

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, Jan. 15

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzine, carrots, pineapple tidbits, bread stick, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, cooked carrots.

Cancelled: Boys JV/JH Meet at Redfield, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Tuesday, Jan. 16

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hot dish, corn, pears, muffin.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Hot digs, chips.

Boys Junior High Basketball at Milbank in the elementary gym (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

JH Boys Wrestling at Simmons Middle School.

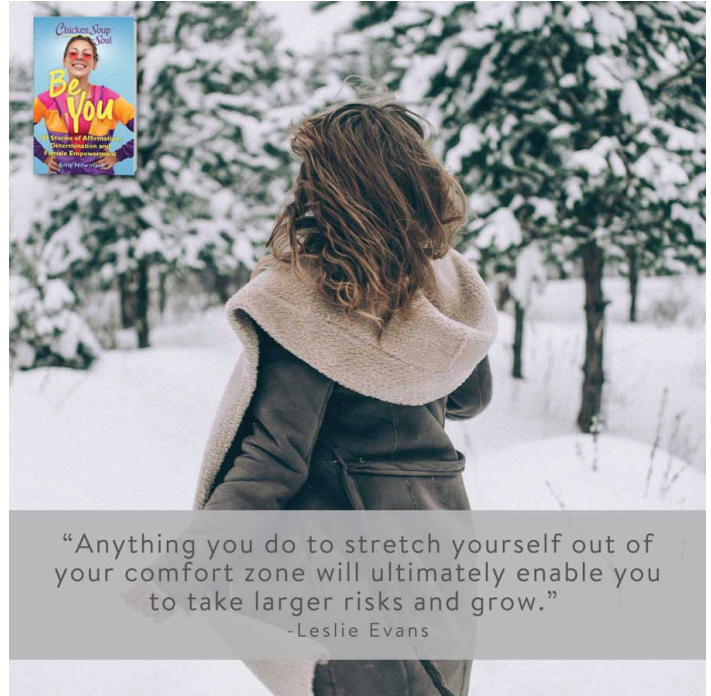
Girls and Boys Varsity Wrestling at Groton Area with Clark/Willow Lake and Hamlin, 6 p.m.

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

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

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

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



“Anything you do to stretch yourself out of your comfort zone will ultimately enable you to take larger risks and grow.”

-Leslie Evans

Wednesday, Jan. 17

Senior Menu: Beef/broccoli stir fry rice, cauliflower, five cup salad, whole wheat bread

School Breakfast: Cereal

School Lunch: Loaded baked potato soup.

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

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Communion at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

Death Notice: Larry Schelle

Larry Schelle, 87, of Groton passed away January 14, 2024 at Avantara Groton. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garress Funeral Chapel, Groton.

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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1440

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The 2024 presidential election cycle kicks into high gear today with the Republican Iowa caucuses, the first nominating contest of the primary season.

Today marks the 100th day of the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, a conflict sparked by an Oct. 7 Hamas raid into southern Israel, during which almost 1,200 civilians were killed.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen proclaimed 55-year-old Prince Frederik X king of Denmark Sunday, two weeks after his 83-year-old mother, Queen Margrethe II, announced she would abdicate the throne after 52 years. She was the first to do so in nearly 900 years in the kingdom's roughly 1,000-year-old monarchy, Europe's oldest.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 75th Primetime Emmy Awards to be presented tonight (8 pm ET, Fox); see predictions for major categories. "Mean Girls" film musical hauls in \$31M to lead holiday weekend box office.

NFL and Disney in early talks for NFL to buy stake in ESPN. NFL postseason's Wild Card Round wrapping tonight; see latest playoff bracket.

Bill Hayes, "Days of Our Lives" star for over 50 years, dies at 98. Joyce Randolph, best known for starring role in "The Honeymooners," dies at 99. Alec Musser, star of "All My Children," dies at 50.

Science & Technology

Federal health officials recommend reclassifying marijuana from a Schedule I to Schedule III drug; move would ease federal restrictions on the substance, decision on reclassification expected in coming months.

Peregrine lunar lander reaches the moon's orbit, continues to send back data despite springing a fuel leak shortly after launch; final plans for the private spacecraft to be determined.

Study links skin microbiome—the collection of bacteria and fungi present on the skin—to signs of aging, including wrinkles, moisture loss, and more.

Business & Markets

Markets mixed at close of trading Friday (S&P 500 +0.1%, Dow -0.3%, Nasdaq 0.0%) as fourth-quarter earnings begin to be released.

JPMorgan Chase sees most profitable year on record, fourth-quarter earnings drop due to fees tied to regional bank rescues., BlackRock to buy Global Infrastructure Partners for \$12.5B, expands portfolio to \$150B in assets.

European inspectors to visit Chinese automakers as part of ongoing probe into Chinese state subsidies for electric vehicle exports.

Politics & World Affairs

Short-term funding extensions agreed to by congressional leaders ahead of looming deadlines over the next two weeks; two-step package lasts until March 1 and 7. Follows topline deal struck last week that drew conservative backlash; see previous write-up.

Taiwanese Vice President Lai Ching-te elected president Saturday with 40% of the vote, takes office May 20; Lai rejects Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan, seeks talks. Roughly 140 hostages, held since Monday in Ecuador prisons, freed over the weekend amid military crackdown.

Iowa high school principal Dan Marburger, who was wounded as he protected students during a Jan. 4 school shooting that killed one and injured six, died Sunday from injuries.

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NEC Boys' Basketball

Deuel loses first NEC game

Deuel lost its first conference game last week to the hands of Clark/Willow Lake, 53-45. That leaves Hamlin as the only undefeated team in the Northeast Conference. In other games during the past week it featured top tier teams beating lower tier teams by wide margins. Groton Area defeated Tiospa Zina, 71-44, Roncalli beat Sisseton, 64-35, Milbank beat Redfield, 75-30, and Hamlin beat Webster Area, 84-44,

Meanwhile in the Region 1A seeding, Tiospa Zina holds a slim edge over Groton Area for the number one spot.

Boys NEC Standings

	NEC	Overall
Hamlin	4-0	6-2
Groton Area	4-1	6-2
Deuel	3-1	6-4
Roncalli	3-1	5-4
Clark/Willow Lake	3-1	5-4
Milbank	3-2	5-2
Tiospa Zina	2-2	6-3
Sisseton	1-3	2-6
Britton-Hecla *	1-4	1-8
Webster Area	1-5	3-7
Redfield	0-5	1-6

* Class B Team

Jan. 16: Roncalli at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 18: Milbank at Groton Area

Jan. 18: Clark/Willow Lake at Roncalli

Jan. 18: Deuel at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 18: Hamlin at Redfield

Jan. 19: Sisseton at Webster Area

Jan. 23: Roncalli at Hamlin

Jan. 25: Hamlin at Sisseton

Jan. 25: Milbank at Deuel

Jan. 25: Britton-Hecla at Roncalli

Jan. 25: Webster Area at Groton Area

Jan. 26: Clark/Willow Lake at Redfield

Jan. 30: Sisseton at Britton-Hecla

Feb. 1: Webster Area at Redfield

Feb. 1: Groton Area at Deuel

Feb. 2: Milbank at Roncalli

Feb. 2: Milbank at Roncalli

Feb. 2: Clark/Willow Lake at Sisseton

*Feb. 6: Milbank at Sisseton

Feb. 8: Deuel at Hamlin

Feb. 8: Redfield at Groton Area

Feb. 8: Britton-Hecla at Clark/Willow Lake

Feb. 9: Sisseton at Tiospa Zina

Feb. 13: Clark/Willow Lake at Tiospa Zina

Feb. 13: Sisseton at Deuel

Feb. 13: Sisseton at Deuel

Feb. 13: Britton-Hecla at Hamlin

Feb. 15: Hamlin at Clark/Willow Lake

Feb. 15: Roncalli at Deuel









Feb. 16: Redfield at Tiospa Zina

Feb. 16: Britton-Hecla at Groton Area

Feb. 16: Milbank at Webster Area

Feb. 23: Tiospa Zina at Milbank

Region 1A Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	PTS
1	 Tiospa Zina	6	3	.667	44.333
2	 Groton Area	6	2	.750	44.250
3	 Waubay/Summit	6	3	.667	42.333
4	 Milbank	5	2	.714	41.714
5	 Aberdeen Roncalli	5	4	.556	41.111
6	 Webster Area	3	7	.300	39.000
7	 Sisseton	2	6	.250	36.875
8	 Redfield	1	6	.143	35.000

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NEC Girls' Basketball

Aberdeen Roncalli

Roncalli 42, Redfield 9
 Roncalli 33, Groton Area 20
 Roncalli 61, Webster Area 37
 Sisseton 62, Roncalli 55

Groton Area

Hamlin 42, Groton Area 39
 Sisseton 65, Groton Area 22
 Roncalli 33, Groton Area 20
 Groton Area 56, Clark/Willow Lake 23

Milbank

Milbank 62, Clark/Willow Lake 30
 Hamlin 39, Milbank 32
 Milbank 58, Britton-Hecla 23
 Milbank 79, Tiospa Zina 21
 Milbank 52, Redfield 17

Redfield

Roncalli 42, Redfield 9
 Redfield 51, Deuel 47
 Sisseton 76, Redfield 25
 Redfield 42, Britton-Hecla 36
 Milbank 52, Redfield 17

Sisseton

Sisseton 65, Groton Area 22
 Sisseton 76, Redfield 25
 Sisseton 62, Roncalli 55

Tiospa Zina

Britton-Hecla 51, Tiospa Zina 46
 Webster Area 57, Tiospa Zina 34
 Hamlin 77, Tiospa Zina 23
 Milbank 79, Tiospa Zina 21
 Groton Area 62, Tiospa Zina 18

Webster Area

Webster Area 51, Britton-Hecla 48
 Webster Area 57, Tiospa Zina 34
 Roncalli 61, Webster Area 37
 Deuel 42, Webster Area 34
 Clark/Willow Lake 52, Webster Area 40
 Hamlin 64, Webster Area 31

Clark/Willow Lake

Milbank 62, Clark/Willow Lake 30
 Groton Area 56, Clark/Willow Lake 23
 Clark/Willow Lake 52, Webster Area 40
 Deuel 51, Clark/Willow Lake 41

Hamlin

Hamlin 42, Groton Area 39
 Hamlin 39, Milbank 32
 Hamlin 77, Tiospa Zina 23
 Hamlin 64, Webster Area 31

Deuel

Redfield 51, Deuel 47
 Deuel 32, Britton-Hecla 30
 Deuel 42, Webster Area 34
 Deuel 51, Clark/Willow Lake 41

Britton-Hecla

Britton-Hecla 51, Tiospa Zina 46
 Webster Area 51, Britton-Hecla 48
 Deuel 32, Britton-Hecla 30
 Milbank 58, Britton-Hecla 23
 Redfield 42, Britton-Hecla 36

Sisseton, Hamlin top girls NEC

Sisseton and Hamlin remain undefeated in the girls race for the Northeast Conference title. In the Region 1A seeding, Sisseton and Roncalli are the big favorites with Sisseton in the number one spot.

Girls NEC Standings

Sisseton	3-0	8-0
Hamlin	4-0	6-3
Milbank	4-1	6-3
Deuel	3-1	5-5
Roncalli	3-1	8-1
Redfield	2-3	4-5
Webster Area	2-4	4-6
Clark/Willow Lake	1-3	3-7
Groton Area	1-3	5-4
Britton-Hecla *	1-4	2-7
Tiospa Zina	0-5	0-10

* Class B Team

Jan. 16

Roncalli at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 18

Clark/Willow Lake at Roncalli

Groton Area at Milbank

Hamlin at Redfield









Webster Area at Sisseton

Deuel at Tiospa Zina

Jan. 23

Roncalli at Hamlin

Girls Region 1A Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	PTS
1	 Sisseton	8	0	1.000	46.250
2	 Aberdeen Roncalli	8	1	.889	45.444
3	 Milbank	6	3	.667	41.333
4	 Groton Area	5	4	.556	41.111
5	 Waubay/Summit	5	3	.625	41.000
6	 Redfield	4	5	.444	40.222
7	 Webster Area	4	6	.400	38.300
8	 Tiospa Zina	0	10	.000	33.900

Sleep Interrupted: Sleep Apnea The Threat in Your Bedroom

My family has a fondness for crime dramas and thrillers. It isn't uncommon to watch a scene in which a peacefully sleeping individual wakes when a shadowy figure approaches their bedside with a pillow. Predictably, the assailant calmly presses that pillow over the face of their victim and waits until the struggling stops.

For millions of us, the threat in our bedrooms isn't some malevolent other, but rather our own bodies and brains. We may get our next breath, but for those with sleep apnea, it can be a struggle.

Sleep apnea has two basic types. In the most common, obstructive sleep apnea, the relaxation of sleep causes some part of the airway to essentially collapse, blocking off airflow. Those afflicted may come to medical attention because their partners complain about their snoring and have to nudge them to prompt that next breath. Their brains have to wake up enough to restore that muscle tone, opening the airway, and allowing them to breathe. This happens repeatedly throughout the night, multiple times an hour. In central sleep apnea, there are problems with the brain sending the instruction to breathe. Some people experience episodes related to both types of apnea, especially as they adjust to treatment for their obstructive sleep apnea, and some people have other types of sleep-disordered breathing.

Sleep apnea is a serious condition. It is linked to many other health problems, among them high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary artery disease, heart rhythm abnormalities, heart failure, strokes, depression, and dementia. Even when statistically subtracting out the risk factors that may be common to both sleep apnea and these other conditions, the relationship remains. Of course, there is the obvious risk of accidents caused by dosing off behind the wheel, or in other perilous situations. Then there is the less quantifiable cost, of couples who want to share a bedroom but don't, because the snoring of one partner, or anxiety about that next breath, means neither really sleep.

The first step to diagnosing sleep apnea is to visit with your primary care provider. They can determine if you qualify for a home sleep study, or if you might be better off having a test done in a sleep lab, where more monitoring is possible and more complex problems can be detected. Once the diagnosis is confirmed, treatment options can be explored. Most people receive some form of breathing support overnight. This is usually considered the gold standard and is suitable for all forms of sleep apnea. Many of my patients are surprised at just how easily they adjust to using it, and tell me that their partners often will wake them up to put it on if they doze off without it. Many of those who initially struggle with their CPAP can overcome the problems with a dose of determination and the help of a talented sleep therapist. For some people, dental appliances and various surgical procedures are possibilities.

I like to remind my patients that sleep deprivation is considered by the UN to be a form of torture. Don't let it be part of your bedtime routine.

Debra Johnson, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust for 22 Seasons, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Debra Johnston, MD

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Weekly Vikings Recap - Wild Card Round

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

Houston Texans 45 - Cleveland Browns 14

In the first game of the Wild Card Round, the up-and-coming Houston Texans blew out the favored Cleveland Browns in a surprising upset. Browns' quarterback, Joe Flacco, who before Saturday's game had never lost a Wild Card game in which he was the starting quarterback, seemed to have lost that "magic" that seemed to be a big part of the Browns' success this season when he threw two pick-sixes in a matter of 2:00 in the third quarter. By that point, the Texans had a 21-point lead, CJ Stroud and the Texan's offense was clicking, and the game was pretty much over from there.

Kansas City Chiefs 26 - Miami Dolphins 7

The Chiefs and Dolphins game went exactly how you would expect for a game with a temperature below zero degrees and a team from Florida that relies so heavily on their speed. Outside of one play where Tyreek Hill was able to score on an underthrown pass from Tua Tagovailoa, the Chiefs' defense completely shut down the Dolphins' offense, holding them to only 264 total yards of offense.

With the cold weather, the Chiefs' offense decided to rely heavily on their three key skill players: Isaiah Pacheco, Rashee Rice, and Travis Kelce, who accounted for 46 of the 68 rushing and receiving targets. That decision paid off as the Chiefs' offense put up 26 points in their win over the Dolphins, their second most in a game since November 26

Green Bay Packers 48 - Dallas Cowboys 32

In a shocking upset, the Green Bay Packers destroyed the Dallas Cowboys, who many thought had a real shot to make their first NFC Championship game appearance since 1995. Despite a change at the quarterback position for the Packers, the team continues to be the thorn in the Dallas Cowboys' side, making it the third straight playoff loss for the Cowboys when facing the Packers. AT&T Stadium is truly becoming "Lambeau South" as the Packers are now 6-0 all-time in that stadium, and have more playoff wins there than the Cowboys themselves.

Los Angeles Rams - Detroit Lions

In his first game back to Detroit since he was traded in 2021, Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams came in hoping to spoil the Detroit Lions' first home playoff game since 1993. After an offensive shootout in the first half where both the Lions and Rams' offenses scored on the first six drives of the game, the defenses showed up big in the second half, holding both offenses to no touchdowns. Despite a stellar performance from Matthew Stafford and Puka Nacua, who went for 181 receiving yards, the most for a rookie in a playoff game in NFL history, the Lions had multiple key third-down stops in the fourth quarter to maintain their lead and eventually come out with their first playoff victory since 1991.

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BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

January 16, 2024 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. First Reading of Ordinance #265 – Rezone
5. Gene Loeschke, Director of Equalization
 - a. 2024 Assessment Plan
6. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Fair Contract for Petting Zoo
7. Discuss Expo Roof Bid
8. Adopt Resolution to Appoint County Coroner
9. Authorize Chairman to sign Inmate Housing Agreements
10. Approve Treasurer Fees
11. Discuss and set Freedom of Information (FOIA) fees
12. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2024
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. Claim Assignments
 - d. Lease Agreements
 - e. Travel Requests
13. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
14. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311)

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission but may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board).

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at

<https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

January 16, 2024 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Approval of Special Event Alcoholic Beverage License – Hand Knit Blanket Class
4. Authorization for Mayor to Sign Memorandum of Understanding with Dakota Resources
5. December Finance Report
6. Minutes
7. Bills
8. Applications Due by February 6, 2024, at 5:00pm:
 - Baseball Coordinator
 - Softball Coordinator
 - Legion Coach
 - Jr. Legion Coach
 - Jr. Teener Coach
 - Girls' Softball Coaches (U8/U10/U12/U14)
 - Day Baseball/Softball Coach
 - Concessions Manager
9. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
10. Hire Skating Rink Applicants
11. Adjournment



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Creative thinking needed to save rural hospitals

by TOM DEAN

Over the last 15 years, approximately 150 rural hospitals have closed nationwide. What does it mean? Are these facilities obsolete, no longer needed? Maybe in a few places, but in the vast majority of communities they provide critically important services.

In most rural communities, the hospital has multiple roles and is the cornerstone for health services. Typically they serve as the base for local EMS/ambulance services and provide crucial first-contact care in medical and trauma emergencies. Besides delivering a range of out-patient services, they care for inpatients who do not require the high-tech interventions of the regional referral centers. Here, they often do a better job than overstressed referral centers. In essence, they are the central component of a rural safety net.

Closures always involve unique local factors. However, the most consistent — and usually the dominant — dilemma is that the costs of continued operation have outpaced the income available to cover them. In the final analysis, decisions which will directly and negatively impact the health and safety of residents are being made based on economic/financial justifications, too often without due regard for adverse health impacts.

How did we get to such a situation? The fundamental fact is that in a market-based economy, entities that generate income enough to cover expenses survive and those who do not fail. Hospitals do have other possible sources of revenue such as local taxes, assistance from larger health systems, etc. These sources, however, are limited and frequently not enough.

Perhaps all this should not be surprising. These facilities have been serving smaller and smaller numbers during a time when the services they must provide have become increasingly complex, technology-dependent and costly. To be prepared for the broad range of services they must provide, these facilities need to have personnel and equipment in place which will not be used often enough to generate the income needed to cover costs. Particularly in the more remote rural areas, facilities don't have the option of maintaining only those services that pay for themselves.

Another problem is that relative reimbursement for different types of care are notoriously uneven. Activities like complex imaging and complicated surgical procedures are reimbursed more favorably than are such things as basic obstetrical care, emergency and trauma services or low-tech inpatient care — the core functions of rural hospitals.

Several federal programs have been developed attempting to stabilize rural hospitals. The Critical Access Hospital program restructured Medicare payments to be more favorable to hospitals that are the only acute care providers in their areas. This was a great benefit to many rural facilities but was not enough for all.

A recent federal development, the Rural Emergency Hospital program, offers new payments to facilities that agree to cease providing inpatient care and provide only emergency services. Some facilities have accepted this, but many have questioned the logic of the arrangement given that there is often a real need for local inpatient services. Furthermore, the staffing and technology requirements for a credible emergency room are not demonstrably less than those required for inpatient services, meaning there would be questionable cost saving.

There are other models for delivering important services to sparsely populated areas. Many years ago the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) made available at affordable prices an important service — electric power. This would not have been feasible if the recipients were charged the full cost of installation.

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The situation with health care is clearly different but in some respects not so much. It is a vital service in which the cost per item increases as the volume of utilization decreases.

A recent and quite worrisome development is the emergence of private equity in the ownership and management of health care facilities. The single motivating factor for these organizations is profit, preferably quick profit. A full discussion of this trend is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say, however, the preservation of a rural safety net is not likely to be a high priority.

Providing health care access for folks in rural areas, in the "bread basket" of our nation, has always been a challenge. Technology developments, especially telehealth services, have clearly been beneficial. At the same time, small rural hospitals still struggle. They are the cornerstone for that access. They deserve all the creative thinking we can mobilize to find better approaches to protect them.

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

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Milbank Boys JV
Great Plains Lutheran Girls C
Great Plains Lutheran Girls JV
Northwestern Girls JV
Webster Boys C
Webster Boys JV
Webster Girls JV
Florence/Henry Girls JV
Deuel Girls JV
Vermillion Boys JV
Redfield Boys C Game
Redfield Girls JV Game
Mobridge-Pollock Boys C Game
Mobridge-Pollock Girls C Game
Mobridge-Pollock Boys JV Game
Mobridge-Pollock Girls JV Game
Dakota Valley Boys JV
Dakota Valley Girls JV

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What resolutions if any did negotiators agree on at the recent COP28 climate talks in Abu Dhabi? Are environmental advocates happy with the results?

-- Joe Watson, via email

International negotiators from 199 countries met in Abu Dhabi in late 2023 for the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) to try to find common ground on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing cataclysmic climate change. Whether and how to phase out fossil fuels took center-stage, as did calls for increased renewable energy development, more help for climate-afflicted less-developed nations, and the creation of national adaptation plans.

So, what exactly did negotiators agree on? For one, they cited fossil fuels specifically as the cause for our ramp up in global temperatures. With a vast majority of the countries in attendance (127) now backing a phase out, environmental advocates were hoping it would be institutionalized in the agreement, but the final written draft employed weaker language, calling for “transitioning away” from fossil fuels.

“The current terminology—‘transitioning away’—is somewhat ambiguous and allows for varying interpretations,” says Climate Action Network International’s Harjeet Singh. Although “transitioning away” may be a step in the right direction, COP28 didn’t call for getting rid of fossil fuels altogether and the language may be too soft to make countries act as quickly as many think they should.

Another step in the right direction was the creation of a loss and damage fund, essentially a form of climate reparations. “Loss and damage” refer to destruction caused by climate change. The fund relies on wealthy countries’ generosity and is voluntary. UAE and Germany each contributed \$100 million while other countries collectively chipped in an additional \$570 million.

Another positive outcome of COP28 is the oil and gas decarbonization charter which 50 oil companies signed onto, each pledging to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. These companies are responsible for only 40 percent of total global oil and gas output, but their commitment can still make a big dent in global fossil fuel production and consumption. Some 100 countries agreed to triple their renewable energy production by 2030. Parties also agreed to a national adaptation plan to try to meet requirements by 2030.

Another key issue is lack of funding. Less developed countries desperately need funds if they are to meet their COP28 aspirations, and the \$770 million raised so far is a drop in the bucket given the needs. Another criticism is the lack of near-term targets, making the monitoring of progress more difficult.

Sweden’s famous youth climate activist, Greta Thunberg, describes COP28 as “another betrayal and a stab in the back” and she isn’t the only one who feels this way. But others remain optimistic that the groundwork laid at COP28 can help make COP29 next year an agreement we can all be happy about. “We didn’t turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai but this outcome is the beginning of the end,” says Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



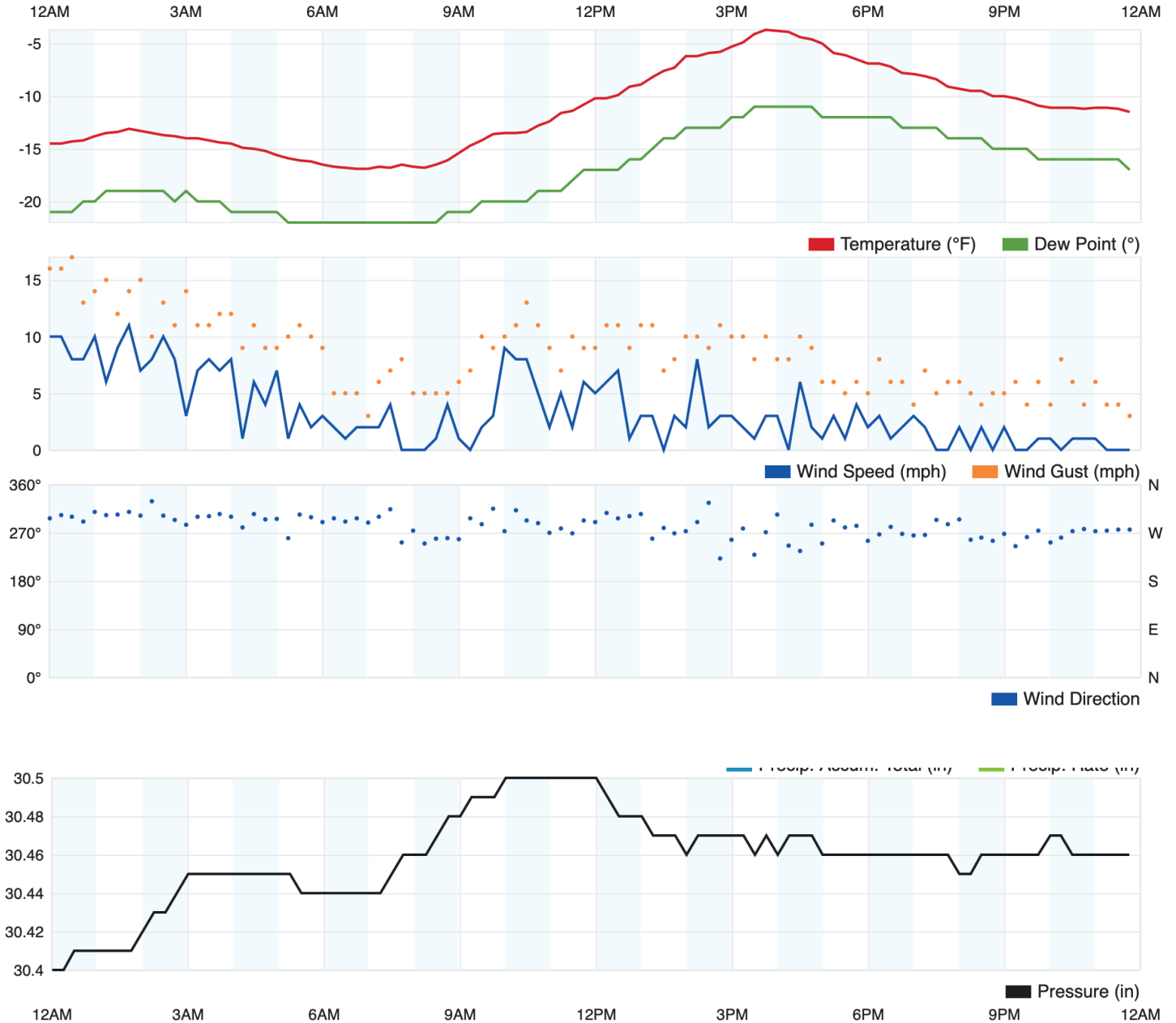
The U.S. delegation to the recent climate talks in Abu Dhabi was former Senator John Kerry.

