh of York Haven, Pennsylvania.

Removal of the hours requirement applies to "publishers," or rank-and-file adherents involved in active ministry. They will now only need to file monthly reports saying whether they've conducted any evangelistic activity and Bible studies, without specifying hours.

Those who sign up for more extensive service, known as "pioneers" or "missionaries," will continue to record their hours.

Skeptical former adherents, however, are speculating different motives are at play — that adherents' ministry hours have dropped so noticeably, particularly since the pandemic.

When numbers were growing, "it was always brought up at meetings or in their publications to show the growth of the organization," said Mitch Melin of Washington state, a former adherent now working to bring awareness to what he calls the "darker side" of the organization, such as its control of Witnesses and the practice of shunning certain members. He speculated that "if they're declining, it might be embarrassing to show" the numbers.

Jarrold Lopes, a spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses based at their world headquarters in New York state,

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disputed this notion. He said ministry time had been increasing yearly until the pandemic, peaking above 2 billion hours worldwide. While the hours are below pre-pandemic levels, he said they began rising from 1.4 billion in 2021 to 1.5 billion hours in 2022 as Witnesses resumed door-to-door visits and other ministry.

Former elder Haugh, who left over what he saw as the denomination's mishandling of sexual abuse and other matters, said the hours requirement was once central in adherents' lives.

"It showed you how loyal you were to Jehovah by how much time was put in," he said.

Haugh recalled how a regional supervisor yelled at elders if their congregation's performance lagged. Haugh said marriages broke up over spouses' different levels of commitment, and people who were judged as failing at ministry would spiral into depression. "Now they don't have to have that stigmatization that they're not putting in the hours," he said.

On a recent weekday afternoon, Jehovah's Witnesses were handing out literature to passers-by at various downtown locations in Pittsburgh — the 19th century birthplace of the movement.

Those interviewed said they planned to do as much ministry as ever and hadn't focused on the hours. "It doesn't affect our day-to-day life," said Chuck Ghee, a local elder. "We give the best out of our heart."

The Governing Body also devoted part of the annual meeting to revising its interpretation of biblical prophecies about the end times — a paramount focus of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Governing Body now accepts that even in the final countdown to Armageddon, nonbelievers might still accept the truth and be saved. That reverses a previous understanding that, once an apocalyptic Great Tribulation gets underway, it would be too late.

That announcement, not yet formally made public, has also been circulating online on the same unofficial sites that distributed authentic recordings of the announced policy change on tracking hours.

"Will all those living during the Great Tribulation have a full opportunity to decide either for the kingdom or against it?" Governing Body member Geoffrey Jackson said at the annual meeting.

"We don't know, and we don't need to know because we're not the judges," Jackson said. "We know that Jehovah and Jesus are merciful, that they will always do the right thing."

Earlier leaders of the organization had raised expectations for apocalyptic events in specific years, such as 1975, which failed to materialize. Current teaching still puts a strong emphasis on the end times, but without predicting specific dates.

Governing Body member Jeffrey Winder said at the annual meeting that God reveals truth gradually and that the body is happy to have its understandings corrected.

"Knowing this, we are not embarrassed about adjustments that are made, nor is an apology needed for not getting it exactly right previously," he said.

Lopes declined to comment on the unreleased teaching videos before their scheduled release in January, following their translation into more than 200 languages spoken by adherents. While he neither confirmed nor disputed the videos' authenticity, he did say unofficial sites impinge on copyright when they distribute Watch Tower videos without authorization.

The changes come at a turbulent time for Jehovah's Witnesses. Worship gatherings in India and Germany suffered fatal attacks in the past year from former participants. Believers in Russia, where the denomination is banned, face persecution.

The Jehovah's Witnesses faces intense scrutiny worldwide over the handling of child sexual abuse. A Pennsylvania grand jury has charged 14 men since 2022 with sexual abuse within the organization.

The denomination counts 8.7 million adherents worldwide, with 1.2 million in the United States.

The changes in teaching and the practice of recording hours, taken together, can be seen as a "relaxation of the sectarian identity of the group," said Mathew Schmalz, a professor of religious studies at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.

On the one hand, "it's hard to see the Witnesses becoming a mainstream church, because it would lose some of its appeal to being the possessors of biblical truth" to the exclusion of others, Schmalz said. On the other hand, the organization wants "to have the public take them seriously as a religious organization."

Former elder Haugh said the changes don't make up for failures in reforming the handling of abuse or for battling former adherents and critics in court and other venues. "They may be nicer to their own

members, but they've become even more against their former members," he said.