Credit: USAID, FlickrCC.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Jan 15	Jan 16	Jan 17	Jan 18	Jan 19	Jan 20	Jan 21
-3°F	8°F	9°F	6°F	5°F	12°F	26°F
-11°F	-1°F	-2°F	-5°F	-7°F	8°F	19°F
W	W	WNW	NNW	NW	S	S
19 MPH	19 MPH	11 MPH	13 MPH	13 MPH	16 MPH	15 MPH



Arctic Outbreak Continues Through Monday Morning

January 15, 2024

4:36 AM

Key Messages

- Dangerously cold. Wind chill values will range from **-30 to -50** degrees this morning and -20 to -35 degrees this afternoon through Tuesday morning.
- Expect wind gusts of 35-45+ mph today. This will lead to periods of blowing and drifting snow, especially in open rural areas.

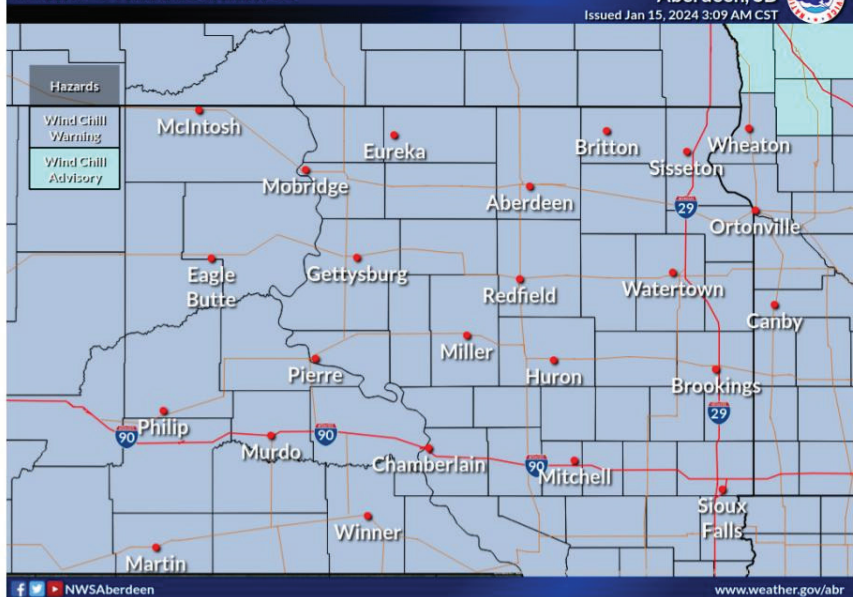
NEW What Has Changed

- No significant changes. A Wind Chill Warning remains in effect through noon CST today before becoming a Wind Chill Advisory.

Next Scheduled Update

- Final Update

Wind Chill Headlines



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Dangerously cold wind chills continue through Monday morning with values reaching -30 to -50 degrees. Winds will increase Monday, which could lead to periods of blowing and drifting snow.

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Dangerously Cold Wind Chills

January 15, 2024
4:42 AM



Hazards:

Wind chill values will range from -30 to -50 degrees through this morning and -20 to -35 degrees this afternoon through Tuesday morning



Timing & Duration:

Coldest wind chills expected through this morning, but still bitterly cold into Tuesday



Impacts:

Exposed skin may freeze in a matter of minutes. Bring your pets inside!

	1/15 Mon						1/16 Tue						Minimum			
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm		3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	-31	-40	-38	-30	-26	-30	-30	-33	-32	-34	-30	-17	-11	-13	-15	-40
Britton	-38	-41	-41	-33	-30	-30	-32	-34	-34	-33	-32	-21	-15	-18	-19	-41
Brookings	-38	-42	-41	-35	-34	-35	-34	-36	-36	-35	-30	-21	-17	-17	-17	-42
Chamberlain	-31	-36	-37	-33	-27	-28	-28	-28	-28	-26	-22	-10	-5	-6	-7	-37
Clark	-41	-44	-43	-36	-32	-34	-34	-35	-37	-37	-35	-24	-17	-17	-20	-44
Eagle Butte	-45	-47	-46	-38	-31	-35	-35	-36	-35	-33	-31	-13	-5	-9	-10	-47
Ellendale	-35	-41	-42	-35	-31	-30	-34	-33	-32	-33	-30	-18	-15	-16	-18	-42
Eureka	-41	-46	-46	-38	-32	-33	-35	-37	-36	-37	-34	-19	-12	-15	-18	-46
Gettysburg	-46	-47	-47	-37	-32	-33	-35	-36	-34	-34	-32	-16	-10	-13	-14	-47
Huron	-35	-39	-40	-33	-28	-29	-30	-30	-30	-29	-26	-14	-8	-11	-14	-40
Kennebec	-37	-46	-43	-36	-30	-31	-34	-34	-35	-34	-32	-12	-8	-8	-8	-46
McIntosh	-46	-51	-50	-44	-37	-38	-40	-40	-38	-36	-34	-17	-9	-14	-16	-51
Milbank	-31	-37	-35	-30	-30	-32	-32	-32	-30	-32	-28	-19	-15	-17	-17	-37
Miller	-40	-43	-43	-35	-28	-30	-32	-33	-33	-32	-31	-16	-10	-11	-11	-43
Mobridge	-36	-43	-42	-33	-25	-34	-34	-34	-35	-33	-32	-14	-4	-10	-12	-43
Murdo	-36	-45	-44	-37	-30	-33	-33	-33	-32	-34	-30	-14	-4	-7	-7	-45
Pierre	-30	-39	-41	-33	-23	-26	-28	-27	-27	-28	-25	-9	-2	-4	-4	-41
Redfield	-35	-43	-43	-32	-28	-30	-30	-34	-33	-34	-32	-15	-13	-13	-14	-43
Sisseton	-26	-39	-40	-35	-33	-32	-33	-33	-33	-33	-31	-20	-14	-16	-17	-40
Watertown	-36	-45	-44	-35	-36	-36	-36	-38	-37	-38	-36	-25	-19	-20	-20	-45
Webster	-37	-43	-41	-36	-34	-34	-34	-37	-36	-36	-35	-25	-19	-20	-21	-43
Wheaton	-31	-37	-38	-33	-28	-29	-29	-32	-30	-30	-28	-16	-14	-15	-17	-38

Minimum Wind Chill Forecast (°F)
Created: 3 am CST Mon 1/15/2024 | Values are minimums over the period beginning at the time shown.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Wind Gusts

January 15, 2024
4:46 AM

- Winds increase this morning with gusts of 30-45+ mph. This will lead to periods of blowing and drifting snow, especially in open rural areas.

	1/15 Mon						1/16 Tue						1/17 Wed			Maximum					
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6am	9am		12pm				
Aberdeen	15	22	29	32	32	29	29	29	31	33	30	28	23	23	21	18	16	16	17	33	
Britton	15	21	26	32	32	29	29	26	25	28	32	32	32	28	23	21	18	18	18	32	
Brookings	17	22	28	31	32	32	31	30	30	30	30	29	28	22	22	22	17	16	17	32	
Chamberlain	18	24	29	31	32	32	31	26	23	18	21	25	25	17	22	16	10	12	13	32	
Clark	23	24	29	32	32	30	30	31	31	31	30	29	29	22	24	25	25	22	18	18	32
Eagle Butte	31	36	39	43	43	43	41	38	36	32	31	33	36	38	38	32	26	21	18	18	43
Ellendale	28	28	33	35	35	32	33	32	31	35	37	39	31	26	29	28	22	18	17	17	37
Eureka	28	32	39	40	40	37	37	37	36	36	32	32	31	28	30	28	26	23	18	20	40
Gettysburg	22	31	37	39	38	36	36	38	32	30	26	29	29	30	31	26	23	20	17	18	39
Huron	22	26	30	31	32	31	30	29	29	26	25	24	22	17	21	22	22	18	15	16	32
Kennebec	22	30	36	39	38	36	35	33	31	26	25	29	28	25	30	30	20	14	12	13	39
McIntosh	25	40	46	48	49	46	46	43	41	35	36	41	43	40	41	35	30	24	21	22	49
Milbank	15	21	25	28	28	28	29	28	29	33	33	33	30	30	30	26	22	20	17	17	33
Miller	25	28	33	35	35	31	32	32	32	31	32	30	29	28	28	22	20	14	14	35	
Mobridge	25	30	35	37	37	36	35	32	30	26	24	25	25	28	29	22	18	16	15	16	37
Murdo	25	31	38	41	41	38	39	35	32	26	23	29	30	31	32	31	23	15	12	12	41
Pierre	21	26	32	36	36	32	33	29	26	20	21	24	24	24	29	20	14	10	10	12	36
Redfield	20	23	29	31	31	26	28	28	28	29	28	25	24	21	22	21	18	18	15	16	31
Sisseton	28	28	31	35	33	33	33	35	35	38	37	37	36	32	33	30	25	22	21	20	38
Watertown	18	23	28	32	32	31	30	31	31	35	31	31	31	26	26	26	23	22	18	18	35
Webster	18	25	31	36	37	35	35	33	33	38	37	36	36	31	30	30	26	25	22	21	38
Wheaton	21	22	28	29	28	26	26	26	26	28	26	26	26	22	21	21	21	18	18	18	29

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)
Created: 3 am CST Mon 1/15/2024 | Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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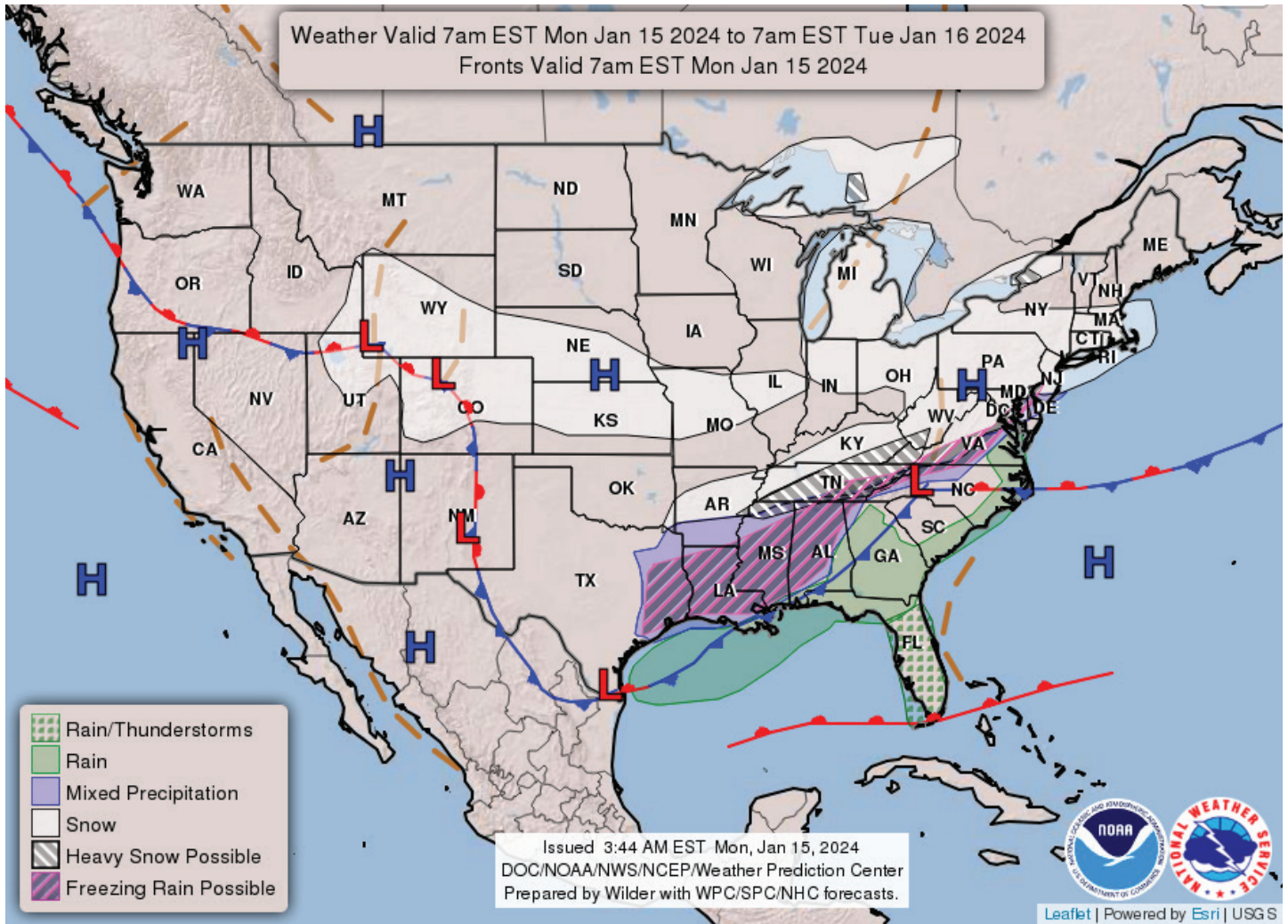
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: -4 °F at 3:55 PM
Low Temp: -17 °F at 6:43 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 12:20 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 9 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 48 in 1942
Record Low: -42 in 2009
Average High: 23
Average Low: 2
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.30
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.30
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:16:39 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:06:12 am



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Today in Weather History

January 15, 1982: Snowfall amounts of one to four inches and powerful northwest winds of 35 to 45 mph with gusts to 60 mph caused blizzard conditions with widespread drifting across much of South Dakota and Minnesota from the early morning of the 15th to mid-afternoon on the 16th. Wind chills were lowered to 50 to 80 degrees below zero, and visibilities were near zero across most areas. One death was attributed to exposure. There were numerous weather-related accidents. Some of the major accidents included; a truck blown off Interstate 90 near Murdo, injuring the driver, a truck blown off Highway 281, turned upside down in a ditch, and a truck slamming into a bridge on Interstate 90 near Murdo. The extreme cold killed numerous fruit trees at a nursery in Watertown.

January 15, 1985: Heavy snow fell in central and south-central South Dakota from the early evening of the 15th to around noon on the 16th, with areas around Pierre receiving up to 18 inches. Generally, 5 to 10 inches fell with numerous minor traffic accidents reported. Interstate 90 had a no travel advisory in a 95-mile stretch from Kimball to Murdo until the afternoon of the 16th due to low visibility and heavy drifting. Also, many schools and businesses were closed. Some snowfall amounts included 4 inches at Kennebec, 6 inches at Murdo, and 10 inches at Pierre.

January 15, 2009: An Arctic high pressure settled in on the morning of the 15th, bringing the region's coldest temperatures in many years. The combination of a fresh and deep snowpack, clear skies, and light winds allowed temperatures to fall to record levels at many locations on the 15th. Daytime highs remained well below zero across the area. This was one of the coldest days that most areas experienced since the early 1970s. The records were broken by 1 to as much as 7 degrees.

1852: In 1852, the long, cold winter froze the Susquehanna River in Maryland to a depth of 2 to 3 feet, preventing all ferry service. Railroad officials overcame this perplexing situation by laying tracks across the ice, with trestles for either bank's inclines. During the several weeks from January 15 to February 29, approximately 1,300 cars with a total weight of 10,000 tons were hauled across the river from Havre de Grace, Maryland, to Perryville, Maryland.

1932 - Up to two inches of snow whitened the Los Angeles basin of California. The Los Angeles Civic Center reported an inch of snow, and even the beaches of Santa Monica were whitened with snow, in what proved to be a record snowstorm for Los Angeles. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1952 - A six day snowstorm was in progress in the western U.S. The storm produced 44 inches of snow at Marlette Lake NV, 52 inches at Sun Valley ID, and 149 inches at Tahoe CA, establishing single storm records for each of those three states. In addition, 24 hour snowfall totals of 22 inches at the University of Nevada, and 26 inches at Arco ID, established records for those two states. The streamliner, 'City of San Francisco' was snowbound in the Sierra Nevada Range, near Donner Summit. (David Ludlum)

1967: The Green Bay Packers beat the Kansas City Chiefs, 35-10, in Super Bowl I at the Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles. From the weather station at the USC campus in downtown LA, the high temperature was 79 degrees, and the low was 51. There was a light west wind.

1972: In Flint, Michigan, the daytime temperature rose to only -3 degrees. This is the second coldest maximum temperature recorded in the city of Flint since 1921. Detroit's high temperature was zero.

1987 - A powerful storm over the Southern Plateau and the Southern Rockies produced 24 inches of snow at Colorado Springs CO, including 22 inches in 24 hours, a January record. High winds in the southwestern U.S. gusted to 65 mph in the Yosemite Valley of California. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A small storm over the Atlantic Ocean produced heavy snow along the coast of North Carolina. The five inch total at Wilmington NC was their third highest for any storm in January in 117 years of records. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - A storm in the northwestern U.S. produced up to 14 inches of snow in the Cascade Mountain Range. Light snow in the north central U.S. was just enough to push the snowfall total for January at Fargo ND past their previous all-time monthly record of 30.7 inches.

1990 - While one Pacific storm crossed the Central Rockies, another approached the west coast. The northern mountains of Utah were buried under 17 to 35 inches of snow while the mountains of southern Utah received another 12 to 16 inches. Eighteen cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 50s and 60s. Wichita KS reported a record high of 68 degrees. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE WILL TO WIN!

It was the first practice of the football season. The captain of the team was trying to impress his fellow teammates with his leadership skills. Pacing back and forth in front of the team, he was doing his best to get them excited. Finally, as his voice reached a level of great intensity, he shouted, "We'll win because we have the will to win!"

The coach, looking rather amused said, "Don't fool yourself, son. The will to win is important. But more important than the will to win is the importance to surrender to hard work, sore muscles, aching joints, sweat running into your eyes, and long hours of studying our plays." In other words, winning requires hard work – not simply a will.

What is required of athletes who want to be victorious on a football field is true of the Christian who is called to live a victorious life for Christ. Paul said, "Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important for it promises a reward in this life and the life to come."

Spiritual exercise - studying God's Word, praying, worshipping, fellowship, and serving Him as well as others - and the desire to achieve success for the Christian does not come easy or simply being willing. It requires a life of discipline and surrender to the will of God. Paul reminds us, however, that if we do the "required work" we will be rewarded in this life and the life to come.

Prayer: Lord, You never promised us a life of ease. But for Your sake, we ask for Your strength and power to live a life that is worthy of You and victorious over sin. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important for it promises a reward in this life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7-8



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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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.12.24

19 34 35 45 67 7

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$208,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 23 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

6 9 30 38 46 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,350,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.14.24

20 28 33 38 42 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 53 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

15 23 29 30 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$21,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 53 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

30 41 44 55 58 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

13 31 33 51 58 15

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$88,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the  Associated Press

Arctic freeze continues to blast huge swaths of the US with sub-zero temperatures

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A dangerous Arctic blast will continue sweeping across the U.S. on Monday and linger through at least midweek, prolonging a bitter cold that set record-low temperatures in parts of the country and threatens to further disrupt daily life, including an NFL playoff game and the first-in-the-nation presidential nominating contest in Iowa.

The National Weather Service said wind chills are expected to push temperatures 30 degrees below zero from the Northern Rockies to northern Kansas and into Iowa, testing the hardiness of caucusgoers willing to brave the deep chill on Monday.

"You can't sit home," former President Donald Trump told supporters Sunday. "If you're sick as a dog, you say, 'Darling, I gotta make it.' Even if you vote and then pass away, it's worth it."

Arctic storms left at least four dead and knocked out electricity to tens of thousands in the Northwest, brought snow to the South and walloped the Northeast with blizzard conditions forcing the postponement of the Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Buffalo Bills NFL playoff game hosted in bone-chilling Buffalo, New York.

The game was scheduled to be held Monday after being cancelled Sunday.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Buffalo native, posted a video on X, formerly known as Twitter, showing near-whiteout conditions.

"Conditions right now in Orchard Park, where the game would have started moments ago," she wrote early Sunday afternoon. "No visibility and dangerously high winds."

The Bills invited diehard fans to help dig out snow-filled Highmark Stadium, offering \$20 an hour for their labor.

"We made progress shoveling, but not much at all," said Logan Eschrich, a storm chaser who made his way to Buffalo and pitched in.

It remains to be seen if the show will go on Monday afternoon. The weather service expects heavy lake-effect snow to push into upstate New York from Lake Erie, adding to the 1 to 2 feet (30.4 to 60.9 centimeters) of snow already blanketing the region. Snow fell at a rate of 2 inches (5 centimeters) per hour.

Sub-zero wind chills will grip much of the country, plunging to 50 degrees below zero in Montana and the Dakotas.

"It takes a matter of minutes for frostbite to set in," the South Dakota Department of Public Safety said in a statement Sunday urging people to stay indoors.

Other parts of the country could see temperatures drop 25 to 40 degrees below normal, from the Rockies to the Ohio Valley.

As temperatures in Texas plunged, the state's power grid operator appealed to residents to voluntarily conserve electricity Monday morning due to the cold weather causing "record breaking demand" for energy. A deadly freeze in 2021 left millions of Texans without power but state officials this week expressed confidence about the grid's reliability as the cold front approached.

Freezing rain is expected to pelt parts of the Southern Plains and Southern Appalachians.

Even places like Florida won't be spared from turbulent weather, with forecasts predicting showers and thunderstorms from Monday into Tuesday.

In Oregon, more than 120,000 homes and businesses were without electricity, most of them in the Portland metro area, a day after high winds and a mix of snow and ice brought down trees and power lines.

Some 100 trees toppled over the weekend in a community just south of Portland, including one that fell on a house and killed a man. Two other people died of suspected hypothermia and a fourth died in a fire that spread from an open-flame stove after a tree fell onto an RV.

"Given the extent of the damage and the high level of outage events, restoration efforts will continue into the week and customers are encouraged to plan accordingly," Portland General Electric said in a statement. The utility said it was watching a second weather pattern that could bring high winds and freezing rain on Tuesday.

Widespread power outages affecting tens of thousands were also reported Sunday in Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In Nebraska, the Omaha Public Power District asked customers to conserve electricity to prevent outages.

Airports across the country were impacted. More than half of flights into and out of Buffalo Niagara International Airport were canceled. Scores of flights also were canceled or delayed at Chicago, Denver and Seattle-Tacoma airports.

Turkey charges Israeli soccer player with inciting hatred for showing solidarity with Gaza hostages

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish authorities on Monday charged Israeli soccer player Sagiv Jehezkel with inciting hatred after he expressed solidarity with people held hostage by the Hamas militant organization during a top-flight league game. He was released from custody pending trial.

The Antalyaspor player had been detained for questioning late Sunday after he displayed a bandage on his wrist with the words "100 Days 7.10" — in reference to Oct. 7, the day Hamas attacked Israel and the hostages were abducted — next to a Star of David.

The 28-year-old Israeli international told police he was simply calling for an end to the war.

Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said late Sunday that Jehezkel was under investigation for "openly inciting the public to hatred and hostility." Tunc maintained in a statement posted on X that Jehezkel had engaged in "an ugly gesture in support of the Israeli massacre in Gaza."

The gesture was deemed to be provocative in Turkey where there is widespread public opposition to Israel's military actions in Gaza and overwhelming support for the Palestinians.

Antalyaspor suspended Jehezkel from the team and announced that it was speaking to the club's lawyers about the possibility of terminating his contract.

The player was expected to return to Israel later in the day on a private jet together with members of his family, private NTV television reported.

During his questioning by police, the player denied accusations that he engaged in a provocative act, the private DHA news agency reported.

"I am not pro-war," DHA quoted him as telling police. "I want this 100-day process to come to an end. I want the war to end."

Jehezkel continued: "I have never engaged in anything related to politics since my arrival. I have never disrespected anyone since the day I arrived. The point I wanted to draw attention to was (the need) for an end of the war."

The Turkish Football Federation condemned what it said was a gesture that "disturbed the conscience" of the Turkish public.

Jehezkel's detention, meanwhile, sparked outrage in Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz called on the international community and sports groups to take steps against Turkey and its "political use of violence and threats against athletes."

"Whoever arrests a football player for a show of solidarity with 136 captives who are more than 100 days with the terrorists of a murderous terrorist organization, represents a culture of murder and hate," he said.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant called Jehezkel's detention "scandalous."

"In its actions, Turkey serves as Hamas' executive arm," he wrote on X.

Bernardo Arévalo sworn in as Guatemala's president despite months of efforts to derail inauguration

By SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Bernardo Arévalo was sworn in as Guatemala's president on Monday minutes after midnight despite months of efforts to derail his inauguration, including foot-dragging and rising tensions right up until the transfer of power.

Arévalo arrives in the presidency after winning August's elections by a comfortable margin. But nothing has been straightforward since, with Attorney General Consuelo Porras and the establishment forces observers say she represents throwing one legal challenge after another at Arévalo and his party.

"It fills me with deep honor to assume this lofty responsibility, showing that our democracy has the necessary strength to resist and that through unity and trust we can change the political panorama in Guatemala," Arévalo said in his first address as president.

Arévalo thanked Guatemala's youth for not losing hope and the country's Indigenous peoples for their support, acknowledging "historic debts that we must resolve." He summarized his administration's guiding principle as: "There cannot be democracy without social justice and social justice cannot prevail without democracy."

Despite hundreds of Arévalo's supporters pressuring lawmakers to follow the constitution, even clashing with riot police outside the congress building Sunday, the inauguration process dragged for hours before he took the oath of office just past midnight.

A progressive academic-turned-politician and son of a Guatemalan president credited with implementing key social reforms in the mid-20th century, Arévalo takes office with expectations of confronting Guatemala's entrenched corruption. But it will not be easy.

He has little support in congress and Porras' term as the top law enforcement official extends to 2026, though Arévalo has said one of his first orders of business will be to request her resignation.

Supporters had been waiting hours for a festive inauguration celebration in Guatemala City's emblematic Plaza de la Constitucion and were fed up with yet another delay, sweeping police roughly out of their way before gathering outside congress demanding legislators stop delaying and name the delegation that must attend the ceremony.

Congress, which was supposed to attend the inauguration as a special session of the legislature, engaged in bitter infighting over who to recognize as part of the congressional delegation, as members yelled at each other.

The leadership commission tasked with doing that was packed with old-guard opponents of Arévalo, and the delay was seen as a tactic to draw out the inauguration and weaken Arévalo.

Arévalo wrote in his social media accounts that "they are trying to damage democracy with illegalities, inconsequential details and abuses of power."

Representatives from the U.S. government and Organization of American States called on the congress to respect Guatemala's constitution.

Minutes before midnight, the special session of congress was convened.

Porras had tried every legal trick in the book to put Arévalo on trial or in jail before he could take office. And Arévalo's party won't have a majority in Congress and may not even have formal recognition there.

Arévalo is an academic, diplomat and the son of a progressive president from the middle of the 20th century, and his election marked a political awakening in a population weary of corruption and impunity.

"I feel enthusiastic, because we are finally reaching the end of this long and torturous process," Arévalo said before his inauguration. "Guatemalan society has developed the determination to say 'no' to these political-criminal elites."

In his address immediately after his swearing-in, Arévalo said "we will not allow our institutions to submit again to corruption and impunity." Outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei, widely criticized for eroding the country's democratic institutions, did not attend the inauguration.

But as much as Arévalo wants to change things, he faces enormous obstacles. His anti-corruption stance

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and outsider status are threats to deep-rooted interests in the Central American country, observers say. Still, the fact he got this far is a testament to international support and condemnation of the myriad attempts to disqualify him.

For many Guatemalans, the inauguration represented not only the culmination of Arévalo's victory at the polls, but also their successful defense of the country's democracy.

In his first act as president, Arévalo visited the site outside the Attorney General's Office where Indigenous protesters have kept vigil for more than three months, demanding authorities respect the vote and that Porras step down. He applauded them for defending the country's democracy.

It was an important gesture by Arévalo, who was criticized last week for including only one Indigenous person in his Cabinet. In October, hundreds had blocked highways across the country for three weeks to pressure authorities.

Indigenous leaders took the opportunity Monday to urge Arévalo not to forget their support and the many basic needs of their communities.

Meanwhile, back in the central plaza outside the theater where Arévalo was sworn in, supporters danced and cheered early Monday.

"I am very happy," said Manuel Perez, a 60-year-old retired teacher, as he danced to a band playing salsa music. "I'm here because I'm Guatemalan and I love my country. I hope for a better life for everyone. We're going to be here celebrating until dawn."

That Arévalo made it to within a day of his inauguration was largely owed to thousands of Guatemala's Indigenous people, who took to the streets last year to protest and demand that Porras and her prosecutors respect the Aug. 20 vote. Many had called for her resignation, but her term doesn't end until 2026 and it's not clear whether Arévalo can rid himself of her.

Prosecutors sought to suspend Arévalo's Seed Movement party — a move that could prevent its legislators from holding leadership positions in Congress — and strip Arévalo of his immunity three times.

On Friday, his choice for vice president, Karin Herrera, announced that the Constitutional Court had granted her an injunction heading off a supposed arrest order. She was also sworn in early Monday.

Prosecutors have alleged that the Seed Movement engaged in misdeeds in collecting signatures to register as a party years earlier, that its leaders encouraged a monthlong occupation of a public university, and that there was fraud in the election. International observers have denied that.

One key was that Arévalo got early and strong support from the international community. The European Union, Organization of American States and the U.S. government repeatedly demanded respect for the popular vote.

Washington has gone further, sanctioning Guatemalan officials and private citizens suspected of undermining the country's democracy.

On Thursday, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for the Western Hemisphere, Brian A. Nichols, said the aggression toward Arévalo won't likely stop with his inauguration.

US delegation praises Taiwan's democracy after pro-independence presidential candidate wins election

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Retired U.S. officials met with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen on Monday and praised the island's democratic process that produced a new president-elect and legislature over the weekend in defiance of China's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan and threat to annex it by military force.

"Taiwan's democracy has set a shining example for the world, a democratic success story based on transparency, the rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms," former national security advisor Stephen Hadley said.

America's commitment to Taiwan is "rock solid," he said.

Taiwan on Saturday elected current Vice President Lai Ching-te as the new head of government, a move likely to prompt China to maintain its military, diplomatic and economic threats against the island.

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Hadley was joined by former Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg, who affirmed bipartisan support for Taiwan "based on our unofficial but warm relationship, our insistence on exclusively peaceful means to address the cross (Taiwan Strait) issues, the importance of dialogue and the avoidance of unilateral efforts to change the status quo."

Their delegations later met with Lai and Vice President-elect Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan's former de-facto ambassador to the U.S.

"Democracy and freedom are the most valuable assets of the Taiwanese people," Lai said. "It is also the core value of Taiwan and the United States and the basis of the long-term partnership between Taiwan and the United States."

"Although China continues to intrude on Taiwan with military and other gray zone activities, Taiwan is still able to deal with it calmly and work together with the United States and other international partners who share the same philosophy to maintain the status quo of stability in the Taiwan Strait," Lai said. Gray zone activities refer to the application of military and socio-economic pressure that comes short of outright armed conflict.

Tsai said that Taiwan's "need to continue to progress and move forward remains unchanged."

"We hope that Taiwan-U.S. relations continue to advance and serve as a key driving force in regional and global prosperity and development," she said.

Despite having cut official diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979, the U.S. remains the island's chief diplomatic ally and source of military hardware and intelligence.

Taiwan's presidential and parliamentary elections have always been a source of contention between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait that divided amid civil war in 1949, amplifying the difference between Taiwan's free-wheeling democratic process and China's strict Communist Party authoritarian rule.

That divide is a major flashpoint in U.S.-China relations that potentially risks leading to an actual war in the future, accentuated by China's claim to virtually the entire South China Sea and competition for markets and diplomatic influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Lai's victory was a setback for China's efforts to bring Taiwan under its control. His Democratic Progressive Party advocates maintaining the status quo of de-facto independence, under which the island's 23 million people carry Taiwanese passports, maintain their own government and defense and issue their own currency, but are denied recognition at the United Nations in deference to China.

China has refused to acknowledge the result of the election, which left the legislature closely divided between the DPP and the Nationalists, also known as the Kuomintang or KMT. China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on the election that "the Taiwan question is China's internal affair" and "the basic fact that ... Taiwan is part of China will not change."

Taiwan said Beijing's position "is completely inconsistent with international understanding and the current cross-strait situation. It goes against the expectation of global democratic communities and goes against the will of the people of Taiwan to uphold democratic values. Such cliches are not worth refuting."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Lai on his victory, prompting the Chinese Foreign Ministry to say that message "sends a gravely wrong signal to the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces" and goes against a U.S. commitment to maintain only unofficial ties with Taiwan.

Lai's victory means the Democratic Progressive Party will hold the presidency for a third four-year term, following eight years under Tsai. Lai won a three-way race for president with 40% of the vote, less than the clear majority Tsai won in 2020. He will take office in May.

Emmys finally arrive for a changed Hollywood, as 'Succession' and 'Last of Us' vie for top awards

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The time has finally come for a most unusual Emmys.

The 75th Primetime Emmy Awards are arriving four months past their due date on Monday night at the Peacock Theater, coming after a year of historic Hollywood turbulence in an industry whose upheavals are evident everywhere.

Strikes by both actors and writers, seismic shifts toward streaming, and the dismantling of the traditional TV calendar mean the envelopes opened during the Fox telecast hosted by Anthony Anderson on Martin Luther King Jr. Day will display winners that were decided months ago for shows that in some cases were completed years ago — and have a fraction of the audience they had a few decades ago.

But for actors and others taking part in the ceremony, norms just aren't a thing anymore in this business.

"Since the pandemic it's been really strange, you shoot something, then sometimes it's another couple years until you see it, and a while longer until something like this," actor Nick Offerman told The Associated Press last week after winning an early Emmy for "The Last of Us," a show that is among Monday night's top nominees along with "Succession," "Ted Lasso" and "The Bear."

The Emmys will provide some respite and celebration after the strike and the troubles that spurred it, and with its 75th edition, will attempt to provide links to its past and to TV history. It will include a series of cast reunions and scene recreations from beloved shows including "Cheers," "Game of Thrones," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Martin."

The nominations themselves provide one big link to Emmys past — the continuation of the decades-long dominance of HBO, which this year has the three most nominated shows with "Succession," "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us."

Anderson has been tasked with hosting at a time when emceeding awards shows is hardly a coveted job, especially after comic Jo Koy was widely roasted for his Golden Globes performance last weekend.

But Anderson said he's actually coming in relaxed and relieved, because for the first time in nearly a decade, he's not a nominee. He never won an Emmy despite 11 nominations as a producer and actor for his former show, "black-ish."

"All the pressure is off of me now," Anderson, now the host of Fox's "We Are Family," said during ceremony preparations. "I don't have to sit there and wonder, am I going to win? Am I going to get it? What time are they going to get to this category? I just get to come up here and be myself."

HOW TO WATCH

The Emmys will air live on Fox starting at 8 p.m. Eastern, and available to stream starting Tuesday on Hulu.

The ceremony is watchable in dozens of countries. The Television Academy website has a handy list of broadcasters and in some instances, air times.

There are also many ways to watch the Emmys red carpet, which begins at 5 p.m., when E! kicks off its coverage. People and Entertainment Weekly are also hosting a red carpet show that will stream on their websites and YouTube pages.

THE NOMINEES

"Succession" got a leading 27 nominations. It's the probable favorite to win its third best drama series Emmy and it has three men — Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin — up for best actor with four more nominated for best supporting actor.

But it won't come away with the most wins. That's because "The Last of Us," second with 24 nominations, is coming in with eight via last weekend's Creative Arts Emmys, where "Succession" won none. Those include best guest acting awards for Offerman and Storm Reid, suggesting that voters may also favor its lead actors Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey. Both could make history, with Pascal becoming the first Latino to win best actor in a drama and Ramsey the youngest to win best actress.

The elite ensemble from "The White Lotus" is all over the supporting categories. It has five women up for best supporting actress in a drama, including Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza.

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On the comedy side, the night could become a victory lap for the third and final season of "Ted Lasso," the soccer-themed series that won best comedy for its first two seasons.

Its main challenger comes from the kitchen. "The Bear," about a chef struggling with his family's legacy, will vie for best comedy, and its lead Jeremy Allen White could challenge Jason Sudeikis of "Ted Lasso" for best actor in a comedy.

THE LONG WAIT

Last year's two strikes meant the Emmys, normally held in September, made an unprecedented move to January, putting it in the heart of Hollywood's awards season.

Academy voting took place on the normal timetable, however, meaning the winners have been determined since late August.

The wait and other quirks of the calendar make for some strange award circumstances. "The Bear" is up for Emmys for its first season, after having already won key Golden Globes for its second.

Jared Goff leads Lions to first playoff win in 32 years, 24-23 over Matthew Stafford and the Rams

By LARRY LAGE AP Sports Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Jared Goff lifted his arms in the air, encouraging Ford Field fans to get even louder, before taking the final snap to end his long-suffering franchise's skid in the playoffs.

The crowd delivered, approaching the decibel level of a siren.

Goff came through, too.

Goff threw for a touchdown and completed a pass for a victory-sealing first down against the team that cast him away, and the Detroit Lions won a playoff game for the first time in 32 years, beating Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams 24-23 on Sunday night.

The Lions (13-5) ended a nine-game postseason losing streak — the longest in NFL history — that dated to a victory over Dallas on Jan. 5, 1992. They lost a home playoff game two years later and hadn't hosted one since.

"It means a whole lot to this city," Goff said. "We knew what it meant when this season started to get into the playoffs and then to get this win. And, you know, it's just the beginning for us. We've got some run left."

Detroit, the NFC's No. 3 seed, will have two home playoff games for the first time in franchise history, hosting either Tampa Bay or Philadelphia in the divisional round next Sunday. Second-seeded Dallas was routed by Green Bay.

The Rams (10-8) had a chance to take the lead late in the fourth quarter, but Detroit's defense denied them. A holding penalty pushed Los Angeles out of field goal range, and Stafford — the Lions' longtime quarterback who won a Super Bowl after he was traded to the Rams — threw incomplete on fourth down.

On the first play after the two-minute warning, Goff hit Amon-Ra St. Brown for 11 yards, allowing the Lions to run out the clock — much to the delight of long-suffering fans who witnessed the franchise's second postseason victory since winning the 1957 NFL title.

"That's the best home atmosphere I've ever played in, and I expect next week will top that," Goff said.

Against the franchise he once led to the Super Bowl, Goff was 22 of 27 for 277 yards and threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to rookie tight end Sam LaPorta that put Detroit ahead 21-10 midway through the second quarter.

The Lions acquired Goff and a pair of first-round picks for Stafford three years ago.

"Jared was really efficient. You could see the command that he has," said Rams coach Sean McVay, whose relationship with Goff soured before the trade. "There's a lot made of it, but I'm really happy for him. We wanted to come away with a win, but he's done a great job."

Stafford, who played most of the game with a bandaged and bloody hand after he slammed it into a defender's helmet, finished 25 of 36 for 367 yards with two touchdowns.

"I wouldn't want anyone else as our quarterback other than Matthew Stafford," McVay said. "He was

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outstanding. He was gritty. He was gutsy and made tough throw after tough throw. The rush was barreling down on him, and he stood in there and was dropping dimes all day.”

Detroit drafted Stafford No. 1 overall in 2009 and while he put up gaudy statistics, he didn't win a playoff game in his 12 seasons. Stafford hugged dozens of Detroit's players and staff members after the game. "I'm happy for the players," he said. "I'm happy for those guys."

Record-breaking rookie Puka Nacua had nine receptions for 181 yards and a touchdown for the Rams. David Montgomery and rookie Jahmyr Gibbs each had a rushing TD for the Lions, and St. Brown had seven receptions for 110 yards.

After trailing by 11 points, the Rams got within 21-17 at halftime thanks to Stafford's 50-yard touchdown pass to Nacua and his 38-yarder to Tutu Atwell.

Michael Badgley's season-long, 54-yard field goal — the longest of his postseason career, and tied for the longest in Detroit's playoff history — gave the Lions a seven-point lead midway through the third quarter.

The Rams moved the ball at will for much of the game, but had to settle for short field goals by Brett Maher to get within 24-23 with 8:10 remaining.

"The difference in the game was the red area," McVay said.

Stafford has made a career of fourth-quarter comebacks, a fact the fans at Ford Field were well aware of. With a chance to put the Rams ahead for the first time, he led a drive to the Detroit 34, but the Lions' defense forced him backwards from there.

Detroit took over with 4:07 to go, and Los Angeles had only one timeout left after calling two earlier in the half to cope with the crowd noise. That allowed Goff to take a knee after his throw to St. Brown.

The Lions started strong and looked as fired up as their long-suffering fans, with rapper and Motor City native Eminem in the house along with Hall of Famers Barry Sanders and Calvin Johnson.

"When we came out for pregame warmups, it was already buzzing," Campbell said.

The fans showered Stafford with boos when he ran onto the field, where he posed for a pregame photo with his wife and their daughters, and chanted "Jar-ed Goff! Jar-ed Goff" for the Lions' quarterback.

"Going into this game, I had two things I was playing for: I was playing for my teammates and I was playing for the city," said Hutchinson, who grew up in suburban Detroit and starred at Michigan. "This city has been so deserving of this for so long, and we're going to keep it up."

INJURIES

Rams: Stafford's right hand was taped up after it was cut in the second quarter and he walked off the field slowly after getting hit by two Lions late in the third. He said he hurt his ribs and head on the play. ... RB Kyren Williams had a hand injury in the fourth quarter. ... TE Tyler Higbee limped off the field, favoring his right leg, after taking a low hit in the fourth. ... S Jordan Fuller, the team's second-leading tackler, was ruled out after being listed as questionable with an ankle injury.

Lions: WR/KR Kalif Raymond, TE James Mitchell and CB Jerry Jacobs were inactive.

Democrats target GOP strongholds Texas and Florida with Senate majority on the line

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats hoping to hold their slim Senate majority after November are looking for upsets in two unlikely places, Texas and Florida, to help neutralize potential setbacks elsewhere.

But that means President Joe Biden's party's top opportunities to play political offense in Senate races are coming in America's largest reliably red state and a onetime quintessential battleground that has moved decidedly to the right in recent years.

Still, with West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin not seeking reelection, his seat is likely to flip Republican. Retaining their 51-49 Senate advantage likely means Democrats must defend their other 22 seats on the 2024 ballot — including party incumbents and independents who caucus with them — while also gaining seats, and they say Texas and Florida are their best shot.

Democrats nationwide have championed abortion rights and are looking to build on gains among suburban

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women and other key swing voters since the Supreme Court's overturning of the Roe v. Wade decision in 2022. The party thinks many Texas and Florida voters are with them in believing Republicans have gone too far in restricting reproductive freedom.

Dallas mother Kate Cox made national headlines when she was recently forced to leave Texas to terminate a non-viable pregnancy after Republican officials argued she didn't qualify for an exception to its near total abortion ban.

In Florida, activists secured enough signatures to put on November's ballot a referendum cementing access to abortion in the state constitution — following statewide votes defending abortion access in Republican-leaning Ohio and even more solidly red Kansas and Kentucky.

Democrats are also encouraged by Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz eking out reelection in 2018 by less than 3 percentage points over Democrat Beto O'Rourke. In Florida, meanwhile, Republican Sen. Rick Scott won his seat that year by around 10,000 votes out of 8.1-plus million cast.

"I think they are winnable states with the right Democratic candidate and the right Republican candidate," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. "And I think we're going to have both."

Running for Senate in Florida is Democratic former congresswoman Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, who upset two-term Republican Rep. Carlos Curbelo in 2018 but lost her seat representing part of Miami and the Florida keys in 2020. In Texas, Democratic Rep. Colin Allred of Dallas will have to overcome primary challenger Roland Gutierrez, a state senator from San Antonio, before he can take on Cruz.

Texas last voted Democratic for president in 1976. The party hasn't won any of the 28 statewide offices there for 30 years. O'Rourke, after nearly toppling Cruz and unsuccessfully running for president in 2020, lost the 2022 governor's race.

Florida voted twice for Donald Trump, and Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis romped to reelection in 2022, as did Republican Sen. Marco Rubio.

"Just 'cause they're the best options they have doesn't mean they're winnable, doesn't mean they're competitive," said Texas Republican strategist Matt Mackowiak.

Peters, though, points to the most recent midterms, when Democrats defied Biden's low approval ratings and historical precedent by gaining a Senate seat and only narrowly losing the House majority.

"Having folks say, 'Well, the deck is stacked against you going into the election,' it's the exact same thing that happened last cycle," he said.

Republicans only have to defend 10 seats and are looking to flip as many as eight held by Democrats, including West Virginia.

Montana Sen. Steve Daines, chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the party's campaign arm, said "the Democrats, we know, are going to dump millions of dollars (in) out-of-state money to buy those two seats" in Florida and Texas, but he believes Scott and Cruz are strong incumbents.

National Republicans are eyeing Ohio, where Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown was first elected in 2006, and Montana's Jon Tester, also a three-term Democratic incumbent. Both states are expected to vote Republican for president.

"This team is not over-confident," Daines said. "We know we also have a great map, but you can't fall in love with the map."

He said strong candidates and messaging will make the difference, as well as a renewed push to encourage early voting and mail-balloting after Trump discouraged them in 2020.

Biden's approval ratings remain soft, which could hurt Democrats in Senate races, though Trump also appears to be his party's likely presidential nominee and would bring his own top-of-the-GOP-ticket negatives.

Only three of the six Senate candidates Trump endorsed won in 2022. Still, Daines said his party was "learning from '22," and that he speaks with Trump and his team "frequently" while "working closely with the president to make sure that we are gonna be behind candidates that can win both the general election as well as the primary."

Democrats have tried to characterize Republicans who are both allied with Trump and more moderate

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as extreme on abortion, arguing that the GOP is looking to take away access.

"We don't like government telling us what to do. That's part of our personality," said Mucarsel-Powell, who helped collect signatures for Florida's abortion referendum.

Allred said the Cox case makes the consequences of tough abortion limits "very real for Texans. It is not theoretical anymore."

"I think it's going to have a huge political impact," he said. "I think it also has an enormous impact on the psyche of so many Texans. I've had so many people reach out to me about this because this is something that could happen to anybody and it's just an example of the most extreme policy taken to its end point."

Another key issue for Mucarsel-Powell is Scott unveiling a 2022 proposal calling for all federal legislation to expire in five years. That would force Congress to pass again what it deemed worthy, including Social Security and Medicare — issues of outsized importance to elderly Floridians.

"Rick Scott is the most vulnerable senator that there is," Mucarsel-Powell said.

Scott has since revised the plan to include exceptions for Social Security, Medicare and things like veterans benefits. Biden nonetheless long decried the original, which was also used as a line of political attack during 2022 races Democrats won in six swing House districts in Illinois, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Georgia.

"Debbie Mucarsel-Powell clearly doesn't want Floridians to know that she fully supports the Biden agenda that's devastating Florida families," Scott campaign spokesman Jonathan Turcotte said, referring to issues including inflation and an influx of immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. "That's why Florida rejected her once and will reject her again in November."

Asked about Biden's potential vulnerabilities, Mucarsel-Powell said she was running her own race. She immigrated from Ecuador at 14 and is seeking to be the second Hispanic woman elected to the Senate, joining Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto. She makes frequent appearances on Spanish-language radio and answers questions without translation — potentially limiting some of Scott's 2018 success in Hispanic advertising and outreach.

Allred, meanwhile, recalled Cruz leaving for a Mexico vacation during a deadly 2021 Texas ice storm. He called the senator, who relished his role as a conservative troublemaker when he arrived in Washington in 2012 and now is closely aligned with Trump, "the most divisive senator in the country."

"Some folks say a Democrat can't win in Texas and I say, 'Well someone like me was never supposed to make it this far anyway,'" said Allred who was raised by a single mother, played linebacker in the NFL and was a civil rights attorney before flipping a Republican congressional seat in 2018.

The Democrats' Senate campaign arm is including Texas and Florida in an investment worth at least \$1 million on research and communications staffers across nine total states tasked with highlighting potential weaknesses of the GOP candidates.

Trump's margin of victory in Texas declined from 9 percentage points to less than 6 percentage points between 2016 and 2020, but Cruz has worked on bipartisan legislation that plays well in his state, increasing investment in space and boosting protections for women in the military. When he announced his reelection bid, Cruz said, "never before has our country needed strong, conservative leaders more to fight against encroaching leftist ideas and politicians."

Republicans like his chances now.

"The nominee is not going to be Beto," MacKowiak said, "and the year is not going to be 2018."

A quiet Dutch village holds clues as European politics veer to the right

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

SINT WILLEBRORD, The Netherlands (AP) — "Everyone is welcome," reads the sign at the church door in this quiet Dutch village, where neighbors greet each other from tidy porches overlooking manicured lawns.

But that declaration of tolerance seems oddly out of place.

Triggered by economic and cultural anxieties that have whipped up fears about immigrants, people here and throughout the Netherlands have veered far to the right politically. It's an extreme example of a trend being felt across the continent that could tilt the outcome of this year's European Union parliamentary

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election.

In Sint Willebrord, which has few immigrants among its 9,300 residents, almost three out of four voters chose a virulently anti-migrant, anti-Muslim party in an election last year that shattered the Netherlands' image as a welcoming, moderate country.

The Party for Freedom, led by a peroxide-haired firebrand named Geert Wilders, received nearly a quarter of all the votes — in a country where less than 5 percent of the people are Muslim — with slogans such as “no Islamic schools, Qurans or mosques” and “no open borders and mass immigration we cannot afford.”

Voters across Europe are increasingly empowering leaders like Wilders who promise to restrict immigration and, in some cases, constrain democratic freedoms: of religion, of expression, of the right to protest.

These forces have bubbled up to varying degrees one country at a time, including in Germany, France, Spain, Sweden and Austria. But before long, experts worry, they could dramatically reshape the continent from the top down.

In June, voters in the 27 member states of the European Union will elect their next Parliament for a five-year term. Analysts say that far-right parties are primed to gain seats — and more influence over EU policies affecting everything from civil rights to gender issues to immigration.

“People have a score to settle with ‘old politics,’” said Rem Korteweg, senior research fellow at the Clingendael think tank in The Hague.

In some European nations, the shift to the right has begun to gnaw at the foundations of democracy.

In Hungary and Serbia, recent elections were free but not fair, democracy experts say, because the ruling parties captured the media, the courts and the electoral authorities.

This story, supported by the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, is part of an ongoing Associated Press series covering threats to democracy in Europe. ____

RISING COSTS, RISING ANGER

Support for Wilders' Party for Freedom more than doubled since the last Dutch election in 2021. With 23% of the vote, Wilders stands a good chance of leading any future governing coalition.

For a quarter century, voters across the Netherlands have grown increasingly disgruntled as successive governments — despite high levels of taxation — were unable to stop the erosion of cradle-to-grave benefits citizens had come to expect for things like education, health care and pensions.

“It is as if people are being forced to vote for Wilders,” said Sint Willebrord resident Walter de Jong, 80. A lifelong baker, De Jong said he was forced to close his business last year because of rising costs and stringent government rules.

The decline in Dutch living standards has coincided with rising immigration. Two decades ago, the Netherlands had a net outflow of migrants, but by 2022 that had swung to an influx of 224,000 in a nation of 17.5 million.

The Netherlands has also been hit hard by a cost-of-living crisis affecting everything from the price of healthcare to food.

The income needed to buy a first home has risen far faster than earnings, according to a 2022 study by the Dutch lender Rabobank.

“Housing is a policy failure,” said Tom Theuns of Leiden University. “And then you have a populist who says, ‘OK, the reason is: asylum seekers are given priority.’ Even if this is a lie, this is how immigration becomes linked via racist messaging. It's scapegoating.”

SHUN OR EMBRACE POPULISM?

For traditional parties of the European center-right and center-left, the success of populist messaging presents a challenge.

One favored analogy for dealing with them has been a “cordon sanitaire,” the protective barrier put in place to stop the spread of infectious diseases. Politically speaking, that meant not forming coalitions with them.

In Belgium, this strategy was used to isolate far-right nationalists, and in France, the Front National party

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of Jean-Marie Le Pen was kept at arm's length.

However, under Le Pen's daughter, Marine, the Front National — rebranded as the National Rally — is no longer a pariah. In November, she was welcomed at a protest march against rising antisemitism. That prompted critics to use an unflattering German expression — “salonfähig” — to describe a former outcast being welcomed into polite society.

In the Netherlands, forming a majority coalition with Wilders' party was considered unthinkable not long ago.

But then the mood of the continent began to change. The 2015 migration crisis in Europe was an opening for far-right politics following the EU's halting response to the arrival of some 100,000 asylum seekers each month.

Wilders' anti-migrant rhetoric began to resonate even more.

In July, Mark Rutte's majority coalition collapsed over his handling of immigration, and his successor as leader of the VVD party hinted that Wilders might be a partner to talk to again.

“Suddenly, a vote for Wilders was no longer a wasted vote,” said Korteweg of the Clingendael think tank.

In December, a member of Wilders' party became president of parliament, marking a breakthrough in political acceptance.

Political analysts looking ahead to the EU Parliament elections in June say what is happening in countries like the Netherlands could be a harbinger for the governing body of the bloc's 450 million people.

Rather than far-right parties being pulled to the center, the center may veer to the right.