## At Black Lives Matter house, families are welcomed into space of freedom and healing

By AARON MORRISON Associated Press

STUDIO CITY, California (AP) — Some of the mystery and controversy shrouding a sprawling Los Angeles-area property owned by a national Black Lives Matter nonprofit have dissipated for dozens of families grieving a loved one killed by police.

The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation Inc., which was widely criticized last year for purchasing a \$6 million compound with donations that followed racial justice protests in 2020, hosted the families for a dinner at the home this fall. The event coincided with an annual conference in southern California, where hundreds who are affected by police violence meet to find support in their journeys to healing, accountability and justice.

More than 150 dinner guests, including some who previously accused the foundation of using their loved ones' names to raise tens of millions of dollars over the last decade, were not just fed and sent on their way. They were given tours of the gated property that has six bedrooms and bathrooms, a swimming pool, a soundstage and office space.

"It was laid out, it was beautiful, it was welcoming," said Beatrice X Johnson, co-founder of Families United 4 Justice Network, the grassroots social justice group that convened the Sept. 28 to Oct. 1 conference.

She is an aunt to Oscar Grant, the young Black man fatally shot while restrained on an Oakland, California, transit station platform in 2009, and is married to fellow Justice Network founder Cephus X Johnson. The two are affectionately known as Uncle Bobby and Auntie Bee within the community of families — and they once counted themselves among the skeptics of the BLM foundation's decision to purchase the property.

"There's been a lot of controversy around this spot, even with families," Auntie Bee said in an interview after the dinner. "The families wanted to see this place. That's a no brainer. And who else would be invited to dinner there, if not the families impacted by police?"

As many of these families gather nationwide for another holiday season with empty chairs at their dinner tables, the BLM foundation says the Studio City home will continue to be a refuge for those grieving loved ones killed in incidents of police violence. It'll also continue to serve as a campus for the foundation's Black artists fellowship.

They officially call it the "Creators House."

"I personally call it a home for freedom, because it is where Black people's gifts and talents can be nurtured in order to flourish," said Shalomyah Bowers, a BLM foundation board member.

"It's where we've kept our activists and organizers safe. It's where we plan and organize outside of the confines of white supremacy. And it's where healing happens," he added.

For nearly two years, Bowers and other board members have faced intense scrutiny over the foundation's finances — a scrutiny accentuated by revelations that the \$6 million property had been purchased with little input from the movement's grassroots organizers or families of police brutality victims, whose names rallied the larger movement. After revealing in 2021 that more than \$90 million in donations poured into the foundation following worldwide protests over the murder of George Floyd, the latest nonprofit tax filings showed the foundation with \$30 million in assets.

In recent interviews with The Associated Press, the foundation continued to defend itself against accusations of mismanagement of its funds.

"I was telling the families that were here, when foundations purchase property, folks laud it as an achievement and a safe investment that builds wealth for the sake of the mission, which is pushing out money to the community," Bowers said. "But when a Black foundation does it, when we do it, it's unwise and ill-informed."

That's not the crux of the criticism that had come from families, movement supporters and staunch op-

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ponents. In 2022, grassroots racial justice activists from all over the U.S. filed a civil lawsuit against the foundation in a California court, alleging leaders had engaged in fraud and broke an agreement to turn over the donated funds to local organizers. In June, a judge dismissed the complaint filed by Black Lives Matter Grassroots Inc., after finding the plaintiffs failed to prove their allegations.

As the dust settled, the foundation sought to reframe the property as part of a larger history of Black activists and artists creating spaces of safety and liberty that are harder to find in white-owned or white-run spaces. Houses of worship and restaurants have featured prominently in historical narratives of Black civil rights leadership and artists movements.

But other kinds of real property, too, served as hubs for organizing resistance and creating art, music, literature and political thought. During the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s, overlapping with iterations of the Black struggle for civil rights, the Harlem YMCA was considered a living room for the Black artists movement. Renowned Black novelists Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison often stayed or worked from the Y. The Black Panther Party purchased buildings and homes that served as safehouses and centers for their community survival programs.

That legacy is not lost on Osayi Endolyn, the inaugural artist-in-residence for the BLM foundation's Black Joy Creators Fellowship. She curated the families' dinner at the Studio City house, with the help of Shenarri Freeman, a Black chef and restaurateur known for her vegetarian and vegan cuisine, and Brittney Williams, an accomplished private chef who cooked the protein dishes.

"There have always been, you could call them, third spaces, where folks could gather to plan to organize, to rest, to retreat," said Endolyn, a James Beard Award-winning writer, editor and producer widely known for her work in Black food traditions.