“And this may be the biggest danger for Europe,” said Korteweg of Clingendael.

Donald Trump's grip on Republican politics is put to the test in ice-cold Iowa's caucuses

By STEVE PEOPLES, THOMAS BEAUMONT and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Voting is set to begin Monday night in icy Iowa as former President Donald Trump eyes a victory that would send a resounding message that neither life-threatening cold nor life-changing legal trouble can slow his march toward the Republican Party's 2024 nomination.

The Iowa caucuses, which are the opening contest in the months-long Republican presidential primary process, begin at 8 p.m. EST. Caucus participants will gather inside more than 1,500 schools, churches and community centers to debate their options, in some cases for hours, before casting secret ballots.

While Trump projects confidence, his onetime chief rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, is fighting for his political survival in a make-or-break race for second place. Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, the only woman in the race, stands in DeSantis' way. The two have competed aggressively in recent weeks to emerge as the clear alternative to the former president, who has alienated many Americans and could end up being a convicted felon by year's end.

“I absolutely love a lot of the things (Trump) did, but his personality is just kind of getting in his way,” said Hans Rudin, a 49-year-old community college adviser from Council Bluffs, Iowa. He said he supported Trump in the past two elections, but will caucus for DeSantis on Monday.

Polls suggest Trump enters the day with a massive lead in Iowa as Haley and DeSantis duel for a distant second. Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson are also on the ballot, as is former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who suspended his campaign last week.

With the coldest temperatures in caucus history expected and dangerous travel conditions in virtually every corner of the rural state, the campaigns are bracing for a low-turnout contest that will test the strength of their support and their organizational muscle. The final result will serve as a powerful signal for the rest of the nomination fight to determine who will face Democratic President Joe Biden in the November general election.

After Iowa, the Republican primary shifts to New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina over the coming weeks before moving into the rest of the country this spring. The ultimate nominee won't be confirmed until the party's national convention in July, but with big wins in the opening contests, Trump will be dif-

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difficult to stop.

Trump's political strength heading into the Iowa caucuses, which come 426 days after he launched his 2024 campaign, tells a remarkable story of a Republican Party unwilling or unable to move on from him. He lost to Biden in 2020 after fueling near-constant chaos while in the White House, culminating with his supporters carrying out a deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol. In total, he faces 91 felony charges across four criminal cases, including two indictments for his efforts to overturn the election and a third indictment for keeping classified documents in his Florida home.

In recent weeks, Trump has increasingly echoed authoritarian leaders and framed his campaign as one of retribution. He has spoken openly about using the power of government to pursue his political enemies. He has repeatedly harnessed rhetoric once used by Adolf Hitler to argue that immigrants entering the U.S. illegally are "poisoning the blood of our country. And he recently shared a word cloud last week to his social media account highlighting words like "revenge," "power" and "dictatorship."

Republican voters have been undeterred.

"Trump is a Christian. He's trustworthy. He believes in America. And he believes in freedom," said 71-year-old Kathy DeAngelo, a retired hospital administrative employee waiting in subzero weather to see Trump on Sunday. "He's the only one."

The final Des Moines Register/NBC News poll before the caucuses found Trump maintaining a formidable lead, supported by nearly half of likely caucusgoers, compared with 20% for Haley and 16% for DeSantis. Haley, the former U.N. ambassador and South Carolina governor, and DeSantis, the Florida governor, remain locked in a close battle for second. Trump is also viewed more favorably than the other top contenders by likely caucusgoers, at 69% compared with 58% for DeSantis and just 48% for Haley.

On the eve of the caucuses, Trump predicted he would set a modern-day record for an Iowa Republican caucus with a margin-of-victory exceeding the nearly 13 percentage points that Bob Dole earned in 1988. He also sought to downplay expectations that he would earn as much as 50% of the total vote.

Whether he hits that number or not, his critics note that roughly half of the state's Republican voters will likely vote for someone not named Trump.

"Somebody won by 12 points and that was like a record. Well, we should do that," Trump said Sunday during an appearance at a Des Moines hotel. "If we don't do that, let 'em criticize us, right? But let's see if we can get to 50%."

"Brave the weather and go out and save America," he later added.

The temperature in parts of Iowa on Monday could dip as low as negative 14 degrees Fahrenheit (negative 26 degrees Celsius) while snow drifts from Friday's blizzard still make travel hazardous across the rural state where unpaved roads are common.

Forecasters warned that "dangerously cold wind chills" as low as 45 degrees below zero Fahrenheit were possible through noon Tuesday. The conditions, according to the National Weather Service, could lead to "frost bite and hypothermia in a matter of minutes if not properly dressed for the conditions."

Over the weekend, signs positioned on key roadways warned motorists in large flashing orange letters: "TRAVEL NOT ADVISED."

And the winter weather, intimidating even for Iowa, will make an already unrepresentative process even less representative.

Many elderly Iowans, who are the backbone of the caucus, are wondering how they will make it to their sites. And only a tiny portion of the participants will be voters of color, given Iowa's overwhelmingly white population, a fact that helped convince Democrats to shift their opening primary contest to South Carolina this year.

Iowa's caucuses are also playing out on Martin Luther King Day, which is a federal holiday.

Last month, some presidential campaigns were expecting close to 200,000 Republican voters to participate in the caucus. On the eve of the contest, many now wonder whether the 2024 turnout will exceed the 118,411 Republicans who showed up in 2012.

Still, each of the campaigns is claiming a powerful get-out-the-vote operation that will ensure their sup-

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porters show up.

Haley rallied a room packed with Iowans and out-of-state volunteers on Sunday in Ames, drawing frequent cheers from the pink necklace and boa-clad "Women for Nikki."

The 51-year-old former South Carolina governor repeated her frequent call for GOP voters to elect her as a "new generational leader that leaves the negativity and the baggage behind and focuses on the solutions of the future."

Nearly 200 miles away in Dubuque, DeSantis dismissed questions about his position in the polls as he courted voters.

"I like being underestimated. I like being the underdog," the Florida governor said. "I think that that's better."

Meanwhile, not all voters were excited about their options.

Jake Hutzell, 28, hasn't participated in a caucus before, and he isn't sure that he will Monday, either. He follows politics, but he said he's part of a generation that's skeptical any of it makes a difference.

"There's never been anyone I feel strongly about," the Dubuque resident said. "If I'm going to throw my name behind who I think should be the president, I would like to very feel very strongly about it."

Conflict, climate change and AI get top billing as leaders converge for elite meeting in Davos

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — The Earth is heating up, as is conflict in the Middle East. The world economy and Ukraine's defense against Russia are sputtering along. Artificial intelligence could upend all our lives.

The to-do list of global priorities has grown for this year's edition of the World Economic Forum's gabfest of business, political and other elites in the Alpine snows of Davos, Switzerland, which runs Tuesday through Friday.

Over 60 heads of state and government, including Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will be heading to town to hold both public appearances and closed-door talks. They'll be among more than 2,800 attendees, which also include academics, artists and international organization leaders.

The gathering is mostly high-minded ambition — think business innovation, aims for peace-making and security cooperation, or life-changing improvements in health care — and a venue for decision-makers in an array of fields and industries to connect.

It is also regularly panned by critics as an emblem of the yawning gap between rich and poor: Young Swiss Socialists staged a rally Sunday to blast the forum and brand attendees as "the richest and most powerful, who are responsible for today's wars and crises."

"Davos is easily mocked. But in current times it is hard to get people together to talk in a room on shared global issues and the value of face-to-face conversations is very real, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed," Bronwen Maddox, director of the Chatham House think tank, said in an e-mail.

Here's what to watch for:

MESSY MIDEAST

While Davos is generally big-picture, regional conflict can cast a long shadow — like Ukraine's war did a year ago, prompting organizers to exclude any Russian delegation.

This year, Israel's three-month war with Hamas in Gaza, and recently U.S. and British airstrikes on Houthi militants in Yemen who have fired missiles into Red Sea shipping lanes, are looming large.

Herzog, the Israeli president, whose job is more ceremonial than is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's, will be on hand for a Davos session Thursday, and the prime ministers of Qatar, Jordan and Lebanon will also be attending.

A "humanitarian briefing on Gaza" session gets a half-hour slot Tuesday.

WHITHER AI?

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A testament to how technology has taken a large and growing slice of attention in Davos, this year the theme of Artificial Intelligence “as a driving force for the economy and society” will get about 30 separate sessions.

The dizzying emergence of OpenAI’s ChatGPT over a year ago and rivals since then have elevated the power, promise and portent of artificial intelligence into greater public view. OpenAI chief Sam Altman will be in Davos along with top executives from Microsoft, which helped bankroll his company’s rise.

AI in education, transparency about AI, its ethics and impact on creativity are all part of the menu — and the Davos Promenade is swimming in advertisements and displays pointing to the new technology.

Forum organizers warned last week that the threat posed by misinformation generated by AI, such as through the creation of synthetic content, is the world’s greatest short-term threat.

AND WHITHER DEMOCRACIES?

Such misinformation could surge this year, and one session explores the threat of “bots and plots” on democracies.

Forum organizers say elections in countries whose populations together total 4.2 billion people will take place this year, and many will be contested. (Few doubt whether Russian President Vladimir Putin will get a new term.)

It comes against the backdrop of talk about a new Cold War, the widening rift between dictatorships — or at least autocracies — and democratic countries.

Back-to-back addresses Tuesday morning by Prime Minister Li Qiang of China and Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, will highlight the contrast. President Joe Biden’s national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, gives a speech later in the day.

French President Emmanuel Macron and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will speak Wednesday, as will Argentina’s new president, Javier Milei, a libertarian who has already announced plans to slash the government workforce.

Davos corridors were already abuzz about whether former U.S. President Donald Trump — who made twotrips to Davos during his term — could be inaugurated again around this time next year, after November’s election. Biden was once a regular at Davos, but has not attended as president.

TRYING AGAIN TO SAVE THE PLANET

Of all the lofty hopes in Davos, the perennial one of late has been the search for creative and promising ways to fight climate change.

This year is no different: Top climate scientists from around the world reported this month that average global temperatures last year obliterated the record highs — raising the urgency level.

John Kerry, who is stepping down as Biden’s climate adviser, takes part in a panel discussion on a U.S.-backed initiative that aims to draw the private sector into development of low-carbon technologies.

Chatham House’s Maddox said plans to transition away from fossil fuels agreed during the U.N. climate conference in Dubai last month means climate finance will face a big year in 2024.

“Davos is a powerful combination potentially, of a lot of concern about the environment, and a lot of high-powered finance present,” she said.

White House says ‘it’s the right time’ for Israel to scale back Gaza war as fighting hits 100 days

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, SAMY MAGDY and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The White House said Sunday that “it’s the right time” for Israel to scale back its military offensive in the Gaza Strip, as Israeli leaders again vowed to press ahead with their operation against the territory’s ruling Hamas militant group.

The comments exposed the growing differences between the close allies on the 100th day of the war.

Also Sunday, Israeli warplanes struck targets in Lebanon following a Hezbollah missile attack that killed two Israeli civilians — an older woman and her adult son — in northern Israel. The exchange of fire underscored concerns that the Gaza violence could trigger wider fighting across the region.

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The war in Gaza, launched by Israel in response to the unprecedented Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, has killed nearly 24,000 Palestinians, devastated vast swaths of Gaza, driven around 85% of the territory's 2.3 million residents from their homes and pushed a quarter of the population into starvation.

Speaking on CBS, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. has been speaking to Israel "about a transition to low-intensity operations" in Gaza.

"We believe it's the right time for that transition. And we're talking to them about doing that," he said on "Face the Nation."

Israel launched the offensive after the Hamas attack killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 250 others hostage. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead until Hamas is destroyed and all of the more than 100 hostages still in captivity are freed.

The war has sent tensions soaring across the region, with Israel trading fire almost daily with Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group and Iranian-backed militias attacking U.S. targets in Syria and Iraq. In addition, Yemen's Houthi rebels have been targeting international shipping, drawing a wave of U.S. airstrikes last week.

Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, said his group won't stop until a cease-fire is in place for Gaza.

"We are continuing, and our front is inflicting losses on the enemy and putting pressure on displaced people," Nasrallah said in a speech, referring to the tens of thousands of Israelis who have fled northern border areas.

In other developments, tens of thousands of people in Europe and the Middle East took to the streets Sunday to mark the 100th day of the war. Opposing demonstrations either demanded the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas or called for a cease-fire in Gaza.

In Israel, supporters of the hostages and their families wrapped up a 24-hour protest in Tel Aviv calling on the government to win their immediate release.

Late Sunday, Hamas released a short video in which three Israeli hostages, presumably speaking under duress, pleaded with their government to end the war and bring them home. It was not clear when the video was taken. At the end of the clip, Hamas said it would provide an update on their fate Monday.

Hamas has released several videos of this kind, in an apparent effort to pressure Israel to agree to its demand of ending the war ahead of negotiations on a possible release of all hostages in exchange for most or all Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

The unprecedented level of death and destruction in Gaza has led South Africa to lodge allegations of genocide against Israel at the International Court of Justice. Israel denies the accusations and has vowed to press ahead with its offensive even if the court in The Hague issues an interim order for it to stop.

Israel has also been under growing international pressure to end the war in Gaza, but it has so far been shielded by U.S. diplomatic and military support. Israel argues that any cease-fire would hand victory to Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007 and is bent on Israel's destruction.

"It's been 100 days, yet we will not stop until we win," Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Sunday.

But differences with the Americans have begun to emerge. During a visit to the region last week, Secretary of State Antony Blinken renewed his calls on Israel to do more to reduce civilian casualties and increase the supplies of desperately needed humanitarian aid entering Gaza.

In recent weeks, Israel has scaled back operations in northern Gaza, the initial target of the offensive, where weeks of airstrikes and ground operations left entire neighborhoods in ruins.

Kirby, the White House spokesman, acknowledged that Israel had taken some "precursory steps" toward scaling back the offensive. But he said there was more to do.

"We're not saying let your foot up off the gas completely and don't keep going after Hamas," he said. "It's just that we believe the time is coming here very, very soon for a transition to this lower intensity phase."

FEARS OF A SECOND FRONT

The deadly Hezbollah missile strike in northern Israel renewed concerns about a second front erupting into full-blown war.

It came shortly after the Israeli army said it killed three Lebanese militants who tried to infiltrate Israel.

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Late Sunday, the Israeli military said it had struck Lebanon in response to the missile strike. Israeli officials said a woman in her 70s and her son, in his 40s, were killed in the town of Yuval.

The army's chief spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Israel would not tolerate attacks on civilians. "The price will be extracted not just tonight, but also in the future," he said.

Yuval is one of more than 40 towns along Israel's northern border evacuated by the government in October. Israeli media reported that the family stayed in the area because they work in agriculture.

Tensions have also spread to the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where Palestinian health officials say nearly 350 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in confrontations throughout the war.

On Sunday, the Israeli army said troops opened fire after a Palestinian car breached a military roadblock in the southern West Bank and an attacker fired at soldiers. Palestinian health officials said two Palestinians were killed.

Late Sunday, Palestinian health officials said two teenage boys were killed by Israeli fire. The army said it shot them after they threw a bomb at an army base.

ISRAEL STRIKES CENTRAL, SOUTHERN GAZA

Israel has launched major operations against the southern city of Khan Younis and built-up refugee camps in central Gaza.

"No one is able to move," said Rami Abu Matouq, who lives in the Maghazi camp. "Warplanes, snipers and gunfire are everywhere."

In the central town of Deir al-Balah, health officials said at least 15 people were killed in Israeli strikes late Saturday.

At the entrance of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, men lined up to pray for the dead, their bodies wrapped in white shrouds. The bodies were put on the back of a pickup truck before they were taken to be buried.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian TV station Al-Ghad said a cameraman was killed in an Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza. The channel said Yazan al-Zwaidi was apparently in a crowd of people at the time. Details were not immediately available, and the Israeli military had no comment.

The internet advocacy group Netblocks said communications in Gaza were still out after a 48-hour outage. The Palestinian telecommunications operator in Gaza, Jawwal, said two of its employees were killed Saturday when they were hit by a shell while fixing lines in Khan Younis.

The Gaza Health Ministry said Sunday that hospitals had received 125 bodies in the last 24 hours, bringing the overall death toll to 23,968. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around two-thirds of the dead are women and minors. It says over 60,000 people have been wounded.

Israel says Hamas is responsible for the high civilian casualties, saying its fighters make use of civilian buildings and launch attacks from densely populated urban areas. The military says 189 soldiers have been killed and 1,099 wounded since the start of the ground offensive.

In his closing pitch to Iowa Republicans, Trump says their votes can help him punish his enemies

By THOMAS BEAUMONT, HANNAH FINGERHUT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

INDIANOLA, Iowa (AP) — Donald Trump implored his supporters Sunday to brave frigid temperatures and deliver him a decisive victory in Monday's Iowa caucuses, saying their vote would help bring to Washington the retribution he has repeatedly promised if he returns to the White House.

The former president has set sky-high expectations for his own performance in the first contest of the race for the Republican presidential nomination. He spent the day before the caucuses trying to ensure he meets them. His main GOP rivals all spent Sunday in Iowa as well, making last-minute appeals to Iowans open to hearing them.

At a rally in Indianola, Trump said his supporters could fight back against his political enemies, claiming that the four indictments he faces were driven by politics and renewing his false claims about the 2020 election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

Many in the crowd wore white and gold caps identifying them as Trump caucus captains who will help

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round up support for him Monday night.

"These caucuses are your personal chance to score the ultimate victory over all of the liars, cheaters, thugs, perverts, frauds, crooks, freaks, creeps and other quite nice people," Trump told the audience. "The Washington swamp has done everything in its power to take away your voice. But tomorrow is your time to turn on them and to say and speak your mind and to vote."

More than 30 minutes before the doors opened for Trump's rally at Simpson College, Marc Smiarowski said he planned to do just that.

"I'm here in part out of spite," said the 44-year-old public utility worker who drove 40 miles from Huneston to see Trump. "I can't abandon him. After what they did to him in the last election, and the political persecution he faces, I feel like I owe him this. He's our only option."

He was among more than 100 layered in Carhartt coveralls with hats and hoods pulled down tight to fight off the minus 18-degree Fahrenheit (minus 28-degree Celsius) chill. It was a test run for Iowa's caucuses Monday night — and of the devotion Trump said last week would make his supporters "walk on glass" for him.

He took it a step further on Sunday, suggesting casting a vote for him would be worth dying for.

"You can't sit home," Trump said. "If you're sick as a dog, you say 'Darling, I gotta make it.' Even if you vote and then pass away, it's worth it."

Even as he predicted his supporters would deliver a substantial victory over his nearest rival, he sought to temper expectations that he could cross 50% of the vote, a threshold never crossed in a contested Republican caucus. The previous record for a margin of victory was Bob Dole's nearly 13-point win over Pat Robertson in 1988.

"Well we should do that. If we don't do that, let 'em criticize us, right?" Trump told volunteers in Des Moines on Sunday morning. Still, he told them: "Let's see if we can get to 50%."

Both former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has bet big on Iowa, exuded confidence in national interviews as they compete for a caucus showing that will boost their campaigns even if they don't beat Trump.

The final Des Moines Register/ NBC News poll before Monday's caucuses found Trump maintaining a formidable lead, supported by nearly half of likely caucusgoers, compared with 20% for Haley and 16% for DeSantis. Haley and DeSantis remain locked in a close battle for second.

"With our folks, they're committed, they're gonna be there," DeSantis said on CNN's "State of the Union," noting that the Republican calendar doesn't end with Iowa. "We're going to have a good night."

The sun was out across Iowa, but some streets and highways remained covered in snow from a Saturday blizzard. Temperatures stayed below 0 degrees Fahrenheit all day and were not forecast to rise into positive territory until Tuesday. The weather — by far the coldest since Iowa started leading the presidential selection process in 1976 — continued to disrupt plans.

Iowa Republican Party Chairman Jeff Kaufmann predicted the weather wouldn't substantially dampen turnout, saying Iowans can handle cold weather as long as the roads aren't icy.

Because of travel conditions from Des Moines, Haley canceled a Sunday morning stop in the eastern city of Dubuque about an hour before it was to start. She swapped in a virtual town hall.

Voters walking into the venue were given the news by campaign staffers, who offered some a T-shirt, hat or yard sign as consolation.

"I don't blame her," said John Schmid, 69, a retiree from Asbury, a few miles outside Dubuque. He is a Haley supporter but wanted to see the "refreshing" candidate in person.

"It's just part of living in Iowa in January," he said.

Haley did make it to an event in Ames, a college town much closer to Des Moines.

"It's been 11 months, and it comes down to tomorrow," Haley said of Monday's votes, repeating her frequent call to GOP voters to elect her as a "new generational leader that leaves the negativity and the baggage behind and focuses on the solutions of the future."

Trump continued picking up support from Republicans who'd remained on the sidelines. North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, who ran for the GOP nomination himself but failed to catch fire, and Florida Sen. Marco

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Rubio endorsed him Sunday. In picking Trump, Rubio passed over DeSantis, the governor of his home state, and Haley, who endorsed Rubio at a crucial moment in his own unsuccessful 2016 presidential campaign. Some voters, too, were waiting until the last minute to make up their minds.

Judy Knowler, 64, of Peosta, had hoped to see Haley in person to help her make up her mind.

"I have one foot in Nikki's camp but we'll see," she said in Dubuque. "It's an opportunity most Americans don't get to be this close in person."

After his rally, Trump dropped by a Casey's convenience store in Waukee with Burgum, where he picked up pizzas that a store worker said would be "the best you'll ever have."

He then headed to a firehouse, where he passed out the pizza, and chatted with a group of first responders about their trucks, posed for photos, and ate a slice.

"This is good pizza, by the way," he said.

Migrant deaths in Rio Grande intensify tensions between Texas, Biden administration over crossings

By JAMIE STENGLE and VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — After Texas fenced off a park along the U.S.-Mexico border and began turning away Border Patrol agents, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott explained why at a campaign stop near Houston.

"We are not allowing Border Patrol on that property anymore," Abbott said Friday, drawing applause from supporters while endorsing a state legislator running for reelection. He relayed frustration over migrants illegally entering the U.S. through the border city of Eagle Pass and federal agents loading them onto buses.

"We said, 'We've had it. We're not going to let this happen anymore,'" Abbott said.

Later that night, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said three migrants, including two children, drowned near the park after Texas officials "physically barred" Border Patrol agents from entering. Mexican authorities pulled the bodies, each of them wearing jackets, from the water on the other side of the Rio Grande.

The weekend deaths intensified tensions between Texas and the Biden administration. They also unleashed a new round of criticism from Democrats over Abbott's aggressive actions to curb illegal crossings, accusing the measures of putting migrants at risk. U.S. authorities described the drownings as underscoring the need for Border Patrol agents to have access to the area around Shelby Park, which Texas closed off earlier this week.

"U.S. Border Patrol must have access to the border to enforce our laws," White House spokesman Angelo Fernández Hernández said in a statement.

On Sunday evening, the Texas Military Department released a statement disputing the U.S. government's accounts, calling it "wholly inaccurate" that state personnel prevented Border Patrol from saving drowning migrants.

"At the time that Border Patrol requested access, the drownings had occurred, Mexican authorities were recovering the bodies, and Border Patrol expressed these facts to the TMD personnel on site," the department said.

The Biden administration stuck to its initial account Sunday, saying in a letter to Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton that Texas denied Border Patrol agents access before they knew the migrants died. In a direct contradiction of Texas' version of events, Homeland Security said agents at the time knew only that migrants were attempting to cross the river.

"Texas has demonstrated that even in the most exigent circumstances, it will not allow Border Patrol agents access to the border to conduct law enforcement and emergency response activities," wrote Jonathan E. Meyer, Homeland Security's general counsel.

Meyer threatened legal action if Texas doesn't restore access by the end of Wednesday.

The park lies in a major corridor for migrants entering illegally from Mexico and is at the center of Abbott's aggressive attempts to stop them, known as Operation Lone Star. Migrants are periodically swept

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away to their deaths by the current of the Rio Grande.

U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Democrat who represents a Texas border district, acknowledged Sunday that state officials investigated the distress call and searched for the migrants.

"However, the bottom line is that Border Patrol was barred from entering Shelby Park," Cuellar said in a statement.

Texas officials said Border Patrol agents had requested access to find other migrants who were presumed to have been with those who died. Two were apprehended by state military personnel, including one who was transferred to medics with "hypothermic conditions." The statement did not say whether Border Patrol agents were allowed in the park.

Over the summer, thousands of people were crossing illegally into the U.S. through Eagle Pass. The numbers subsided but again rose in December when thousands of migrants overwhelmed federal resources. But a sharp decrease was noted at the start of January after Mexico stepped up immigration enforcement.

The 50-acre (20-hectare) park is owned by the city, but it is used by the state Department of Public Safety and the Texas Military Department to patrol border crossings. Earlier this week, Eagle Pass Mayor Rolando Salinas questioned why the state closed the park now, since daily apprehensions in the region have fallen in recent weeks. He said the state gave city officials no warning and offered no timetable on when the park would reopen.

On Friday, the Justice Department told the U.S. Supreme Court that Texas had taken control of Shelby Park and was not letting Border Patrol agents enter. Texas acknowledged seizing the city park but told the court the the federal government had mischaracterized its actions and that it was trying to resolve any disputes over access.

Texas has come under recurring scrutiny over efforts to curb border crossings. Abbott has sent more than 100,000 migrants on buses to Democratic-led cities, even as frigid conditions set in during the winter. He also has strung up razor wire on the border and installed buoy barriers on the Rio Grande.

Melissa R. Cigarroa, a city council member in Laredo and member of the No Border Wall Coalition, was among those who attended a vigil Saturday at Shelby Park to mark the deaths of migrants who have died along the Rio Grande. She said attendees passed through a gate with armed National Guard members and that they could see law enforcement officers and vehicles gathered near the river.

She said that scene, coupled with the reason for the ceremony, left her thinking about "just how little people's lives matter in these decisions."

"People are dying, and we know now that deterrents mean nothing," she said.

Jordan Love and the Packers pull a wild-card stunner, beating Dak Prescott and the Cowboys 48-32

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Pro Football Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Aaron Jones grew up idolizing Emmitt Smith and the Dallas Cowboys.

The Green Bay running back found a new, and most painful, way to torment the all-time rushing leader's former team.

Jones ran for three touchdowns, Jordan Love threw for three more in his postseason debut, Darnell Savage returned an interception 64 yards for a score and the Packers handed the Cowboys their first home loss since the 2022 opener in a 48-32 wild-card stunner Sunday.

"This was my dad's team," Jones, who shared a moment with Smith before the game and now has 488 yards in four career games against the Cowboys, said of his late father. "You always want to be like your father, so that's how it became my team. Dallas is a special place to me, so it's a full-circle moment. It feels like home."

Even against a team that had won 16 consecutive home games.

Green Bay (10-8) will visit top-seeded San Francisco in the divisional round next weekend.

Dak Prescott threw two interceptions before three mostly empty touchdown passes in another playoff

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flop for him and the No. 2 seed Cowboys (12-6).

The first home loss for the Cowboys since now-retired Tom Brady and Tampa Bay beat them 16 months ago was also the most points the franchise has allowed in a postseason game. The previous high was 38.

The Cowboys, who haven't reached an NFC championship game since the most recent of their five Super Bowl titles 28 years ago, didn't trail by more than eight points at AT&T Stadium this season before falling behind 27-0 in the first half.

The loss will raise questions about the future of Dallas coach Mike McCarthy after the Cowboys lost their playoff opener at home for the second time in three postseasons under the former Green Bay coach.

Dallas is the first team to win at least 12 games in three consecutive playoff seasons without making a conference title game.

The Cowboys surged to the NFC East title in the final two weeks and had a chance to be home at least twice this postseason. Instead, they head into a suddenly uncertain offseason.

"Just shocked, honestly," Prescott said. "From the beginning of the game, we got beat. There's no which way around it. There's no way to sugar coat it. Shock."

Romeo Doubs had a career-high 151 yards receiving a week after being hospitalized with a chest injury as the Packers rolled after finishing the regular season 6-2 to grab the NFC's final playoff spot.

"We came in here with a mindset of we're going to dominate," Love said. "A lot of people were counting us out, and we didn't care about that."

The Packers have never lost in six trips to AT&T Stadium — including the Super Bowl over Pittsburgh during the 2010 season. They now have two playoff victories over the Cowboys after Aaron Rodgers led a 34-31 divisional win when Dallas was the NFC's top seed in 2016, Prescott's rookie year.

Those Packers let a 21-3 lead slip away. These Packers, with the four-time MVP's successor, left little doubt with a 48-16 fourth-quarter lead before two late Dallas TDs.

"We knew it would take time," said Jones, who was a high school and college standout in the far West Texas city of El Paso. "You would hear me during the season and other players (say), we were right there, we're right there, we're right there. We've been able to get over that hump."

Facing the NFL's fifth-best defense, Green Bay matched its Super Bowl-winning team from 2010 for the most points in a playoff game. That was also on the road, a 48-21 victory at top-seeded Atlanta in the divisional round.

Doubs, who returned to the Green Bay sideline after his hospital trip before the end of last week's 17-9 home victory over Chicago that secured a playoff spot, had 102 yards at halftime. It was seven more than the second-year player's previous best.

First-half catches of 22, 26 and 39 yards helped get Love going, and the fourth-year QB finished 16 of 21 for 272 yards as the Packers scored touchdowns on six of their first seven offensive possessions in their highest-scoring game since 2014.

One of them was set up by Prescott's first interception at the Dallas 19-yard line, from Jaire Alexander after he was questionable coming in when he sprained an ankle during the week.

A 46-yard grab by Doubs early in the second half helped finish off the Cowboys after they had scored 10 points on either side of the break. Doubs, Luke Musgrave and Dontayvion Wicks had TD catches.

Jones rushed for 118 yards, putting him over the century mark in all four career games against the Cowboys with nine touchdowns.

"That was fun," said Green Bay coach Matt LaFleur, who took over in 2019 after McCarthy was fired during the 2018 season. "To put on a performance like that. Couldn't be happier for them."

The crowd under the retractable roof on a frigid day in the Dallas area had already been stone-cold silenced when Prescott tried to throw a slant to top receiver CeeDee Lamb.

Savage, who went without an interception in the regular season for the first time in his five-year career, stepped in front and run untouched for a 27-0 lead with 1:50 left before halftime.

"They were mad at me 'cause I wasn't celebrating afterward," Savage said. "I was like, 'We gotta keep playing. But it was definitely a momentum swing in the game, I think.'"

Prescott finished 41 of 60 for 403 yards, with all three of his touchdowns to tight end Jake Ferguson.

Yemen Houthi rebels fire missile at US warship in Red Sea in first attack after American-led strikes

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Yemen's Houthi rebels fired an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea on Sunday, but a U.S. fighter jet shot it down in the latest attack roiling global shipping amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, officials said.

The attack marks the first U.S.-acknowledged fire by the Houthis since America and allied nations began strikes Friday on the rebels following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthis have targeted that crucial corridor linking Asian and Mideast energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe over the Israel-Hamas war, attacks that threaten to widen that conflict into a regional conflagration.

The Houthis, a Shiite rebel group allied with Iran that seized Yemen's capital in 2014, did not immediately acknowledge the attack.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the U.S. would retaliate for the latest attack, though President Joe Biden has said he "will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary."

The Houthi fire on Sunday went in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, the U.S. military's Central Command said in a statement.

The missile came from near Hodeida, a Red Sea port city long held by the Houthis, the U.S. said.

"An anti-ship cruise missile was fired from Iranian-backed Houthi militant areas of Yemen toward USS Laboon," Central Command said. "There were no injuries or damage reported."

The first day of U.S.-led strikes Friday hit 28 locations and struck more than 60 targets with cruise missiles and bombs launched by fighter jets, warships and a submarine. Sites hit included weapon depots, radars and command centers, including in remote mountain areas, the U.S. has said.

The Houthis have yet to acknowledge how severe the damage was from the strikes, which they said killed five of their troops and wounded six others.

U.S. forces followed up with a strike Saturday on a Houthi radar site.

Shipping through the Red Sea has slowed over the attacks. The U.S. Navy on Friday warned American-flagged vessels to steer clear of areas around Yemen in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden for 72 hours after the initial airstrikes.

For their part, the Houthis alleged without providing evidence that the U.S. struck a site near Hodeida on Sunday around the same time of the cruise missile fire. The Americans and the United Kingdom did not acknowledge conducting any strike — suggesting the blast may have been from a misfiring Houthi missile.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea, saying they were avenging Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade.

Though the Biden administration and its allies have tried to calm tensions in the Middle East for weeks and prevent any wider conflict, the strikes threatened to ignite one.

Saudi Arabia, which supports the Yemeni government-in-exile that the Houthis are fighting, sought to distance itself from the attacks on Houthi sites as it tries to maintain a delicate détente with Iran and a cease-fire it has in Yemen. The Saudi-led, U.S.-backed war in Yemen that began in 2015 has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, killing tens of thousands more.

The American military did not specifically say the fire targeted the Laboon, following a pattern by the U.S. since the Houthi attacks began. However, U.S. sailors have received combat ribbons for their actions in the Red Sea— something handed out only to those who face active hostilities with an enemy force.

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Millions of Americans face below-zero temperatures as storms bring blast of Arctic air, snow and ice

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Subfreezing temperatures across much of the U.S. left millions of Americans facing dangerous cold as Arctic storms left four dead and knocked out electricity to tens of thousands in the Northwest, brought snow to the South, and walloped the Northeast with blizzard conditions that forced the postponement of an NFL game.

An estimated 95 million people nationwide faced weather warnings or advisories Sunday for wind chills below zero Fahrenheit (minus 17 Celsius). Forecasters said the severe cold was expected to push as far south as northern Texas while the bitter blast sends wind chill readings as low as minus 70 degrees (minus 56 Celsius) in Montana and the Dakotas.

"It takes a matter of minutes for frostbite to set in," the South Dakota Department of Public Safety said in a statement Sunday urging people to stay indoors.

In Buffalo, New York, where snowfall of 1 to 2 feet (30 to 60 centimeters) was forecast, severe conditions led officials to postpone the Buffalo Bills-Pittsburgh Steelers NFL playoff game from Sunday to Monday. Winds whipped at 30 mph (48 kph), and snow was falling at a rate of 2 inches (5 centimeters) per hour.

Workers with shovels and trucks worked to clear snow from the field at Buffalo's Highmark Stadium as the Bills warned volunteers eager to help with the shoveling to stay at home and not defy a travel ban on area roads.

"Looks like a pretty good day to not have a football game," New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Buffalo native, posted on X with a video clip of whiteout conditions in the western New York city.

At least one Bills player was out in the bad weather Sunday putting his newfound free time to good use. Offensive tackle Ryan Van Demark shared a video on Instagram showing fellow lineman Alec Anderson helping a motorist struggling with icy road conditions.

"Good Samaritan, Alec, helping the people," Van Demark narrates on the brief clip.

Zack Taylor, a National Weather Service meteorologist in College Park, Maryland, warned some parts of the Northeast would see intense snowfall and extreme winds, with gusts up to 50 mph (89 kph) possible.

"That's why they're expecting to see near-blizzard conditions at times," Taylor said.

Across the country in Oregon, more than 120,000 homes and businesses were without electricity, most of them in the Portland metro area, a day after high winds and a mix of snow and ice brought down trees and power lines.

"Given the extent of the damage and the high level of outage events, restoration efforts will continue into the week and customers are encouraged to plan accordingly," Portland General Electric said in a statement. The utility said it was watching a second weather pattern that could bring high winds and freezing rain on Tuesday.

The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services said its crews were working non-stop at multiple locations to make emergency repairs and prevent sewage releases into homes and businesses. Portland's largest sewage pump station, which serves downtown and the surrounding inner city, was under partial service due to a frozen pipe.

Widespread power outages affecting tens of thousands were also reported Sunday in Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In Nebraska, the Omaha Public Power District asked customers to conserve electricity to prevent outages.

"The weather came on faster and has been more prolonged than anticipated," the district said in a statement Sunday.

Airports across the country were impacted. More than half of flights into and out of Buffalo Niagara International Airport were canceled. Scores of flights also were canceled or delayed at Chicago, Denver and Seattle-Tacoma airports.

Forecasters also warned that rapid bursts of heavy snow and wind could cause drastic and sudden drops in visibility in eastern Pennsylvania and parts of northern New Jersey and Delaware with some "near

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whiteout conditions" possible.

Another Arctic storm that's dumped heavy snowfall in the Rockies was forecast to push further south, potentially bringing 4 inches to 6 inches (10 to 15 centimeters) of snow to parts of Arkansas, northern Mississippi and west Tennessee.

Juan Villegas wore layers of clothing beneath his heavy coat Sunday as he and roughly a dozen sub-contractors in downtown Des Moines, Iowa, shoveled away a blanket of snow, which also covered park benches and partially buried fire hydrants the day before the state's presidential caucuses.

Working in temperatures of minus 15 degrees (minus 26 degrees Celsius), Villegas said the best way to feel warm was to "just keep moving."

"If you stay doing nothing, it's when you really feel the cold," Villegas said.

Much of Wisconsin were under advisories through Monday afternoon, with predicted wind chills as low as 30 degrees below zero (minus 34 Celsius).

Even parts of northern Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia could see snow. In Shreveport, Louisiana, Mary Trammel was among residents who stocked up on bottled water, food and fuel for generators ahead of subfreezing weather expected to coat some roads in ice and up to an inch (2.5 centimeters) of snow.

"It's cold out here," said Trammel, who told KSLA-TV she bought bread and ingredients for enough soup to last days.

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared a state of emergency in advance to give utility trucks and trucks hauling essential supplies greater flexibility to respond.

Officials in Mississippi's capital city of Jackson were preparing for days of freezing weather after cold snaps in 2021 and 2022 caused pipes to burst and water pressure to drop across the city of 150,000.

"We feel as confident as we can that we're prepared for whatever comes our way," Ted Henifin, Jackson's interim manager of the city's long-troubled water system, told WAPT-TV. He said crews were on standby to respond to any broken pipes.

The wild weather didn't just bring snow and ice. Record high tides that flooded some homes in Maine and New Hampshire on Saturday also swept three historic fishing shacks into the sea from where they had stood for more than 130 years in South Portland, Maine.

"History is just being washed away," Michelle Erskine said Sunday, a day after capturing video footage of the last two wooden shacks sliding into the ocean.

In Oregon, just south of Portland, 100 trees toppled Saturday, including one that fell on a house and killed a man. Two other people died of suspected hypothermia and a fourth died in a fire that spread from an open-flame stove after a tree fell onto an RV.

The snow and gusting winds had let up Sunday in Oregon, but frigid temperatures meant roads remained treacherous and much of Portland was shut down. In nearby Lake Oswego, Glenn Prohaska was looking for a business that had WiFi so he could book a hotel. With the power out, the temperature in his home had dropped to the 20s overnight.

"In the 40 years I've been here, this is the worst I've seen," he said.

'The Honeymooners' star Joyce Randolph, who played Trixie Norton, dies at 99

NEW YORK (AP) — Joyce Randolph, a veteran stage and television actor whose role as the savvy Trixie Norton on "The Honeymooners" provided the perfect foil to her dimwitted TV husband, has died. She was 99.

Randolph died of natural causes Saturday night at her home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, her son Randolph Charles told The Associated Press Sunday.

She was the last surviving main character of the beloved comedy from television's golden age of the 1950s.

"The Honeymooners" was an affectionate look at Brooklyn tenement life, based in part on star Jackie Gleason's childhood. Gleason played the blustering bus driver Ralph Kramden. Audrey Meadows was his

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wisecracking, strong-willed wife Alice, and Art Carney the cheerful sewer worker Ed Norton. Alice and Trixie often found themselves commiserating over their husbands' various follies and mishaps, whether unknowingly marketing dogfood as a popular snack or trying in vain to resist a rent hike, or freezing in the winter as their heat is shut off.

Randolph would later cite a handful of favorite episodes, including one in which Ed is sleepwalking.

"And Carney calls out, 'Thelma?!' He never knew his wife's real name," she later told the Television Academy Foundation.

Originating in 1950 as a recurring skit on Gleason's variety show, "Cavalcade of Stars," "The Honey-mooners" still ranks among the all-time favorites of television comedy. The show grew in popularity after Gleason switched networks with "The Jackie Gleason Show." Later, for one season in 1955-56, it became a full-fledged series.

Those 39 episodes became a staple of syndicated programming aired all over the country and beyond.

In an interview with The New York Times in January 2007, Randolph said she received no compensation in residuals for those 39 episodes. She said she finally began getting royalties with the discovery of "lost" episodes from the variety hours.

After five years as a member of Gleason's on-the-air repertory company, Randolph virtually retired, opting to focus full-time on marriage and motherhood.

"I didn't miss a thing by not working all the time," she said. "I didn't want a nanny raising (my) wonderful son."

But decades after leaving the show, Randolph still had many admirers and received dozens of letters a week. She was a regular into her 80s at the downstairs bar at Sardi's, where she liked to sip her favorite White Cadillac concoction — Dewar's and milk — and chat with patrons who recognized her from a portrait of the sitcom's four characters over the bar.

Randolph said the show's impact on television viewers didn't dawn on her until the early 1980s.

"One year while (my son) was in college at Yale, he came home and said, 'Did you know that guys and girls come up to me and ask, 'Is your mom really Trixie?'" she told The San Antonio Express in 2000. "I guess he hadn't paid much attention before then."

Earlier, she had lamented that playing Trixie limited her career.

"For years after that role, directors would say: 'No, we can't use her. She's too well-known as Trixie,'" Randolph told the Orlando Sentinel in 1993.

Gleason died in 1987 at age 71, followed by Meadows in 1996 and Carney in 2003. Gleason had revived "The Honey-mooners" in the 1960s, with Jane Kean as Trixie.

Randolph was born Joyce Sirola in Detroit in 1924, and was around 19 when she joined a road company of "Stage Door." From there she went to New York and performed in a number of Broadway shows.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, she was seen often on TV, appearing with such stars as Eddie Cantor, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Danny Thomas and Fred Allen.

Randolph met Gleason for the first time when she did a Clorets commercial on "Cavalcade of Stars," and The Great One took a liking to her; she didn't even have an agent at the time.

Randolph spent her retirement going to Broadway openings and fundraisers, being active with the U.S.O. and visiting other favorite Manhattan haunts, among them Angus, Chez Josephine and the Lambs Club.

Her husband, Richard Lincoln, a wealthy marketing executive who died in 1997, served as president at the Lambs, a theatrical club, and she reigned as "first lady." They had one son, Charles.

GOP candidates make last-minute appeals to Iowa voters a day before caucuses. Follow live updates

By The Associated Press undefined

With just one day to go until Iowa's presidential caucuses, the candidates are urging their supporters to brave bone-chilling cold and blustery wind to help carry them through Republicans' leadoff voting contest.

The final Des Moines Register/NBC News poll before Monday night's caucuses found former President

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Donald Trump maintaining a formidable lead, supported by nearly half of likely caucusgoers. Nikki Haley, the former U.N. ambassador and South Carolina governor, and Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor, remain locked in a close battle for second.

Trump, Haley and DeSantis are fanning out across Iowa on Sunday to meet with voters. Already, Haley was forced to cancel an in-person stop because of poor weather conditions.

What to know

Who's running for president? Here are the 2024 candidates

In his closing pitch, Trump says Iowa's votes can help him punish his enemies

Iowa's winter blast could make an unrepresentative way of picking nominees even more so

Iowa's sparsely populated northwest is a key GOP caucus battleground

Feeling caucus confusion? Your guide to how Iowa works

'A little too cold' for the DeSantis kids

ANKENY — DeSantis took the stage with his wife and three young children Sunday night, joking that the severe weather has a little TV-style comic irony to it.

"We could do a sitcom on this," DeSantis said to almost 1,000 people gathered at an events center in Ankeny, one of the largest audiences of his entire campaign. "Taking a Florida family and dropping them in the middle of a blizzard."

DeSantis, who commonly travels with his kids, said that as of last month they had never seen snow and that they were excited when they did. "They had snowball fights and all that stuff," he said. "They loved it."

In the meantime, the temperature has dropped to well below zero on top of a foot of snow, forming glacier-like snowbanks.

"Well, now after seeing all this," he said, "they say it's a little too cold."

Ernst shows up at DeSantis event, too

ANKENY — Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst doesn't want to be accused of not playing fair.

Hours after she appeared at an event with Haley in Ames, Ernst was among a crowd of more than 200 at a DeSantis event in Ankeny. She kicked off the event by introducing DeSantis' lieutenant governor, Jeanette Núñez.

Haley offers well wishes for family of slain Iowa principal

ADEL — At her closing event of the last day ahead of Iowa's GOP caucuses, Haley offered well wishes for the family of an Iowa principal who died Sunday of injuries suffered in a school shooting earlier this month.

"Today my heart dropped again when I learned that we lost Dan Marburger," she said, speaking in a wood-paneled lodge packed with several hundred supporters. "This principal was a hero. He saved lives."

Marburger died 10 days after a 17-year-old student opened fire at Perry High School. An 11-year-old middle school student also died in the shooting, which ended with the gunman's death.

"God bless (Marburger) and his family," Haley said. "And we have got to finally acknowledge once and for all the cancer that is mental health in America."

Former Iowa chair says Haley is 'leaning into the future'

ADEL — David Oman, a former co-chair of the Iowa Republican Party, says he thinks Haley is far and away the best choice for the GOP, in part because she's "leaning into the future."

"I felt in my head and heart that the choice is pretty easy," Oman said ahead of Haley's final pre-caucus day event. "She's got some good policy ideas and a lot of energy - what's not to love?"

He also said that the country needs a president "to come in and take stock of new ideas and new people in key roles, reassert our leadership - that speaks to national security, which for me is always an important issue, and some of the others are frankly a little weak, in my view."

Iowa Republican leader predicts 'robust' caucus turnout

DES MOINES — Iowa Republican Party Chair Jeff Kaufmann is feeling more optimistic about caucus turnout than he was a few days ago.

"If you would have asked me this and the caucuses would have been two days ago, I would have said we would have significantly less turnout," Kaufmann told reporters at a briefing hosted by Bloomberg on Sunday.

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Clear skies Sunday that helped create conditions for crews to clear the roads bolstered his confidence. He said he was more concerned about icy roads than about low temperatures, which he said Iowans were accustomed to.

Without putting an exact number on it, Kauffman said, "I think it's going to be a robust turnout."

DeSantis dons an overcoat days after leaving his at home

DeSantis is wearing a winter coat again.

The Florida governor was bundled up at a campaign event in Cedar Rapids on Sunday, days after he left his coat at home in the Sunshine State when he was there delivering his State of the State address Tuesday.

"This is my winter coat. I have not worn this since I've been governor once," DeSantis said in Iowa.

He told a crowd at a construction contractors convention in Des Moines on Wednesday that his staff was hustling his coat from Tallahassee.

Freezing in Iowa? This voter is still wearing shorts

DUBUQUE — Mark Calhoun wears shorts every day of the year.

The 61-year-old fan of DeSantis (and the Dallas Cowboys) ventured out in subzero temperatures Sunday — with bare legs — to see the candidate in Dubuque.

"He's what we need," Calhoun said.

The coldest caucus temperatures won't keep him away Monday.

'This is good pizza,' Trump says after stop at Casey's

WAUKEE — Trump and his former-rival-turned-backer, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, dropped by a Casey's convenience store to pick up pizzas after his Indianola rally.

"The best you'll ever have," said a Casey's worker as he handed over the food.

Trump then made another stop to deliver the pizzas to members of the Waukee Fire Department. He handed the stack of boxes out down the line of those assembled and chatted about their trucks and their work.

Trump then asked for a slice of his own.

"Good luck, everybody," he said before taking a bite and continuing to chat as he ate. "This is good pizza, by the way," he said.

Iowa Sen. Ernst introduces Haley at campaign event

AMES — Speaking to a room packed full of Iowans and out-of-state volunteers, Haley gave an abbreviated version of her campaign speech, drawing frequent cheers from the pink necklace and boa-clad "Women for Nikki" volunteers.

"It's been eleven months, and it comes down to tomorrow," Haley said of Monday's caucuses, repeating her frequent call to GOP voters to elect her as a "new generational leader that leaves the negativity and the baggage behind and focuses on the solutions of the future."

Haley was introduced by Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst, who hasn't endorsed a candidate in the 2024 campaign but said the former South Carolina governor is "inspiring so many people across the state of Iowa, inspiring them so much to get out and support her in the caucuses, support her in this quest for the nomination of the Republican Party for our president of the United States."

Volunteers swarm Iowa to help give candidates last-minute boost

AMES — Out-of-state volunteers have descended on Iowa to help boost enthusiasm for their given candidates in the waning hours before the state's leadoff caucuses.

On Sunday in Ames, dozens of women festooned in hot pink feather boas and beaded necklaces waved "Women for Nikki" signs ahead of her afternoon event.

One of them was Alissa Baker, who said she has been calling Iowans and knocking on doors since she arrived from Virginia on Saturday.

"We've stepped up our efforts on phone banking and definitely been making a lot more phone calls," Baker said. "We're doing everything that you would normally do to get out the caucus support."

On Monday night, Baker said she would serve as a caucus captain for Haley's campaign in the Ames area, telling caucusgoers why they should support the Republican.

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Rubio endorses Trump before Iowa caucuses

WASHINGTON — Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida has become the 24th Republican senator to endorse Trump for president.

Rubio's endorsement on Sunday means the two U.S. senators from Florida are now firmly behind Trump instead of DeSantis, their home-state governor. Trump is now one Republican senator short of securing the majority support of the GOP senators.

"I support Trump because that kind of leadership is the ONLY way we will get the extraordinary actions needed to fix the disaster Biden has created," he said on X, formerly known as Twitter. "It's time to get on with the work of beating Biden & saving America!"

The endorsement of Trump is a bit of a surprise, given that Haley endorsed Rubio when he was running in the 2016 Republican presidential campaign. Rubio dropped out of that race after losing Florida.

Hutchinson isn't giving up on Iowa

AMES — He hasn't been as visible on the campaign trail this week as some of the other Republican contenders, but Asa Hutchinson is still homing in on Iowa.

The former Arkansas governor was spotted Sunday at the same Ames barbecue restaurant where Haley was hosting a campaign rally. Hutchinson met with some lunchtime diners and did a media interview before heading out.

Hutchinson qualified for the first Republican candidate debate but didn't meet the markers for the subsequent four. He said last week that he expects to beat expectations in Iowa's caucuses.

Iowan says DeSantis' response to Hamas attack cemented his support

COUNCIL BLUFFS — Hans Rudin, a 49-year-old community college adviser in Council Bluffs, Iowa, says DeSantis' response to the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas won the Florida governor his support.

Rudin supported Trump in the past two elections but has now decided to caucus for DeSantis. The DeSantis administration arranged flights for Americans evacuating from Israel and sent cargo planes with health care supplies, drones, body armor and helmets.

"The definite trigger was Israel," Rudin said, adding that he did not like Trump's criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu days after the attack saying he "let us down" about another operation in which the U.S. killed top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in 2020.

"I thought, This guy's kind of a jerk. Well, I knew that beforehand in many ways, but I like Israel so much," he said.

Nevertheless, Rudin said he would still support Trump over President Joe Biden if Trump becomes the Republican nominee.

Vote, no matter what, Trump says

INDIANOLA — Trump is telling his supporters not to let anything stop them from voting for him in Monday's Iowa caucuses.

"You can't sit at home. If you're sick as a dog ... Even if you vote and then pass away," Trump said at his Sunday rally.

Snow stops, but frigid temperatures set in

The snow may have stopped falling across Iowa, but evidence of the treacherous storm that bore down on the state earlier this week remains.

Major interstates in the Des Moines area were mostly clear on Sunday, but wrecked cars and tractor trailers stranded in the snowstorms of recent days littered medians and areas just off the road.

Bone-chilling temperatures have now set in across the state ahead of Monday night's presidential caucuses. In Des Moines on Sunday afternoon, it was mostly sunny and cold, with a high near minus-9 degrees Fahrenheit (minus-23 Celsius). The wind chill made it feel as cold as minus-30 Fahrenheit (minus-34 Celsius).

Former rival endorses Trump for president

INDIANOLA — Former Republican presidential candidate Doug Burgum is endorsing Trump for president.

"Four years ago, I was speaking on behalf of President Trump at the Iowa caucuses in Sioux City. And today I'm here to do something that none of the other presidential primary candidates have done, and that's endorse Donald J. Trump for the president of the United States of America," the North Dakota gov-

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ernor said, appearing with Trump at a rally in Indianola on Sunday.

Burgum, who ended his own campaign last month, said he'd had a "front-row seat," both as a business leader and a governor, to see what Trump can do.

'Go back to Mommy,' Trump tells protesters who crash his rally

INDIANOLA — Trump's rally was briefly interrupted by protesters — the first time it's happened in years. "You've taken millions!" a woman shouted as Trump was mid-rally, prompting the crowd to respond with a "Trump!" chant to drown her out.

"Go back to Mommy," Trump responded as she was led out of the room. "So young and immature."

Moments later came another protester, this one holding a black and yellow banner that read "Trump Climate Criminal." He shouted the same thing. The same group interrupted a DeSantis town hall and a separate event for the Florida governor in Ames last week.

When he was running in 2016, Trump's events were routinely interrupted by protesters.

"That used to happen all the time," Trump remarked. "It always adds excitement."

Couple heads to DeSantis event after Haley's stop canceled

DUBUQUE — Judy and Brad Knowler drove a few miles from Peosta to hear Haley in Dubuque. A couple of hours later, after Haley's in-person stop was canceled, they found themselves down the road at an event for DeSantis.

Brad, 67, is sure he'll support Haley in Monday's caucuses, but Judy, 64, was hoping to hear her in person to "give me a little bit more confidence." From debates and negative political ads, she said, "it's really hard to see the real person."

"I have one foot in Nikki's camp, but we'll see," she said as she waited for DeSantis to take the stage. "It's an opportunity most Americans don't get to be this close in person."