"When we look at so many different symbols of Black resistance, of civil rights, of liberation movements, there's always some kind of art story being told," she said.

And that's the story Endolyn wanted to tell at dinner. The menu included jerk pork, scotch bonnet roasted chicken and grilled suya steak, a dish from West Africa. They also provided baked beans, collard greens, mac 'n cheese, potato salad, maple buttermilk cornbread and hibiscus lemonade.

It was all a hit with dinner guests.

"Being here, knowing that someone cares about these families and that the families are not left behind, is a really, really good feeling," said Yolanda Price, whose stepson Jeffrey Price Jr. was killed in a 2018 crash involving a Metropolitan Police Department vehicle in the nation's capital.

"It lets people know that they are not left behind," she added.

By the end of the dinner, guests young and old danced to music curated by DJ Francesca Harding. And a sense of trust was bridged between the movement's directly impacted families and the foundation that has stewardship over BLM's multimillion dollar endowment.

"Black Lives Matter was a mystery," said Uncle Bobby, who helped convene the dinner under the banner of the Justice Network's "Love Not Blood Campaign." In 2021, the campaign received a five-year, multimillion dollar grant from the foundation.

"Many said, 'We deserve this.' We were able to break bread together with the foundation, to claim it as ours."

## **NFL disability program leaves retired Saints tight end hurting and angry**

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

Boo Williams wakes up each morning not knowing how the pain will hit. It could be debilitating headaches that make it impossible to get out of bed. Sometimes the pain shoots down his neck. Through all of it, he's angry.

Williams, who played tight end for the Saints from 2001-05, needs surgery, medicine and doctors, but struggles to afford any of it. The 44-year-old, who lives in Picayune, Mississippi, was recently awarded \$5,000 a month by the NFL's disability benefit plan, but says the plan and the league have repeatedly mishandled his claims and should have paid him \$500,000 or more over the past 14 years.



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"I need all the help I can get because, some days, it feels like it's going to be all over," he told The Associated Press. "Sometimes I can't sleep. It all makes it harder when you're fighting to get what you deserve and all you do is get frustrated."

His story is not unlike dozens of retired players in similar positions who spend their days picking through a web of lawyers, paperwork and bureaucracy in a fight against the NFL and its NFL Player Disability & Neurocognitive Benefit Plan.

Over the past 30 years, the league has added millions of dollars to the plan for retired players with injuries they suffered playing football or that emerged after their careers were over. Approved as part of the collective-bargaining agreements between the league and players union, the plan expects to pay more than \$330 million in benefits in 2023, NFL spokesperson Brian McCarthy said.

But plaintiffs' lawyers point to a high rate of claim denials and a system in which doctors assigned to examine players are paid by the NFL plan as evidence the system is rigged against retirees.

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EDITOR'S NOTE — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

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Earlier this year, 10 players, including retired Pro Bowl running back Willis McGahee, filed a lawsuit accusing the program of unfairly denying benefits to injured retirees.

"After years of putting their bodies on the line with the NFL's promise of assistance should they need it, former players are met with an unfair and biased system for obtaining their rightful benefits," said Sam Katz, an attorney representing players in the lawsuit.

Williams' journey through the claims system began in 2009 when he sought benefits under the league's "line of duty" disability policy for active and recently retired players who suffer football-related injuries.

All signs pointed toward him receiving payments of around \$2,400 a month, after an orthopedic doctor assigned by the plan evaluated Williams. Dr. George Canizares graded Williams' "whole person impairment," or WPI, — a gauge of the severity of his injuries measured by standards set by the American Medical Association — at 27%. Rules at the time said if a player was rated 25% or higher he could receive benefits.

But three weeks after Canizares filed his report, he sent an addendum downgrading the severity of one of Williams' injuries, to his left shoulder, at "the suggestion" of NFL Disability Plan Director Dr. Stephen Haas.

Crossed out was the "27" in the spot labeled "Combined WPI% Impairment." Next to it, "24" was handwritten and circled.

It would take another 14 years for Williams to get approved for benefits.

"That's what led to a lot of my depression," Williams said. "I couldn't get any help. I didn't see how a guy who wasn't in the office could tell the doctor to change the number like that."

Neither Canizares nor Haas responded to messages for comment left by the AP.

NFL spokesperson McCarthy said the NFL and the union's "jointly developed and administered program led by neutral medical personnel fairly delivers benefits to deserving players and their families."

Williams has received about \$45,000 after finally getting approved this year. It has allowed him to rent a house, but he still has no car and says he can't afford medical care for his neck injury.