'Let's see if we can get to 50%,' Trump says

DES MOINES — Trump is setting high expectations in Iowa the day before the state's caucuses — even as he criticizes those who are trying to do the same.

"Somebody won by 12 points, and that was like a record," he said, citing Republican Bob Dole's margin of victory in 1988.

"Well, we should do that. If we don't do that, let 'em criticize us, right?" Trump told volunteers in Des Moines on Sunday morning. "But let's see if we can get to 50%."

Moments earlier, Trump had been complaining about the expectation that he earn a majority of the caucus votes Monday night.

"There seems to be something about 50%," he said. "Now it doesn't matter from a numbers standpoint. I think they're doing it so that they can set a high expectation so if we end up with 49%, which would be about 25 points bigger than anyone else ever got, they can say, 'He had a failure, it was a failure.'"

Trump says Iowa win would be a victory over the 'liars, cheaters'

INDIANOLA — Trump sounded a message of vengeance at his only Iowa rally this weekend.

"These caucuses are your personal chance to score the ultimate victory over all of the liars, cheaters, thugs, perverts, frauds, crooks, freaks, creeps and other quite nice people," he said at a commit-to-caucus event in Indianola.

"The Washington swamp has done everything in its power to take away your voice," Trump added. "But tomorrow is your time to turn on them and to say and speak your mind and to vote. And we're going to take this country back."

'Walk on glass' for Trump? These supporters would

INDIANOLA — Marc Smiarowski hunched to fight off the minus 18-degree chill outside the Kent Student Center on Simpson College campus Sunday morning, waiting for doors to open for former President Donald Trump's midday rally at the small school south of Des Moines.

But as the weak winter sun hung low in the sky, a sense of bitterness burned in Smiarowski.

"I'm here in part out of spite," said the 44-year-old public utility worker, who drove 40 miles to be there. "I can't abandon him. After what they did to him in the last election, and the political persecution he faces,

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I feel like I owe him this. He's our only option."

"No one else could handle what he's facing," added his friend Kailie Johnson, a 26-year-old dental hygienist from the same small town of Huneston.

More than 30 minutes before the center opened, more than 100 people stood in line while layered in Carhartt coveralls with hats and hoods pulled down tight. It was a test run for Iowa's caucuses Monday and of the devotion Trump said last week would make his supporters "walk on glass" for him.

Haley skips in-person campaign stop over weather

DUBUQUE — Haley's campaign stop in Dubuque was canceled Sunday morning because of poor travel conditions, the campaign said about an hour before the scheduled event.

Voters walking into the venue were given the news by campaign staffers, who offered some a T-shirt, hat or yard sign as consolation.

John Schmid, 69, was already waiting at the venue when the event was called off.

"I don't blame her," said the retiree from Asbury, a few miles outside Dubuque. He's already a Haley supporter, but he wanted to see the "refreshing" candidate in person. He hopes Haley will do well in Monday's caucuses, which he'll be at despite the bitter cold.

"It's just part of living in Iowa in January," he said.

Haley swapped the in-person event with a virtual town hall.

Asian Cup holds moment's silence for Israel-Hamas war victims ahead of Palestinian team's game

AL-RAYYAN, Qatar (AP) — A moment of silence was observed and then shouts of "free Palestine" rang out ahead of the Asian Cup game between Iran and the Palestinian soccer team on Sunday.

As the Israel-Hamas war reached the 100-day mark both teams lined up in the center of the field at Education City Stadium and an announcement asked for silence "in memory of the lives tragically lost as a result of the ongoing situation in Palestine."

A hush fell across the stadium in the city of Al-Rayyan in Qatar before the pro-Palestinian chants could be heard coming from members of the crowd.

Earlier, Palestinian players stood in a line with their arms linked across each others' shoulders and sang their national anthem along with fans. The players then gathered in a huddle before and after the moment of silence.

The Palestinian soccer team's preparations for the tournament have been carried out without domestic soccer, as well as limited opportunities to play competitive matches.

Three-time champion Iran won Sunday's game 4-1. Iran scored two early goals as Karim Ansarifard struck inside two minutes and Shoja Khalilzadeh added another in the 12th.

Mehdi Ghayedi made it 3-0 in the 38th.

But the loudest cheers of the game came when Palestinian player Tamer Seyam pulled a goal back in first-half stoppage time.

Sardar Azmoun scored a fourth for Iran 10 minutes after the break.

Iowa caucuses: What to watch as voters weigh in on the Republican campaign's first contest of 2024

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

As frigid temperatures scour the Midwest, the Republican presidential nominating process will officially start Monday with Iowa's caucuses.

The quadrennial contest has been unusually quiet this year, a mark of former President Donald Trump's commanding lead in the race. An arctic blast dropping the state into subzero temperatures and dumping snow during the final days of the runup didn't help, either.

But there's plenty to consider heading into the caucuses, and after years of speculation and maneuvering

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over who will face President Joe Biden this November, we'll finally have the first votes tallied.

Here are some things to watch.

WHO WINS SECOND

Iowa appears to be a battle for second place given Trump's dominance. The real question is whether either of the two Republicans who lead the pack of very distant also-rans can make it a two-person race in the long run.

To do that, they probably need to at least come out of Iowa with a silver medal.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis once talked of winning the state, but he's lowered expectations to simply having a good showing. With his campaign apparatus in turmoil and funds drying up, he needs a strong finish in a state where its movement conservatives would normally be his natural audience.

Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley's technocratic and consensus-building pitch doesn't seem tailor-made for Iowa, but the caucuses come just as she gained increased attention and financial support. Her strongest state may be the next one up, New Hampshire, and a second-place finish in Iowa could put her in a strong position as attention shifts to New England.

Rarely has so much ridden on a second-place finish in the first nominating state.

WHO BRAVES THE COLD?

Heading into the caucuses, much of the focus has been on Trump's strong standing. The surprise may ultimately be more about the turnout and who would benefit from the brutal winter storm limiting participation.

After all, the caucus isn't built for convenience. Those who participate must venture out after dark to one of 1,567 locations, almost always requiring a drive. The roads will be icy, the wind chill will be dozens of degrees below zero. Iowans are a famously hardy stock, but even they may flinch at venturing out in those conditions. The National Weather Service last week warned people not to leave their homes if possible.

On top of all that, people can be less motivated to vote in contests where winners are seen as inevitable.

On the flip side, Trump's voters are very motivated to support him. DeSantis may benefit from having a deep organization to ferry nervous participants to caucus sites. Overall, conservative voters are excited to get 2024 underway — they're angry at the state of things, like their candidates and see Biden as easily beaten in November.

The comparison will be 2016 when 186,000 Republicans turned out in the last competitive caucus. That's a small number to have such a huge role in determining the nominee to lead a country of 330 million. Will we see fewer people this time?

WHAT'S TRUMP'S MARGIN?

The polls have been impressive but you don't know how a candidate will fare until the votes are counted. Will Trump's polling dominance translate to a big win on Monday? Or will there be a surprise?

Trump has popped into the state in the final days of the contest, but he's also diverted his attention elsewhere in ways that are unusual for a candidate seeking to lock down an Iowa win. He, for instance, spent time last week at an appeals hearing in one of his criminal cases and the end of his fraud trial, hoping that would put him in better stead with Republican voters than crisscrossing Iowa. His rivals have dinged him for being gone, but it's unclear whether it'll hurt him in the state.

The odds of a surprise are always low — that's why they're surprises — but anything can happen in politics, especially with this weather. If Trump underperforms it could shake up a nominating contest that, to date, has been the sleepest in modern memory.

RAMASWAMY'S MARK

One of the more unexpected side plots in the 2024 Republican primary has been Vivek Ramaswamy, a 38-year-old pharmaceutical entrepreneur who wrote a book called "Woke, Inc." and then decided to run for president. His aggressive, social media-driven approach initially attracted some curiosity from Republican voters but seemed to turn many off after he attacked rivals during the debates.

Ramaswamy's hard-charging style may not exactly be "Iowa nice," but neither is Trump's and he's far ahead. Ramaswamy has been all over Iowa, hitting the campaign milestone of visiting all 99 counties in the state not once, but twice.

It's not clear what Ramaswamy is competing for — he goes out of his way not to criticize Trump, but flames all other candidates in a potential audition for the frontrunner's administration. Iowa will help determine whether he has a reason to keep running his quixotic campaign.

Haley wins backing from ex-Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, who won't mount his own third-party 2024 bid

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Squelching speculation of a third-party presidential run, former Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan on Sunday endorsed Nikki Haley for the GOP nomination, saying he feels she "is the strongest chance" for Republicans to win in November.

Hogan told CNN's "State of the Union" he thinks "it's pretty clear" that former President Donald Trump will win Monday's Iowa caucuses, but that Haley "has all of the momentum" to make her a strong nominee.

Hogan, one of his party's fiercest Trump critics, had fueled speculation that he was preparing for his own third-party bid when he stepped down from the leadership of No Labels. A resignation letter dated Dec. 15 offered no criticism of the group, and Hogan declined to comment after the letter was obtained earlier this month by The Associated Press.

On Sunday, Hogan said he hadn't meant to stoke rumors that he was planning his own run when he left the group, saying that he was focused on GOP efforts "to nominate the strongest possible Republican we can."

"It kind of created a whole lot of speculation," Hogan said. "I didn't mean to do that. My position on No Labels has not changed."

No Labels is seeking ballot access across the country as it lays the groundwork for a possible presidential ticket. The plans have spooked many Democrats and other Trump critics who fear it would siphon votes that would otherwise go to Democratic President Joe Biden and facilitate Trump's return to the White House.

Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis have been locked in a tight battle for second place in Iowa, which holds its leadoff GOP caucus vote on Monday night. The final pre-caucus Des Moines Register/NBC News poll found Trump maintaining a formidable lead in the state, supported by nearly half of likely caucus-goers compared with 20% for Haley and 16% for DeSantis.

Hogan suggested a strong second-place finish for Haley would give her momentum heading into next week's primary in New Hampshire, where he said "it's possible she could win, which would put her in much better position when she moves into her home state of South Carolina."

Some had previously hoped that Hogan would seek the GOP nomination this year himself. But in March, Hogan wrote in an op-ed that he wouldn't run because he cares "more about ensuring a future for the Republican Party than securing my own future in the Republican Party."

Some Republicans had hoped that Hogan, emerging as the new best hope of a small group of "Never Trump Republicans," would also challenge Trump in 2020. But a year after Hogan's reelection in 2018, he said that while he appreciated "all of the encouragement" he had received to run for president, he would not. Hogan told AP he had no interest in a "kamikaze mission."

In the past two presidential elections, Hogan said he did not vote for Trump, the party nominee. Hogan said he wrote in the name of his father, former U.S. Rep. Larry Hogan Sr., in 2016 and the late President Ronald Reagan in 2020.

Trump's campaign banks on its loyal supporters to turn out and caucus in Iowa despite frigid weather

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

URBANDALE, Iowa (AP) — Donald Trump was stuck in Florida, forcing his presidential campaign to cancel his in-person events two days before Iowa's kickoff Republican caucuses.

But at his campaign's Iowa headquarters in a nondescript brick building northwest of Des Moines, volunteers were busy working the phones, trying to turn out the vote for Monday's contest as the snow whipped in frigid winds outside.

"He has sacrificed so much for our country and I need to do my part to support his efforts to save America because America is dying," said Melissa Davis, 56, a small-business owner from Windsor Heights who has spent the past few months phone-banking, knocking on doors and encouraging voters in her district to turn out on Trump's behalf. For Davis, who will also serve as a Trump caucus captain on the night of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, the connection is deeply personal.

"I couldn't love him any more," she said. "He's like a member of my family." She lost her father in 2012, she said, "so I think he's kind of taken the role in my life as a father figure."

It's people like Davis who are giving Trump's campaign confidence that his supporters will turn out even as Iowa braces for the coldest caucus night in modern history, with temperatures forecast to plunge to minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 23 degrees Celsius).

While much of the recent focus has been on the race for second and whether former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley will finish ahead of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Trump's campaign is hoping for the kind of blowout that will blunt his rivals' momentum as he tries to lock up the nomination and pivot to the general election.

"The enthusiasm level for the (former) president's supporters is so much higher," Trump campaign senior adviser Jason Miller told reporters at an event hosted by Bloomberg News. He and other aides point to the scores of people who routinely stand in line for hours and sometimes overnight to attend Trump's rallies. The campaign believes these people are very likely to attend the caucuses, even if they haven't done so before.

Organizers have also been hard at work for DeSantis and Haley, who hope to use Iowa as a springboard for the rest of the campaign contests.

The pro-DeSantis super political action committee Never Back Down, which contends DeSantis has the best organization in Iowa, said it has collected 40,000 commitment-to-caucus cards, signed up 1,699 precinct captains and knocked on more than 921,000 doors across the state.

"People involved in this process say it's the best yet," DeSantis said while campaigning in northwestern Iowa on Thursday.

AFP Action, the organizing arm of the conservative Koch brothers' political network, has been trying to get out the vote on Haley's behalf. The group said it had more than 200 staff and volunteers out on Saturday, knocking on doors in a blizzard.

Among them was Drew Klein, a senior adviser with AFP Action. He navigated unplowed streets in a black GMC Sierra pickup and trudged through snowbanks as high as mailboxes to try to find voters who may be open to backing Haley.

"It's vitally important," said Klein of the face-to-face contact, despite his limited success during that particular outing. He found one woman deciding between DeSantis and Haley, several undecided voters and a man who responded, "I'm a Trump guy. Go Trump!"

Trump has held huge leads in Iowa polls conducted over the past two months. The final Des Moines Register/NBC News poll before the caucuses found he was supported by nearly one-half of likely caucus-goers compared with 20% for Haley and 16% for DeSantis.

A commanding victory would help to lessen the sting of 2016, when Trump lost in Iowa to Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. At the time, Trump barely knew what a caucus was. Trump campaign senior adviser Chris LaCivita often recalls Trump telling the story of how his daughter Ivanka showed up at one large caucus site that

year only to discover there was nobody there to speak on behalf of her father.

The instructions Trump gave his aides for 2024: not this time.

Planning began even before Trump launched his campaign to regain the White House. Since then, the campaign says it has made hundreds of thousands of voter contacts, held hundreds of training sessions and signed up 2,300 "caucus captains" — volunteers tasked with representing Trump at caucus sites and speaking on his behalf. The captains, who have been given special white hats with gold embroidery, are tasked with turning out 10 first-time caucusgoers from lists provided by the campaign.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of supporters have attended "commit to caucus" events across the state.

"These were like little practice runs for actual caucus events, from a turnout standpoint, from an organizational standpoint, for who we're targeting, for who we're talking to," said LaCivita. "These are not just done, you know, like pin-the-tail on the donkey."

The campaign is leaning heavily on first-time caucusgoers and has tried to educate supporters on the ins-and-outs of the obscure caucus process, where voters turn up at community centers and school gymnasiums at 7 p.m. and are wooed by each campaign. To attract new participants, the Trump campaign produced an animated "Schoolhouse Rock!"-style video and sent mailers that tell voters their caucus sites.

Trump's campaign cites other advantages. Because this is his third time running, Trump entered the race with three campaigns worth of experience, data, and personnel.

Aides also stress their operation is driven by local volunteers and overseen directly by the campaign, in contrast to other candidates who have left organizing to outside groups.

It's a difference that matters, said Dan Heffernen, 64, a Trump caucus captain who owns a small construction business in Altoona. Heffernen said he is suspicious of campaigns that have to pay for organizers and he didn't trust a pro-DeSantis organizer who stopped by several weeks ago.

"He was from Florida," he said of the visitor. "I'm pretty sure he was paid to come up here."

But his wife, Cheryl Heffernen, a fellow caucus captain, noted that despite her personal connection to the people she's trying to organize, only about 20% to 30% of those she's spoken with plan to caucus.

"Some people, I think, are reluctant to take the time," she said. "I've had a lot of people, yes, they support Trump. Most people are supporting Trump that I contact. Most of them do not go to caucus."

And she worries about the impact of the weather, noting her reluctance to have her own mom, who is 87, go to caucus.

"I don't want her to go out, you know, and there's going to be a lot of people like that, that live in Iowa, that are older. It's just not safe for them," she said. "So I do think that the overall turnout will be less."

But at Trump's campaign headquarters Saturday morning, where volunteers with plates of free pizza sat making phone calls in a room plastered with campaign signs, many brushed off those concerns.

"We're used to this," said Miriam Schultz, 74, a retired teacher. "We have this every winter. We have many cold snaps," she said, predicting a majority would turn out regardless.

District attorney defends the qualifications of a prosecutor hired in Trump's Georgia election case

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis on Sunday defended the qualifications of a special prosecutor she hired for her case against Donald Trump and others over efforts to overturn the 2020 election in Georgia after a defense lawyer accused Willis of professional impropriety.

In her first public remarks since the accusation was made in a court filing, Willis offered a vigorous defense of her leadership of the office and pushed back against critics. She was received warmly by the congregation of Big Bethel AME Church as she spoke at a service a day before the holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Willis thanked leaders of the historically Black church in Atlanta who "didn't care what they said about me" and told her "the invite was still good" to speak.

"I hope for y'all this week I don't look like what I've been through," she said.

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The allegations were in a motion filed last week by Ashleigh Merchant, who represents Michael Roman, a former Trump campaign staffer and onetime White House aide. The filing alleges that Willis was involved in an improper romantic relationship with Nathan Wade, the outside lawyer she hired, and questions Wade's qualifications for the job.

The motion seeks to have the indictment dismissed and to disqualify Willis and Wade and their offices from further prosecuting the case.

At the church, Willis did not address the allegations of an improper relationship. She did not speak to reporters after the service.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAfee said during a hearing Friday that he is awaiting a response from the district attorney's office and expects to set a hearing on the motion in February. Other defense attorneys in the case, including Trump attorney Steve Sadow, have said they want to look into the allegations before deciding whether they want to join the motion.

Willis said her father, who she said met and spent time with King, told her that he saw the civil rights leader at low moments, saddened because people were cruel and unsupportive. Her father told her that King "was not a perfect man, but he was a great man, willing to answer God's call."

At a low point in the past week, she said, she "penned a letter to my heavenly Father." She framed much of her speech at the church as a conversation with God, describing herself over and over again as flawed, imperfect and hard-headed.

"You did not tell me as a woman of color, it would not matter what I did. My motive, my talent, my ability and my character would be constantly attacked," she said.

She appeared to choke up briefly at times and talked about the loneliness and stress of her job, saying she has come to think it is "not normal if I don't have two death threats a week" and that she's regularly called racial slurs.

She revealed that on Christmas night, she got an emergency call saying police had surrounded her house because a man had called 911 saying he had shot a woman there. She said she experienced "pure, unimaginable fear," believing her older daughter was dead in her home until the incident was revealed to be "a cruel hoax."

Willis said she hired three special prosecutors for the election case: a white man, a white woman and a Black man. They are paid the same hourly rate and no one has questioned the qualifications of the two white lawyers, she said.

While never mentioning Wade by name, she called him a "superstar, a great friend and a great lawyer." She cited his accomplishments and past professional experience and said, "I'm just asking, God, is it that some will never see a Black man as qualified, no matter his achievements?"

Merchant wrote in her motion that she can find no evidence that Wade, whose law firm website promotes his experience in civil litigation, including car accident and family law cases, has ever prosecuted a felony case. She questioned his qualifications to try this case.

Merchant's filing offered no proof of the alleged relationship or trips that she said that Willis and Wade had taken together.

Merchant also alleges Willis did not get necessary approval from county leaders to hire Wade and that no special prosecutor's oath had been filed for him.

Pete Skandalakis, a former district attorney who is executive director of the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, said district attorneys do not have to seek permission before hiring a special prosecutor. McAfee previously said when another defendant raised the issue that it did not appear Wade was required to file the oath.

From Berlin to Karachi, thousands demonstrate in support of either Israel or the Palestinians

By MUHAMMAD FAROOQ, DANICA KIRKA and MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press
KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — From Berlin to London and Limassol to Karachi, tens of thousands of people took to the streets Sunday to mark the 100th day of Israel's war with Hamas. Opposing demonstrations either demanded the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas or called for a cease-fire in Gaza.

In the southern Pakistani city of Karachi, protesters waved Palestinian flags or wore the keffiyeh, the traditional Palestinian scarf, to express their solidarity with Palestinians in a rally organized by the country's largest religious political party, Jamaat-e-Islami.

The party's Karachi chief, Hafiz Naeem Ur Rehman, called on the U.S. to stop backing Israel and compensate Palestinians for their losses. He also criticized Muslim leaders and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for not doing enough to help stop the war.

"Resolutions will not solve this problem," Rehman said, adding that all "conscientious people" should support South Africa's action to launch legal action against Israel for allegedly committing genocide in Gaza.

Karachi resident Ishrat Zahid took Muslim leaders to task for "peacefully sleeping in their homes (but) not even thinking about protesting."

"This is why we have gathered here, to tell our Palestinian brothers and sisters that we are with them," he said.

In the heart of the British capital, thousands of people chanted "Bring them home now" in a demonstration to demand the freedom of 132 remaining hostages taken by Hamas militants in the Oct. 7 attacks that also killed some 1,200 Israelis and touched off the war.

Gaza health authorities say the death toll in the enclave has already eclipsed 23,000 people, roughly 1% of the Palestinian territory's population. Thousands more remain missing or badly wounded, while 80% of the population has been displaced.

Protesters in London held posters with photos and the words "100 days in hell" to express their solidarity with Israel.

Ayelet Svatitzky, the sister of a hostage still in captivity, warned "there is no more time" for those captured, and called for their release ahead of the 100th day since Hamas launched its attack on Israel.

"My biggest fear is, I don't know how long it's going to last, I don't know how long he can hold on and I don't know what his condition is," she said of her brother Nadav Popplewell, 51, one of two U.K. nationals who remain hostage.

Popplewell was captured alongside his 79-year-old mother, Channah Peri. Though Peri was released during a November cease-fire, Svatitzky's elder brother, Roi Popplewell, was found dead near his home just after the attacks.

The demonstration comes just a day after thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrated in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, calling for a permanent cease-fire in the conflict — part of a global day of action involving 30 countries.

In a reflection of ongoing tensions, members of the crowd Sunday had to wait in line to get their bags searched before entering the square. Barricades were erected on the square's perimeter, lined by police officers and security guards.

A similar demonstration was held in Berlin, where pianist Igor Levit played a yellow piano as part of an initiative to keep the memory of the Israeli hostages alive.

Played in public places from Tel Aviv to Tokyo, the yellow grand piano aimed to bring to mind 22-year-old hostage Alon Ohel, a pianist who was abducted by Hamas militants during the Oct. 7 attack on the Nova Music Festival.

Alon's mother Idit Ohel who was on hand for the demonstration said the piano is symbolic of "something bigger."

"Music is something that is beyond Religion. Beyond gender. And it's something that we can understand," she said.

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In the French capital, several hundred protesters converged in the city center holding placards with the faces of Israeli hostages, singing for their release around a large banner strewn on the ground reading, "Bring them home now!"

About 100 motorcyclists waved Israeli flags and sported stickers of Israeli hostages on their bikes as they cruised around Paris in a ride to express support for Israel. The motorcycle ride followed an earlier, pro-Israeli bicycle procession around the city with cyclists waving Israeli flags and chanting "Free the hostages."

On Cyprus' southern coastline outside the town of Limassol, several hundred protesters waved Palestinian flags and held placards outside the entrance of a British air force base calling for a "Free Palestine" and an end to the "siege of Gaza."

Protesters handed authorities at RAF Akrotiri a petition demanding an end to the use of the air base as a launchpad for airstrikes in the region and the alleged transfer of arms to Israel from there.

British aircraft had taken off from RAF Akrotiri — one of two military bases that Britain maintains in Cyprus — to strike Houthi targets in Yemen in recent days.

A British Ministry of Defense spokesperson said that no U.K. aircraft have delivered any lethal cargo to Israel and that the U.K. government is "focused on getting significantly more aid to Gaza" after delivering about 96 tons of British and Cypriot aid from Cyprus to Egypt for the people in the Palestinian enclave.

In neighboring Turkey, about 2,000 marchers waved Palestinian and Turkish flags in Istanbul while paying homage to nine Turkish soldiers who were killed in northern Iraq last week.

Similar demonstrations organized by Turkey's Humanitarian Relief Foundation were held in other Turkish cities. Foundation representative Osman Delibas linked the war in Gaza and hostilities in Iraq. Turkey holds Kurdish militants in Iraq responsible for the death of its soldiers.

"Those who supported terrorist organizations and unleashed them on us are the same ones who committed genocide in Gaza," state-run Anadolu news agency quoted Delibas as saying.

At the Vatican, Pope Francis told the faithful in St. Peter's Square that modern warfare is "a crime against humanity" because it "sows death among civilians and destroys cities and infrastructure." In his weekly appearance at the Vatican window overlooking the Square, the pope lamented that "arms continue to kill and destroy" when at the start of the year "we exchanged wishes for peace," urging people not to forget those who "suffer the cruelty of war" around the world especially in Ukraine, Palestine and Israel.

In Lisbon, Portugal, ballet dancer Irina Almeida joined several thousand marchers to demand a cease-fire in Gaza as they made their way from the U.S. to the Israeli embassies, chanting "Yes to peace" and "No to war."

"It's not about 100 days, it's 75 years," said Almeida. "This is the 21st century and this should have never happened in the history of humankind, let alone at a time when we say we are so developed."

Iowa principal who risked his life to protect students during a high school shooting has died

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE and TRISHA AHMED Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An Iowa principal who put himself in harm's way to protect students during a school shooting earlier this month died Sunday, a funeral home confirmed.

Caldwell Parrish Funeral Home & Crematory confirmed the death of Perry High School Principal Dan Marburger after the family announced it on a GoFundMe page.

Marburger was critically injured during the Jan. 4 attack, which began in the school's cafeteria as students were gathering for breakfast before class. An 11-year-old middle school student was killed in the shooting, and six other people were injured. The 17-year-old student who opened fire also died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot.

The day after the shooting, the state Department of Public Safety said Marburger "acted selflessly and placed himself in harm's way in an apparent effort to protect his students."

News of Marburger's death was first posted on a GoFundMe page for his family. The post, by Marburger's wife, Elizabeth, said he died at about 8 a.m. Sunday, and said: "Dan lost his battle. He fought hard and

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gave us 10 days that we will treasure forever.”

The news that Marburger died triggered a flood of support on the Perry Facebook page with nearly 200 people posting condolences within the first hour after it was posted.

Iowa Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds offered her condolences.

“Our entire state is devastated by the news of Dan Marburger’s death,” she said in a statement Sunday. “Dan courageously put himself in harm’s way to protect his students, and ultimately gave his own life to save them. He will forever be remembered for his selfless and heroic actions. May he rest in peace.”

Reynolds ordered all flags in Iowa to be lowered to half-staff on Sunday and to remain that way until sunset on the day of Marburger’s funeral and interment. People, businesses, schools and local governments are also encouraged to fly the flag at half-staff for the same length of time as a sign of respect, the statement said.