NFL health insurance for retired players ends after five years, so Williams' benefits stopped in 2012. After that, he struggled to pay for doctors' visits and MRIs on his constantly aching neck.

When Williams finally did get approved for NFL disability payments this year it was based on what a program-appointed neuropsychologist determined were psychiatric impairments that rendered him totally and permanently disabled.

The approval was for the "Inactive B" level, which pays \$5,000 a month to players who apply for benefits after they've been retired 15 years. It's less than half of what he would have received if approved at "Inactive A," for players before the 15-year mark.

Williams appealed, arguing for the increased benefit because the 2023 approval was based on identical medical information used for a December 2019 application filed before the 15-year deadline and rejected.

The program rejected that application in part because the plan-appointed orthopedic doctor who exam-

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ined Williams ruled he could participate in sedentary and desk work. The denial letter focused on Williams having missed appointments with program-appointed doctors, which can result in rejected applications. It made no mention of the 2009 exam included in the application, with the crossed-out 27% whole-person impairment rating replaced by 24%.

Because program rules required him to wait a year and then the COVID-19 pandemic caused more delays, Williams couldn't reapply until this year — after the 15-year window had expired.

But, in any case, Williams said, the league should have been well aware of his issues — and not only because of the medical records he submitted over many years.

"I've called their suicide hotline when I've had episodes. They don't help you," he said. "I've been telling them about my neck for decades. They've seen the fracture and the tear in my shoulder for decades. Bottom line, they don't care."

## Today in History: November 23, the UN seats China

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Nov. 23, the 327th day of 2023. There are 38 days left in the year. Today is Thanksgiving.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 23, 1971, the People's Republic of China was seated in the United Nations Security Council.

On this date:

In 1889, the first jukebox made its debut in San Francisco, at the Palais Royale Saloon.

In 1903, Enrico Caruso made his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, appearing in "Rigoletto."

In 1936, Life, the photojournalism magazine created by Henry R. Luce, was first published.

In 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed Nov. 25 a day of national mourning following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In 1980, some 2,600 people were killed by a series of earthquakes that devastated southern Italy.

In 1996, a commandeered Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the water off the Comoros Islands, killing 125 of the 175 people on board, including all three hijackers.

In 2000, in a setback for Al Gore, the Florida Supreme Court refused to order Miami-Dade County officials to resume hand-counting its election-day ballots. Meanwhile, Gore's lawyers argued in a brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court that the high court should stay out of the Florida election controversy.

In 2003, five U.S. soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan.

In 2006, former KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko (leet-vee-NYEN'-koh) died in London from radiation poisoning after making a deathbed statement blaming Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In 2008, the government unveiled a bold plan to rescue Citigroup, injecting a fresh \$20 billion into the troubled firm as well as guaranteeing hundreds of billions of dollars in risky assets.

In 2011, Yemen's authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh (AH'-lee ahb-DUH'-luh sah-LEH') agreed to step down amid a fierce uprising to oust him after 33 years in power.

In 2012, actor Larry Hagman, best known for playing the scheming oil baron J.R. Ewing on TV's "Dallas," died in Dallas at age 81.

In 2020, the federal government recognized Joe Biden as the "apparent winner" of the Nov. 3 election, formally starting the transition of power; President Donald Trump still refused to concede and vowed to continue a court fight.

In 2021, a federal jury in Cleveland found that CVS, Walgreens and Walmart pharmacies recklessly distributed massive amounts of pain pills in two Ohio counties. (A judge awarded \$650 million in damages.)

In 2022, the Middle East's first World Cup opened in Qatar. Ecuador beat the host country 2-0 in the opening match.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Franco Nero is 82. Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas (ES'-tur-hahs) is 79. Actor-comedy

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writer Bruce Vilanch is 76. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., is 73. Singer Bruce Hornsby is 69. Former Sen. Mary Landrieu (LAN'-droo), D-La., is 68. Actor Maxwell Caulfield is 64. Actor John Henton is 63. TV personality Robin Roberts ("Good Morning America") is 63. Rock singer-musician Ken Block (Sister Hazel) is 57. Actor Salli Richardson-Whitfield is 56. Actor Oded Fehr (OH'-dehd fayr) is 53. Rapper-actor Kurupt (Tha Dogg Pound) is 51. Actor Page Kennedy is 47. Actor Kelly Brook is 44. Actor Lucas Grabeel (GRAY'-beel) is 39. TV personality Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi is 36. Actor-singer Miley Cyrus is 31. Actor Olivia Keville (TV: "Splitting Up Together") is 21.