In a Facebook post on the night of the shooting, the principal’s daughter, Claire Marburger, called her father a “gentle giant” and said it wasn’t surprising that her father tried to protect his students.

“As I heard of a gunman, I instantly had a feeling my Dad would be a victim as he would put himself in harms way for the benefit of the kids and his staff,” his daughter wrote. “That’s just Dad.”

Marburger had been principal since 1995.

Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation spokesman Mitch Mortvedt said after the shooting that Marburger did some “pretty significant things” to protect others, but didn’t release details. Perry Superintendent Clark Wicks said Marburger was a “hero” who intervened with the teenage gunman so students could escape.

An 11-year-old sixth grader, Ahmir Jolliff, was killed in the shooting. Authorities said he was shot three times.

The shooting happened just after 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 4, shortly before classes were set to begin on the first day back after winter break. Mortvedt said the shooting started in the cafeteria, where students from several grades were eating breakfast, then spilled outside the cafeteria but was contained to the north end of the school.

Authorities said the suspect, identified as Dylan Butler, had a pump-action shotgun and a small-caliber handgun. Mortvedt told The Associated Press that authorities also found a “pretty rudimentary” improvised explosive device in Butler’s belongings, and that experts advised “it was something that they needed to disarm.” It was rendered safe.

The GoFundMe page for Marburger was further updated on Sunday.

“All of the Marburger family and the entire Perry Community will forever be touched by the selflessness of Mr. Marburger. This GoFundMe will continue to be used for the Marburger family as they process through and live out Dan’s legacy,” it said.

More countries join talks on Ukraine leader’s peace formula. But Russia is absent and war grinds on

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — Leaders of talks on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s peace formula on Sunday said a growing number of countries are working to help set the groundwork for Russia to join one day, an admittedly distant goal as the nearly two-year war grinds on and with neither side willing to cede ground.

The fourth such meeting of national security advisers was held in the Swiss town of Davos, where Zelenskyy is set to attend the World Economic Forum’s annual meeting starting Tuesday. He will endeavor to keep up international focus on Ukraine’s defense amid eroding support for Kyiv in the West and swelling distractions like conflict in the Middle East.

Andriy Yermak, the Ukrainian president’s chief of staff, posted photos of the meeting’s opening and hailed a “good sign” that the number of participants in a string of conferences on Zelenskyy’s peace formula was growing — nearly half from Europe, as well as 18 from Asia and 12 from Africa.

“Countries from the Global South are increasingly getting involved in our work. It shows understanding

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that this European conflict is in fact a challenge for all humanity," he wrote.

Zelenskyy has presented a 10-point peace formula that, among other things, seeks the expulsion of all Russian forces from Ukraine and accountability for war crimes — at a time when the two sides are fighting from largely static positions along a roughly 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line. Such ideas are rejected out of hand by Moscow.

Yermak said that if Ukraine's territorial integrity — now violated by Russia including through illegal annexations — isn't restored, "soon other aggressors elsewhere in the world will be able to seize parts of other countries and start staging fake elections there."

At a final news conference, Yermak said the purpose of the meeting — the last in a series — was to discuss issues like an eventual Russian withdrawal, a path to justice, environmental security and ultimately how the war might be declared over.

He said that no allies had ever asked Ukraine to make any compromise, "which they know is not acceptable for us," and it would never accept a "frozen conflict."

"For all Ukrainians, the most important (thing) is to win this war," he said. Earlier in a statement from the Ukrainian presidency, Yermak said a simple cease-fire wouldn't end Russia's "aggression" on Ukraine: "It's definitely not the path to peace. The Russians do not want peace. They want domination."

Co-host Ignazio Cassis, the Swiss foreign minister, said that 83 delegations were on hand for the talks in Davos.

"Peace is something that Ukraine needs," he said during a break in the talks Sunday. "We are going to do all we can to end this war."

The talks aimed to build on previous such closed-door efforts in Denmark, Saudi Arabia and Malta last summer and fall. Any peace deal naturally will require Russian participation — and Moscow isn't represented in the discussions.

The last round, in Malta in October, involved envoys from 65 countries.

Cassis said the plan should serve as a "departure point" toward possible peace, and stressed the need to reduce the conflict from intensifying. He said that the purpose of the talks was to get ready for the moment when Russia might join a peace discussion.

Moscow, which hasn't been invited to any of the meetings, has dismissed the initiative as biased.

"For the moment, it's illusory to think that Russia would respond positively to an invitation," he added, "but that's not the goal" of the Davos conference. "For now, Russia is not ready to take any step or make any concession."

Cassis acknowledged "many challenges" and negotiators were working to "modulate" the fine print of the peace formula to make it more workable as a blueprint for the way forward.

He said that neither Ukraine nor Russia was ready to make territorial concessions.

Russian forces have recently stepped up missile and drone attacks that have stretched Ukraine's air defense resources, leaving the country vulnerable in the nearly 23-month war unless it can secure further weapons supplies.

"The war is far from over and peace is still nowhere in sight," the Swiss department of foreign affairs said in a statement previewing Sunday's talks.

US says Texas blocked border agents from entering park to try to save 3 migrants who drowned

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — The U.S. Homeland Security Department said Saturday that Texas denied federal agents access to a stretch of border when they were trying to rescue three migrants who drowned.

The federal government's account came hours after U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar said the Texas Military Department and Texas National Guard "did not grant access to Border Patrol agents to save the migrants" Friday night. Mexican authorities recovered the bodies of a woman and two children Saturday across the border from Eagle Pass, Texas.

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"This is a tragedy, and the State bears responsibility," said Cuellar, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee's subcommittee for homeland security, in a statement.

The drownings come amid escalating tensions between Texas and the U.S. government over immigration enforcement. On Friday, the Justice Department told the U.S. Supreme Court that Texas had taken control of an area in Eagle Pass known as Shelby Park and were not letting Border Patrol agents enter.

The Texas Military Department said in a statement Saturday night that one of its units had searched the river after Border Patrol alerted them of the situation but did not find any migrants. The statement did not address the U.S. government's claims that Texas authorities had "physically barred" Border Patrol agents from entering the park at the time.

Homeland Security echoed Cuellar's account of the distress call. In a filing to the U.S. Supreme Court on Saturday, Texas acknowledged seizing the city park on the border but said the federal government had mischaracterized its actions and it was trying to resolve any disputes over access.

"In responding to a distress call from the Mexican government, Border Patrol agents were physically barred by Texas officials from entering the park," Homeland Security said in a statement. "The Texas governor's policies are cruel, dangerous, and inhumane, and Texas's blatant disregard for federal authority over immigration poses grave risks."

The park lies in a major corridor for migrants entering illegally from Mexico and is the center of Abbott's aggressive attempts to stop them, known as Operation Lone Star. Migrants are periodically swept away to their deaths by the current of the Rio Grande.

Abbott's office referred questions about the drownings to the Texas Military Department, which said its security personnel saw Mexican authorities responding to an incident across the river about 45 minutes after Border Patrol made the state aware of the situation. The department said it maintains water rescue equipment and works with local paramedics to assist migrants needing medical care.

"At no time did TMD security personnel along the river observe any distressed migrants, nor did TMD turn back any illegal immigrants from the US during this period," the department said in the statement.

Cuellar, who represents a Texas border district, said Mexican authorities alerted the Border Patrol to the distressed migrants struggling in the river late Friday. He said federal agents attempted to call and relay the information to Texas National Guard members at Shelby Park, without success. Agents then visited the entrance to the park but were turned away, according to the congressman, who said they were told a Guard member would be sent to investigate the situation.

The 50-acre park is owned by the city, but it is used by the state Department of Public Safety and the Texas Military Department to patrol border crossings. Although daily crossings diminished from the thousands to about 500, state authorities put up fences and stationed military vehicles by the entry to deny access to the public and Border Patrol agents this week, according to a court filing.

In its Supreme Court filing, Texas challenged claims that Border Patrol agents were denied access. They said the Border Patrol has scaled down its presence since summer, when the state moved its resources and manpower to the park.

Federal agents were also granted access to the area to secure supplies, the state said.

Cuellar said there was no immediate information available about the victims' nationalities, relationship and ages. The Mexican government made no public statements.

On Saturday members of the public held a ceremony at the park to mark the deaths of migrants in their region. Julio Vasquez, a pastor, said access was granted after making requests with the city and sharing pictures showing the entry still fenced up and guarded by members of the National Guard and military vehicles.

Frederik X is proclaimed the new king of Denmark after his mother Queen Margrethe II abdicates

By JAN M. OLSEN Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Denmark's prime minister proclaimed Frederik X as king on Sunday after his mother Queen Margrethe II formally signed her abdication, with massive crowds turning out to rejoice in the throne passing from a beloved monarch to her popular son.

Margrethe, 83, is the first Danish monarch to voluntarily relinquish the throne in nearly 900 years. Many thousands of people gathered outside the palace where the royal succession took place, the mood jubilant as the Nordic nation experienced its first royal succession in more than a half-century, and one not caused by the death of a monarch.

Denmark's monarchy traces its origins to 10th-century Viking king Gorm the Old, making it the oldest in Europe and one of the oldest in the world. Today the royal family's duties are largely ceremonial.

Margrethe signed her abdication during a meeting with the government at the Christiansborg Palace, a vast complex in Copenhagen that has been the seat of Danish power for centuries. It now houses the Royal Reception Rooms and Royal Stables as well as the Danish Parliament, the prime minister's office and the Supreme Court.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen next proclaimed Frederik king from the balcony of the palace before the cheering crowd.

Frederiksen read the proclamation three times, which is the tradition, as Frederik stood beside her wearing a ceremonial military uniform adorned with medals. He was then joined on the balcony by the new, Australian-born Queen Mary and the couple's four children, and the crowd spontaneously sang the national anthem.

"My hope is to become a unifying king of tomorrow," Frederik said. "It is a task I have approached all my life."

It is the custom for each new sovereign to adopt a royal motto as a guiding principle for their reign, and Frederik's is: "United, committed, for the kingdom of Denmark."

"I want to return the trust I meet," the new king said. "I need trust from my beloved wife, you and that which is greater than us."

Frederik kissed Mary, the queen, who wore a white dress with a sash over one shoulder, and another great cheer rose from the crowd.

They then left Christianborg Palace in a horse-drawn coach as church bells rang out, and headed to their Amalienborg residence, where they once again appeared before people cheering and waving the nation's flag of a white cross on a red background.

Frederik, who was visibly moved, placed both hands on his heart in a gesture of thanks.

The abdication document was earlier presented to Margrethe as she sat at a massive table covered in red cloth around which royals and members of the Danish government were seated. Frederik sat beside her.

After signing it, Margrethe, dressed in a magenta skirt suit, rose and gestured to Frederik to take her place. "God save the king," she said as she left the room using a cane for support.

The abdication leaves Denmark with two queens: Margrethe keeps her title, while Frederik's wife becomes Queen Mary. Frederik and Mary's eldest son Christian, 18, has become crown prince and heir to the throne.

Citing health issues, Margrethe announced on New Year's Eve that she would step down, stunning a nation that had expected her to live out her days on the throne, as is the tradition in the Danish monarchy. Margrethe underwent major back surgery last February and didn't return to work until April.

Even the prime minister was unaware of the queen's intentions until right before the announcement. Margrethe had informed Frederik and his younger brother Joachim just three days earlier, the Berlingske newspaper wrote, citing the royal palace.

People from across Denmark gathered outside parliament, with many swarming streets decorated with red-and-white Danish flags. Several shops hung photos of Margrethe and Frederik, while city buses were adorned with small Danish flags as is customary during royal events. Many others across the kingdom of nearly 6 million people followed a live television broadcast of the historic event.

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"It was worth the four hours wait," said Anders Pejtersen, 25. He made the trip from Aalborg, in northern Denmark, to witness Frederik's proclamation. His mother, Helle Pejtersen, said "it was intense."

Marina Gregovic, 32, a Copenhagen resident, said she believed Frederik "will be fantastic. And we loved his speech."

Royals across Europe sent their congratulations including U.K. King Charles III, whose late mother Queen Elizabeth II and Margrethe were third cousins.

Charles said he was committed to working with them "on ensuring that the enduring bond between our countries, and our families, remains strong."

Earlier in the day, the royal guards' music band made their daily parade through downtown Copenhagen, but wore the red jackets used to mark major events, instead of their usual black.

The last time a Danish monarch voluntarily resigned was in 1146, when King Erik III Lam stepped down to enter a monastery. Margrethe abdicated on the same day of January that she ascended the throne following the death of her father, King Frederik IX, on Jan. 14, 1972.

Australians also turned out on the streets of Copenhagen to celebrate one of their own becoming queen.

"I think it's good that she's not from royalty and has a normal Australian background. We can relate more to that, because she's from a middle-class background, and we are too," said Judy Langtree, who made the long journey from Brisbane with her daughter to witness the royal event.

A survey — commissioned by Denmark's public broadcaster DR — published Friday showed that 79% of the 1,037 people polled by the Epinion polling institute said that they believed Frederik was prepared to take the reigns and 83% said they thought his wife Mary was ready to become queen. The survey margin of error was 3 percentage points, DR said.

Though a hereditary monarchy might seem contradictory to the egalitarian principles of modern-day Denmark, the royal family remains highly popular and the anti-monarchist movement is small.

"The republicans in Denmark have no future," former parliamentary Speaker Pia Kjaersgaard said on public television.

War of words after Taiwan election highlights the intractable divide over the island's fate

By EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA and KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — A war of words erupted the day after Taiwan's presidential and parliamentary elections, with Taiwan on Sunday accusing China of making "fallacious comments" and China criticizing the U.S. for congratulating the winner.

The verbal sparring highlighted the seemingly intractable divide over Taiwan's fate, a major flashpoint in U.S.-China relations that risks leading to an actual war in the future.

The victory of Lai Ching-te in Saturday's election was a setback for China's efforts to bring Taiwan under its control. His Democratic Progressive Party advocates maintaining the status quo, in which Taiwan governs itself but refrains from declaring formal independence — a move that could trigger a Chinese military response. China, meanwhile, calls for what it terms a "peaceful reunification," but that seems increasingly unrealistic as most Taiwanese have come to oppose becoming part of China.

Taiwan said as much, taking issue with China over its often-repeated line that Taiwan is a domestic Chinese issue. China regards the island of 23 million people as a renegade province and says it shouldn't have its own president or official relations with foreign governments.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement on the election that "the Taiwan question is China's internal affair" and "the basic fact that Taiwan is part of China will not change."

Taiwan said that statement "is completely inconsistent with international understanding and the current cross-strait situation. It goes against the expectation of global democratic communities and goes against the will of the people of Taiwan to uphold democratic values. Such cliches are not worth refuting."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Lai on his victory, and saying Washington looks forward to working with all of Taiwan's leaders "to advance our shared interests and values." It congratulated

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the people of Taiwan for demonstrating the strength of their democracy, a nod to the Biden administration's efforts to find common ground with other democracies in the face of China's rise.

China's Foreign Ministry said the U.S. statement "sends a gravely wrong signal to the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces" and goes against a U.S. commitment to maintaining only unofficial ties with Taiwan.

Lai's victory means the Democratic Progressive Party will continue to hold the presidency for a third four-year term, following eight years under President Tsai Ing-wen. But he won a three-way race for president with 40% of the vote, less than the clear majority Tsai won in 2020. He will take office in May.

The Democratic Progressive Party lost its majority in the legislature, finishing with one seat fewer than the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party. Neither holds a majority, giving the Taiwan People's Party — a relatively new force that won eight of the 113 seats — a possible swing vote on legislation.

A statement from the Taiwan Affairs Office in China said that the results showed that the Democratic Progressive Party does not represent mainstream public opinion on the island.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry, in its response, called on China "to respect the election results, face reality and give up its oppression against Taiwan."

The Chinese military regularly sends fighter jets and warships into the skies and waters near Taiwan. Any conflict could draw in the United States, which officially doesn't support Taiwan's independence but opposes any attempt to change the status quo by force.

Meanwhile, former U.S. national security adviser Stephen Hadley and former Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg arrived in Taipei on Sunday for post-election meetings with political leaders. It was unclear how China would react, as it seeks to nurture a recent improvement in its troubled ties with the U.S. while also maintaining a firm and unwavering position on Taiwan.

They two will have meetings on Monday, the American Institute in Taiwan, the de-facto U.S. embassy, said in a news release. The institute said the U.S. government had asked Hadley and Steinberg "to travel in their private capacity to Taiwan."

China has said that it opposes any official interaction with Taiwan but has not indicated whether it considers the upcoming visit an official one.

The U.S. does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, though it maintains an office in Taipei, the capital city, and is the main supplier of weapons for the island's military.

As diversity, equity and inclusion comes under legal attack, companies quietly alter their programs

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, HALELUYA HADERO and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Sophia Danner-Okotie's has ambitious plans for her Nigerian-inspired clothing line but a sense of dread has punctured her optimism as she watches a legal battle being waged against a small venture capital firm that has provided funding instrumental to her boutique brand's growth.

The case against the Fearless Fund alleges that one of its grant programs discriminates against non-Black women and asks the courts to imagine a similar program designed only for white applicants. It is among a growing list of lawsuits against corporate diversity and inclusion programs that are making their way through the courts this year.

Most have been filed by conservative activists encouraged by the Supreme Court's June ruling ending affirmative action in college admissions and are now seeking to set a similar precedent in the working world.

The battle has been a roller coaster of setbacks and victories for both sides, but some companies are already retooling their diversity programs in the face of legal challenges, and the growing expectation that the conservative-dominated Supreme Court will eventually take up the issue.

One conservative activist, Christopher Rufo, claimed another victory this month with the resignation of Harvard's first Black woman president, Claudine Gay, after allegations of plagiarism and a furor over her congressional testimony about antisemitism.

Rufo, who has cast Gay's appointment to the job as the culmination of diversity and inclusion efforts that have sidelined conservative voices in higher education, vowed on the social media platform X, formerly

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known as Twitter, not to “stop until we have abolished DEI ideology from every institution in America.”

Dozens of prominent companies have already been targeted, as well as a wide array of diversity initiatives, including fellowships, hiring goals, anti-bias training and contract programs for minority or women-owned businesses.

Some challenges have focused on policies adopted after the 2020 protests over George Floyd’s killing by police as companies pledged more efforts to redress racial inequalities in the workplace. But others have targeted decades-old diversity programs that anti-affirmative action advocates have long tried to dismantle.

Diversity and inclusion experts say the legal backlash is already having a chilling effect over corporate efforts to address workplace inequality at a time when investment and interest in such initiatives have slowed following the post-Floyd surge.

Job openings for diversity officers and similar positions have declined in recent months. The combined share of venture capital funding for businesses owned by Black and Latina women has dipped back to less than 1% after briefly surpassing that threshold — at 1.05% — in 2021 following a jump in 2020, according to the nonprofit advocacy group digitalundivided.

The case against the Fearless Fund, which provides early-stage funding to businesses led by women of color, exemplifies the unpredictable legal landscape.

In late September, a federal judge in Atlanta refused to block a Fearless Fund grant contest for Black women business owners, saying they are donations protected by the First Amendment and the lawsuit was likely to fail. But days later, a three-judge federal appeals panel suspended the contest, calling it “racially exclusionary” and saying the suit was likely to succeed.

“Am I going to be able to apply to grants like these? Are they even going to exist?” said Danner-Okotie, who received \$10,000 from a separate Fearless Fund grant. “With this last ruling, it seems like no.”

Danner-Okotie first saw the potential for scaling her clothing brand when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the boutiques and fairs that carried her designs. Searching for ways to increase her online sales, she landed a contract with subscriber-based retailer Stitch Fix and used a government pandemic relief loan to fulfill the order. But when she tried to build on that success, she ran into roadblocks as banks declined her loan applications, deeming her business model risky since her clothes are handmade by Nigerian tailors.

The Fearless Fund, Danner-Okotie said, grasped her mission of designing clothes for American women looking to celebrate their African heritage. The grant was a game changer, allowing her to contract a factory in India to make uniquely designed fabrics for her team of tailors in Nigeria.

But now, future funding from the program is in jeopardy. The lawsuit against the Fearless Fund is being brought by the American Alliance for Equal Rights, a nonprofit founded by anti-affirmative action activist Edward Blum, the man behind the college admissions cases the Supreme Court ruled on in June. The outcome of the case could be a bellwether for similar diversity programs.

Oral arguments in the case are scheduled for Jan. 31.

ADJUSTING DIVERSITY PROGRAMS

Faced with a messy legal landscape, companies are being cautious. Most major companies have stuck by diversity initiatives that many ramped up in the face of pressure from some shareholders, employees and customers. Starbucks and Disney are among companies that have so far prevailed in court against challenges to their inclusion policies.

But some have made changes to diversity programs to try to protect them from legal scrutiny.

Among those are two prominent law firms that had faced lawsuits by Blum’s group. The firms, Morrison Foerster and Perkins Coie, opened their diversity fellowship programs to all applicants of all races in October, changes the companies said were in the works before Blum’s lawsuits, which he subsequently dropped.

In February, Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer dropped race-based eligibility requirements for a fellowship program designed for college students of Black, Latino and Native American descent, even though a judge had dismissed a lawsuit against the program two months earlier. Despite the change, the conservative nonprofit suing Pfizer, Do No Harm, is appealing the lawsuit’s dismissal, arguing the fellowship’s goals remain the same.

In May, Comcast said business owners of all backgrounds would be eligible to apply for a grant program

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originally intended for women and people of color when it launched in 2020. The telecommunications settled a lawsuit last year over the program brought by the conservative Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty on behalf of the white owner of a commercial cleaning business.

The Wisconsin Institute filed another lawsuit in October, this one on behalf of two construction firms. The lawsuit seeks to dismantle the U.S. Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, which dates back to the Reagan administration and requires that 10% of funds authorized for highway and transit federal assistance programs be expended with small businesses owned by women, minorities or other socially and economically disadvantaged people.

Dan Lennington, an attorney with the Wisconsin Institute, said he considers Comcast's changes "progress," but the anti-affirmative action movement is looking for a broader victory that could change case law on workplace diversity programs, and the lawsuit against the DOT has that potential.

The Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action "opened up a whole new world," Lennington said. "This decision just really injected new life into the whole debate."

A GRAY AREA ON HIRING

Many of the lawsuits challenging diversity programs, including the cases against Pfizer and the Fearless Fund, are relying on a section of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which prohibits racial discrimination in contract agreements. The law was originally intended to protect formerly enslaved people, but conservative activists are citing it to challenge programs designed to benefit racial minorities.

Their lawsuits generally target programs that have clear race-based eligibility components. A more difficult challenge is proving that companies are making hiring decisions based on race, said David Glasgow, executive director of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at New York University's School of Law.

Taking race into account for hiring or promotions is illegal under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. A debate has emerged about whether companies are crossing the line by announcing goals for increasing Black and other minority representation. Companies say such efforts are not quotas but aspirational goals they will try to achieve through policies like widening candidate pools and rooting out bias in hiring processes.

Glasgow called it a "gray area" that could depend on a court's interpretation of corporate policies. He said it could be hard to prove discrimination just because a company "announced in a really broad way that it would be nice to have more people of color in management" but plaintiffs could try to argue that Diversity Equity and Inclusion policies are pressuring hiring managers to make race-based decisions.

Conservative activists are trying to make just that case, seizing on corporate documents that share data on efforts to increase the ranks of Black, Hispanic and other underrepresented groups in their workforce, however modest that progress might be.

America First Legal, a group run by former Trump adviser Stephen Miller, sent a letter in November to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission seeking an investigation into Macy's efforts to strengthen its DEI policies, arguing they amount to discriminatory hiring practices.

In 2019, Macy's announced a goal of 30% ethnic diversity among its leadership at the director level and above by 2025, in part to better serve its customer base, which is about 50% non-white. The retailer launched a leadership training program for selected managers of color, and last year required that candidates for director roles include ethnically diverse applicants. It also has incorporated its DEI goals into annual performance reviews for directors and company-wide incentive calculation.

America First Legal cited those initiatives to argue that Macy's "has set explicit racial and other quotas for hiring." The group has sent dozens of similar letters to the EEOC targeting companies from IBM to American Airlines.

Macy's declined to comment on the letter. But in a previous interview with The Associated Press, outgoing Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette said the company is sticking with its DEI policies while closely watching legal developments.

"Our enthusiasm and our commitment to all the prongs that we had with DEI, and our strategy, remains. We might express it differently based on court rulings and in the future," Gennette said, without providing details.

North Korea launches suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile that can reach distant US bases

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired a suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile into the sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, two months after the North claimed to have tested engines for a new harder-to-detect missile capable of striking distant U.S. targets in the region.

The launch was the North's first this year. Experts say North Korea could ramp up its provocative missile tests as a way to influence the results of South Korea's parliamentary elections in April and the U.S. presidential election in November.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that it detected the launch of a ballistic missile of an intermediate-range class from the North's capital region on Sunday afternoon. It said the missile flew about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff called the launch a provocation that poses a serious threat to peace on the Korean Peninsula. It said South Korea's military will maintain its readiness to overwhelmingly respond to any provocations by North Korea.

The South Korean assessment suggests North Korea could have launched a new intermediate-range ballistic missile, whose solid-fuel engine the North said it had tested in mid-November.

The missile is mainly designed to hit U.S. military bases in the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, which is about 3,400 kilometers (2,110 miles) from Pyongyang, the North's capital. With a range adjustment, the missile can also be used to attack closer targets — the U.S. military installations in Japan's Okinawa island, according to Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy in Seoul.

Built-in solid propellants make missile launches harder to detect than liquid-fueled missiles, which must be fueled before launch and cannot last long. North Korea has a growing arsenal of solid-fuel short-range missiles targeting South Korea, but its existing Hwasong-12 intermediate-range missile is powered by liquid-fuel engines.

Japan's Defense Ministry said its analysis showed the missile traveled at least 500 kilometers (300 miles) at the maximum altitude of 50 kilometers (30 miles), data that suggest North Korea may have fired a short-range and not an intermediate-range missile.

Japan and South Korea said they closely exchanged information about the launch with the United States, but they didn't immediately explain the discrepancy in data.

In a trilateral call later Sunday, senior diplomats from South Korea, the U.S. and Japan condemned the North Korean launch and stressed that a North Korean provocation would lead to the three countries strengthening their security cooperation, according to South Korea's Foreign Ministry.

The last time North Korea performed a missile launch was Dec. 18, when it test-fired its Hwasong-18 solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missile, the North's most advanced weapon. The Hwasong-18 is the country's only known solid-fuel ICBM and it's designed to strike the mainland U.S.

On Jan. 5, North Korea fired a barrage of artillery shells near the disputed western sea boundary with South Korea, prompting South Korea to conduct similar firing exercises in the same area. The site is where the navies of the two Koreas have fought three bloody sea battles since 1999, and attacks blamed on North Korea killed 50 South Koreans in 2010.

In recent days, North Korea has also been escalating its warlike, inflammatory rhetoric against its foes ahead of an election year in South Korea and the U.S. Last week, leader Kim Jong Un called South Korea "our principal enemy" and threatened to annihilate it if provoked.

Experts say Kim likely wants to see South Korean liberals win the election in a blow to conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, who has taken a hard line on the North. They say Kim also wants former U.S. President Donald Trump to be elected again because he may believe he could win U.S. concessions if Trump returns to the White House.

Kim has been pushing hard to enlarge his nuclear and missile arsenals since his high-stakes diplomacy

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with Trump broke down in 2019. In recent months, North Korea has also been expanding its military and other cooperation with Russia.

The U.S. government said it has evidence that missiles provided by North Korea to Russia had been used in the war in Ukraine. In a joint statement last week, the U.S., South Korea and their partners said the missile transfer supports Russia's war of aggression and provides North Korea with valuable technical and military insights.

North Korea and Russia announced Sunday that North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui will visit Russia from Monday to Wednesday at the invitation of her Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov.

"Pyongyang's show of force should be of concern beyond Seoul, as its military cooperation with Moscow adds to the violence in Ukraine, and because it may be more willing to challenge the U.S. and its allies while global attention is fixed on the Middle East," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

A weekend of ferocious winter weather could see low-temperature records set in the US heartland

By JIM SALTER and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — Icy winter weather blanketed the U.S. on Saturday as a wave of Arctic storms threatened to break low-temperature records in the heartland, spread cold and snow from coast to coast and cast a chill over everything from football playoffs to presidential campaigns.

As the three-day Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday weekend began, the weather forecast was a crazy quilt of color-coded advisories, from an ice storm warning in Oregon to a blizzard warning in the northern Plains to high wind warnings in New Mexico.

"It's, overall, been a terrible, terrible winter. And it came out of nowhere — two days," Dan Abinana said as he surveyed a snowy Des Moines, Iowa. He moved to the state from Tanzania as a child years ago, but said "you never get used to the snow."

The harsh weather in Oregon played a role in three deaths.

In Portland, medical examiners were investigating a hypothermia death as freezing rain and heavy snow fell in a city more accustomed to mild winter rains, and hundreds of people took shelter overnight at warming centers.

Portland Fire and Rescue also reported the death of a woman in her early 30s on Saturday afternoon. An RV caught fire when a small group of people used an open flame stove to keep warm inside and a tree fell on the vehicle, causing the fire to spread. Three other people escaped, including one with minor injuries, but the woman was trapped inside, the fire department said.

Authorities in Lake Oswego, Oregon, said a large tree fell on a home during high winds Saturday, killing an older man on the second floor.

Weather-related deaths already were reported earlier in the week in California, Idaho, Illinois and Wisconsin.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen announced a state of emergency, citing "very dangerous conditions." Up to 2 feet (0.6 meters) of snow fell in some areas over the past week, and wind chills were well below zero.

"This event is not going away tonight. It's not going away tomorrow," Pillen said at a news conference "It's going to take a number of days."

About 1,700 miles (2,735 kilometers) of Nebraska highways were closed. State police assisted more than 400 stranded motorists, said Col. John A. Bolduc, head of the Nebraska State Patrol.

In Iowa, cars were stuck for five hours in blowing snow on Interstate 80 after semitrailers jackknifed in slippery conditions. State troopers had handled 86 crashes and 535 motorist-assist calls since Friday, State Patrol Sgt. Alex Dinkla said.

Road crews were "working the snow-blowers like crazy," Dinkla said, but high winds were blowing snow right back onto roadways.

Governors from New York to Louisiana warned residents to be prepared for worrisome weather.

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Parts of Montana fell below minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 34 degrees Celsius) Saturday morning, and the National Weather Service said similar temperatures were expected as far as northern Kansas, with minus 50 F (minus 46 C) possible in the Dakotas. In St. Louis, the National Weather Service warned of rare and "life-threatening" cold.

"We've had, now, multiple back-to-back storms" parading across the country, weather service meteorologist Zach Taylor said. That typically happens at least a couple of times in the U.S. winter.

Still, to Eboni Jones of Des Moines, it felt unusual for "how much we're getting all within one week."

"It's pretty crazy out," Jones said while shoveling snow.

Grant Rampton, 25, also of Des Moines, braved a wind chill of minus 20 F (minus 29 C) to go sledding with friends at a golf course, fighting off the cold by wearing layers of clothing and insulated socks and keeping in constant movement.

"It's a great state to be in," said Rampton, a lifelong Iowan. "There's not as much to do, in winter especially, but you can make your own fun, like out here, sledding with your friends."

The temperature in parts of Iowa could dip as low as minus 14 F (minus 26 C) on Monday, when the state's caucuses kick off the presidential primary season. And forecasters said it would be Wednesday before below-zero windchills go away.

Republicans Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley and former President Donald Trump all canceled campaign events because of the storm.

Electricity was out Saturday afternoon in hundreds of thousands of households and businesses, mainly in Michigan, Oregon and Wisconsin, according to poweroutage.us.

In Yankton, South Dakota, the temperature was minus 15 F (minus 26 C) in the evening. Police there said plows were "freezing and breaking," so they would not operate until conditions improve. The Minnehaha County Highway Department also pulled its plows "due to low visibility and extreme cold temps."

In other places, if the problem wasn't snow and wind, it was water: Record high tides hit the Northeast, flooding some homes in Maine and New Hampshire.

The coastal Northeast was pounded by 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) of rain in the morning, and a storm surge amplified what was already the month's highest tide, National Weather Service meteorologist Michael Cempa said. In Portland, Maine, a gauge recorded a 14.57-foot (4.4-meter) difference between high and average low tide, topping a prior record of 14.17 feet (4.3 meters) set in 1978.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul warned of a "dangerous storm" as she announced that the Buffalo Bills-Pittsburgh Steelers NFL playoff game was postponed from Sunday to Monday. Residents of the county that includes Buffalo were told to stay off the roads starting at 9 p.m. Saturday, with the forecast calling for 1 to 2 feet (0.3 to 0.6 meters) or more of snow and winds gusting as high as 65 mph (105 kph).

Kansas City, Missouri, hosted a frigid playoff game Saturday night between the Chiefs and the Miami Dolphins. It was minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 20 degrees Celsius) at kickoff, easily setting a record for the coldest game at Arrowhead Stadium.

Still, hundreds of fans lined up hours beforehand outside the Arrowhead Stadium parking lots, some with ski goggles, heated socks and other winter gear they bought for the game.

Chiefs season ticket holder Keaton Schlatter and his friends had considered trying to sell their seats, as many other fans did.

"But we decided that it's all part of the experience, and we didn't want to miss it," said Schlatter, of West Des Moines, Iowa.

In Oregon, Robert Banks, who has been homeless for several years, stood outside his blue tent along a Portland street in the afternoon, wearing one glove as sleet pelted him. He said he wanted to secure his belongings before making his way to a shelter.

"I lived in Alaska for a number of years," he said. "The wind and the wet cold is different from dry tundra cold ... oh, it is bone-chilling."

The snow was welcome in at least one place.

Philip Spitzley of Lake Odessa, Michigan, woke up Friday to 95 small snowmen in his front yard to cel-

celebrate his 95th birthday. Fifteen family members and a neighbor collaborated on the snow-packing job, which took about 90 minutes.

"I was quite surprised," Spitzley said. "I sat right here watching my TV and didn't know they were out there. Then I saw flashlights."

The display has turned into a spectacle as motorists slow down for a look. And with days of cold weather ahead, "they'll be there awhile," Spitzley said.

As legal challenges mount, some companies retool diversity and inclusion programs

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, HALELUYA HADERO and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Advocates of diversity efforts are steeling themselves for a fight this year as a growing number of lawsuits take aim at programs intended to advance racial equity in the corporate world.

Lawsuits making their way through the courts have targeted prominent companies and a wide array of diversity initiatives, including fellowships, hiring goals, anti-bias training and contract programs for minority or women-owned businesses. Most have been filed by conservative activists who have been encouraged by the Supreme Court's June ruling ending affirmative action in college admissions and are seeking to set a similar precedent in the workplace.

The battle has been a roller coaster of setbacks and victories for both sides, but some companies are already retooling their diversity programs in the face of legal challenges, and the expectation that the conservative-dominated Supreme Court will eventually take up the issue.

"There's a dragnet that I think we should all be concerned about," said Alphonso David, President & CEO of the Global Black Economic Forum and a legal counsel for the Fearless Fund, an Atlanta-based non-profit that is facing a lawsuit over a grant program for businesses owned by Black women.

"It's all coordinated to reverse existing law and advance a chilling effect throughout many industries," David said.

One conservative activist, Christopher Rufo, claimed a victory this month with the resignation of Harvard's first Black woman president, Claudine Gay, after allegations of plagiarism and a furor over her congressional testimony about antisemitism.

Rufo, who has cast Gay's appointment to the job as the culmination of misguided diversity and inclusion efforts, vowed on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, not to "stop until we have abolished DEI ideology from every institution in America."

Civil Rights advocates are fighting back. On Monday, the National Action Network, led by the Rev. Al Sharpton, plans to announce a national drive to defend diversity programs at an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day breakfast in Washington.

Sharpton and other prominent civil rights activist have rallied around the Fearless Fund as it fights a lawsuit brought by the American Alliance for Equal Rights, a group founded by anti-affirmative action activist Edward Blum, the man behind the college admissions cases the Supreme Court ruled on in June. The lawsuit alleges that one of the Fearless Fund's grant contests discriminates against non-Black women and asks the courts to imagine a similar program designed only for white applicants.

In late September, a federal judge in Atlanta refused to block the contest, saying the grants are donations protected by the First Amendment and the lawsuit was likely to fail. But days later, a three-judge federal appeals panel suspended the contest, calling it "racially exclusionary" and saying the suit was likely to succeed.

Oral arguments in the case are scheduled for Jan. 31. The outcome of the case could be a bellwether for similar diversity programs.

Advocates say the legal backlash comes at a time when investment in diversity programs are slowing following a surge in 2020 in the wake of racial protests over the police killing of George Floyd. Job openings for diversity officers and similar positions have declined in recent months. The combined share of

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venture capital funding for businesses owned by Black and Latina women has dipped back to less than 1% after briefly surpassing that threshold — at 1.05% — in 2021 following a jump in 2020, according to the nonprofit advocacy group digitalundivided.

Faced with a messy legal landscape, companies are being cautious. Most major companies have so far stuck by diversity initiatives, which many ramped up in the face of pressure from some shareholders, employees and customers. Starbucks and Disney are among companies that have so far prevailed in court against challenges to their Diversity Equity and Inclusion policies.

But some have made changes to diversity programs to try to protect them from legal scrutiny.

Among those are two prominent law firms that had faced lawsuits by Blum's group. The firms, Morrison Foerster and Perkins Coie, opened their diversity fellowship programs to all applicants of all races in October, changes the companies said were in the works before Blum's lawsuits, which he subsequently dropped.

In May, Comcast said business owners of all backgrounds would be eligible to apply for a grant program originally intended for women and people of color when it launched in 2020. The telecommunications settled a lawsuit last year over the program brought by the conservative Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty on behalf of the white owner of a commercial cleaning business.

The Wisconsin Institute filed another lawsuit in October, this one on behalf of two construction firms. The lawsuit seeks to dismantle the U.S. Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, which dates back to the Reagan administration and requires that 10% of funds authorized for highway and transit federal assistance programs be expended with small business owned by women, minorities or other socially and economically disadvantaged people.

Dan Lenington, an attorney with the Wisconsin Institute, said he considers Comcast's changes "progress," but the anti-affirmative action movement is looking for a broader victory that could change case law on workplace diversity programs.

The Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action "opened up a whole new world," Lenington said. "This decision just really injected new life into the whole debate."

Many of the lawsuits challenging diversity programs, including the case against the Fearless Fund, are relying on a section of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which prohibits racial discrimination in contract agreements. The law was originally intended to protect formerly enslaved people, but conservative activists are citing it to challenge programs designed to benefit racial minorities.

Some conservative officials and activists are also alleging that companies crossed a line by announcing goals for increasing Black and other minority representation. Companies say such goals are not quotas but aspirational targets designed to measure the effectiveness of policies like widening candidate pools and rooting out bias in hiring.

Misty Gaither, vice president for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at Indeed, said the online jobsite is sticking with its goal of increasing the representation of underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities in its U.S. workforce to 30% by 2030.

"We are doubling down on our efforts because we believe it's the right thing to do," Gaither said.

Conservative activists have seized on the goals to argue that hiring managers are being pressured to make race-based decisions in violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits taking race into account in hiring decisions.

America First Legal, a group run by former Trump adviser Stephen Miller, sent a letter in November to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission seeking an investigation into Macy's DEI policies, including its goal of achieving 30% ethnic diversity among its leadership at the director level and above by 2025, in part to better serve its customer base, which is about 50% non-white. The retailer launched a leadership training program for selected managers of color, and last year required that candidates for director roles include ethnically diverse applicants. It also has incorporated its DEI goals into annual performance reviews for directors and company-wide incentive calculation.

America First Legal cited those initiatives to argue that Macy's "has set explicit racial and other quotas for hiring." The group has sent dozens of similar letters to the EEOC targeting companies from IBM to

American Airlines.

Macy's declined to comment on the letter. But in a previous interview with The Associated Press, outgoing Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette said the company is sticking with its DEI policies while closely watching legal developments.

"Our enthusiasm and our commitment to all the prongs that we had with DEI, and our strategy, remains. We might express it differently based on court rulings and in the future," Gennette said, without providing details.

US military academies focus on oaths and loyalty to Constitution as political divisions intensify

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. (AP) — For 75 minutes, Maj. Joe Amoroso quizzed his students in SS202, American Politics, about civilian leadership of the military, the trust between the armed forces and the public, and how the military must not become a partisan tool.

There was one answer, he said, that would always be acceptable in his class filled with second-year students at the U.S. Military Academy. Hesitantly, one cadet offered a response: "The Constitution."

"Yes," Amoroso said emphatically.

His message to the students, known as yearlings, was simple: Their loyalty is "not about particular candidates. It's not a particular person or personality that occupies these positions. It's about the Constitution."

The emphasis for the next generation of military officers that their loyalty must be focused on the nation's democratic underpinnings rather than on any individual is a reflection of how the armed forces are being forced to deal with America's deep political polarization at a time when trust in traditional institutions is eroding.

The role of the military in particular has come under scrutiny as former President Donald Trump runs to reclaim the White House and has laid out an aggressive agenda should he win. It includes potentially using the military in ways other presidents have not. That could mean invoking the Insurrection Act to send units to the border or patrol the streets of predominantly Democratic cities.

Trump's rhetoric about top commanders also has raised concerns. While in office, Trump once referred to the military leaders in his administration as "my generals." Earlier this year, he suggested that a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, retired Army Gen. Mark Milley, be put to death for treason.

President Joe Biden, in his first campaign address of the year, warned about Trump's rhetoric on the military and its leadership.

With cadets and midshipmen drawn from across the United States, students at West Point and other service academies are aware of the national mood and the potential for political divisions to seep into the military.

They encounter an array of classes on the Constitution and, in some cases, the history of the civilian-military relationship. Each graduate who is commissioned takes multiple oaths at school and during their service. Milley emphasized the significance of the oaths in his retirement address last fall, appearing to take aim at Trump.

"We don't take an oath to a king or a queen or to a tyrant or a dictator. And we don't take an oath to a wannabe dictator," he said.

At the Air Force Academy, the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol was a top subject of discussion in the Civil-Military Relations class when junior and senior-year cadets began the spring semester the next day.

The coincidental timing "brought introspection about their oath as future officers," said the instructor, Marybeth Ulrich. One result was a cadet-driven initiative, the Oath Project.

"Instigation of potential uprising or any issues on Capitol Hill creates immediate concern for the military and for the larger public as a whole. So we were very aware of the events as they were unfolding," said 1st Lt. Darrell Miller, now stationed with the Space Force at Buckley Space Force Base near Denver, and

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one of the 13 students in the class who started the project.

Dozens of former and active duty military members have been charged in the Jan. 6 assault, an attempt to stop Congress from certifying the 2020 presidential election that Democrat Biden won over Republican Trump. A recent Defense Department inspector general report showed that dozens of military members were suspected of extremist activities that included conspiring to overthrow the government, though the number represents a tiny fraction of the more than 2 million U.S. service members.

When the students examined the three oaths they had sworn to, Miller said they realized there had not been much education about them -- "a line by line breakdown. What does it mean? What are you really swearing your allegiance to essentially."

The group suggested more emphasis on the history and purpose of their oaths and also "what you are actually swearing your allegiance to," he said. One point was showing the distinction between countries where the military professed allegiance to sovereigns or individuals as opposed to the U.S. military's oath to the Constitution.

"We knew what it was and the do's and don'ts, but we didn't really go into the why," said 1st Lt. Bryan Agustin, another of the students behind the Oath Project who is stationed at Goodfellow Air Force Base in Texas.

Although the seniors had a short time before graduation, they were able to change some of the language in their commissioning ceremony, adding more history about the oath before it was administered. The incoming basic class that fall also had the history added to their ceremony. According to copies provided by the academy, the phrasing in both cases noted that the oath had its roots in the Revolutionary War and was given to support "the democratic processes and civil liberties that our Founders enumerated in the Constitution."

Since then, the Oath Project has been instrumental in further changes, including to basic training for new students and to their handbooks. The group's work also is integrated throughout cadets' academic and military training. Future plans include symposiums for other service academies and ROTC units.

At West Point, the Constitution and the oaths are not only embedded throughout the curriculum, they also permeate the campus.

Constitution Corner Monument is near student housing and a place cadets pass daily. Dedicated by members of the class of 1943 to their fallen classmates, it contains several markers that include inscriptions of their oaths and parts of the Constitution.

Inside Grant Hall, two of the alumni portraits that look down on diners and visitors loom large in the history of the oath and the civilian-military relationship. Ulysses S. Grant, who later became president, led the Union Army through the Civil War after an estimated 300 of his fellow graduates had rejected their oaths and fought for the Confederacy. Dwight D. Eisenhower was the Supreme Allied Commander in World War II who later became president and used the Insurrection Act to call on the 101st Airborne to help integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

"The Constitution remains absolutely central to all the things that we teach, whether it's expressly or it's tangentially connected in the courses," said Brig. Gen. Shane Reeves, dean of the academic board and a 1996 graduate.

The goal is training officers to win wars, but current events are intertwined, including Jan. 6, which routinely comes up in class discussions. Avoiding it would not be an option, said Reeves, whose family ties to West Point date to the 19th century. His son is due to graduate in May.

He said if newly minted officers cannot answer questions from their units about current events, "we would have failed."

"We want the cadets to be thoughtful and to think through and to understand what their obligations are," he said. "They have some really important obligations — trust of the American people, trying to stay nonpartisan."

In Amoroso's American Politics class, the only mention of Biden and Trump, who so far has dominated the 2024 GOP primary campaign, came up in scenarios he presented about service members -- even retired ones -- speaking out in support of candidates and how that can be interpreted as the position of

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the military as a whole. While individuals retain the right to express themselves, it's important that the military not be seen as partisan, he said.

"Whether you like it or not, you're going to be thrust into these political conflicts," he told the cadets. No matter the circumstance, he added, their foundation should never change – loyalty to the Constitution.

Genocide case against Israel: Where does the rest of the world stand on the momentous allegations?

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — South Africa says more than 50 countries have expressed support for its case at the United Nations' top court accusing Israel of genocide against Palestinians in the war in Gaza.

Others, including the United States, have strongly rejected South Africa's allegation that Israel is violating the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Many more have remained silent.

The world's reaction to the landmark case that was heard Thursday and Friday at the International Court of Justice in The Hague shows a predictable global split when it comes to the inextricable, 75-year-old problem of Israel and the Palestinians. Sunday marks 100 days of their bloodiest ever conflict.

The majority of countries backing South Africa's case are from the Arab world and Africa. In Europe, only the Muslim nation of Turkey has publicly stated its support.

No Western country has declared support for South Africa's allegations against Israel. The U.S., a close Israel ally, has rejected them as unfounded, the U.K. has called them unjustified, and Germany said it "explicitly rejects" them.

China and Russia have said little about one of the most momentous cases to come before an international court. The European Union also hasn't commented.

US: 'MERITLESS' ALLEGATIONS

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on a visit to Israel a day before the court proceedings began that South Africa's allegations are "meritless" and that the case "distracts the world" from efforts to find a lasting solution to the conflict. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said genocide is "not a word that ought to be thrown around lightly, and we certainly don't believe that it applies here."

"We don't agree with what the South Africans are doing," U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron said of the case.

Israel fiercely rejects the allegations of genocide and says it is defending its people. It says the offensive is aimed at eradicating the leaders of Hamas, the militant group that runs the territory and provoked the conflict by launching surprise attacks on southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and taking around 250 hostages.

Blinken said a genocide case against Israel was "particularly galling" given that Hamas and other groups "continue to openly call for the annihilation of Israel and the mass murder of Jews."

The U.S., the U.K., the EU and others classify Hamas as a terrorist organization.

Israel's military response in Gaza has killed more than 23,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The count doesn't distinguish between combatants and civilians. It says more than two-thirds of the dead are women and children. Much of northern Gaza has become an uninhabitable moonscape with entire neighborhoods erased by Israeli air strikes and tank fire.

South Africa has also condemned Hamas' Oct. 7 attack but argues that it did not justify Israel's response.

GERMAN SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

Germany's announcement of support for Israel on Friday, the day the hearings closed, has symbolic significance given its history of the Holocaust, when the Nazis killed 6 million Jews in Europe. Israel was created after World War II as a haven for Jews in the shadow of those atrocities.

"Israel has been defending itself," German government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit said. His statement also invoked the Holocaust, which in large part spurred the creation of the U.N. Genocide Convention in 1948.

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"In view of Germany's history ... the Federal Government sees itself as particularly committed to the Convention against Genocide," he said. He called the allegations against Israel "completely unfounded."

Germany said it intends to intervene in the case on Israel's behalf.

The EU has only said that countries have a right to bring cases to the U.N. court. Most of its member states have refrained from taking a position.

Turkey, which is in the process of joining the EU, was a lone voice in the region. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country provided documents that were being used against Israel in the case.

"With these documents, Israel will be condemned," he said.

ARAB CONDEMNATION

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation was one of the first blocs to publicly back the case when South Africa filed it late last month. It said there was "mass genocide being perpetrated by the Israeli defense forces" and accused Israel of "indiscriminate targeting" of Gaza's civilian population.

The OIC is a bloc of 57 countries that includes Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt. Its headquarters are in Saudi Arabia. The Cairo-based Arab League, whose 22 member countries are almost all part of the OIC, also backed South Africa's case.

South Africa drew some support from outside the Arab world. Namibia and Pakistan agreed with the case at a U.N. General Assembly session this week. Malaysia also expressed support.

"No peace-loving human being can ignore the carnage waged against Palestinians in Gaza," Namibian President Hage Geingob was quoted as saying in the southern African nation's *The Namibian* newspaper.

Malaysia's Foreign Ministry demanded "legal accountability for Israel's atrocities in Gaza."

CHINA AND RUSSIA: SILENCE

China, Russia — which is also facing allegations of genocide in the world court — and the emerging power of India have largely remained silent, seemingly aware that taking a stand in such an inflammatory case has little upside and could irreversibly upset their relationships in the region.

India's foreign policy has historically supported the Palestinian cause, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi was one of the first global leaders to express solidarity with Israel and call the Hamas attack terrorism.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE

A handful of South American countries have spoken up, including the continent's biggest economy, Brazil, whose Foreign Ministry said President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva backed South Africa's case. However, the ministry's comments did not directly accuse Israel of genocide but focused on the need for a cease-fire in Gaza.

South Africa's case against Israel is two-fold: It wants the court to say Israel is committing genocide and to issue an interim ruling ordering an end to its military campaign in Gaza. The court said it would decide on an interim ruling soon but, reflecting the gravity of the case, it could take years for a final verdict on the genocide charge.

Brazil said it hoped the case would get Israel to "immediately cease all acts and measures that could constitute genocide."

Other countries have stopped short of agreeing with South Africa. Ireland premier Leo Varadkar said the genocide case was "far from clear cut" but that he hoped the court would order a cease-fire in Gaza.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said no one — including the world court — will stop Israel's war against Hamas. Russia didn't obey the court when it told it to halt its invasion of Ukraine nearly two years ago.

As Israel-Hamas war reaches 100-day mark, here's the conflict by numbers

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Now 100 days old, the latest Israel-Hamas war is by far the longest, bloodiest, and most destructive conflict between the bitter enemies.

The fighting erupted on Oct. 7 when Hamas carried out a deadly attack in southern Israel. Since then, Israel has relentlessly pounded the Gaza Strip with airstrikes and a ground offensive that have wrought

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unprecedented destruction, flattening entire neighborhoods. The offensive has displaced the vast majority of Palestinians in Gaza, shuttered operations in more than half of Gaza's hospitals and caused widespread hunger, U.N. monitors say.

The Israeli military says it has now scaled back operations in the hard-hit north. But in the south, where it says Hamas' leaders are hiding, it presses forward at full strength. Meanwhile, Lebanon's Hezbollah militia and Israel have engaged in cross-border skirmishes nearly every day since the war began.

Here's a look in numbers at the toll of the Israel-Hamas war, sourced from Palestinian Health Ministry and Israeli officials as well as international observers and aid groups.

TOTAL DEATHS

Number of Palestinians killed in Gaza: 23,843

Number of people killed in Israel: more than 1,200

Number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank: 347

CIVILIANS

Civilians killed in Gaza: The civilian toll of the war is unknown, with women and minors making up an estimated two-thirds of those killed

Number of civilians killed in Israel on Oct. 7: 790

U.N. staff killed in Gaza: 148

Health workers killed in Gaza: at least 337

Journalists killed in Gaza: 82

SOLDIERS/MILITANTS

Number of Israeli soldiers killed on Oct. 7: 314

Number of militants killed by Israel: Over 8,000

Number of Israeli soldiers killed in the Gaza ground offensive: 188

Number of Israeli soldiers killed on the northern front: 9

Number of Israeli soldiers killed by friendly fire or "accidents" in Gaza and the north: 29

DESTRUCTION/HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN GAZA

Percentage of Gaza's buildings likely damaged/destroyed: 45-56%

Hospitals in Gaza partially functioning: 15/36

Palestinian civilians facing "catastrophic hunger and starvation": 576,600 (26% of the population)

Percentage of school buildings in Gaza damaged: over 69%

Mosques damaged: 142

Churches damaged: 3

Ambulances damaged: 121

Students out of school: 625,000 (100% of students)

INJURIES

Palestinians injured in Gaza: 60,005

Palestinians injured in West Bank: more than 4,000

Total Israeli injuries: 12,536

Israeli soldiers injured in ground offensive: 1,085

Israeli soldiers injured since Oct. 7: 2,496

DISPLACEMENT

Number of Palestinians displaced in Gaza: 1.9 million (85% of Gaza's population)

Number of Israelis displaced from northern and southern border communities: 249,263 (2.6% of the population)

HOSTAGES/PRISONERS

Hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7: 253

Hostages released: 121

Hostages taken Oct. 7 who remain in the strip: 132

1. 111 men, 19 women, 2 children

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2. 121 Israelis, 11 foreign nationals

Hostages who were killed or died in Hamas captivity: 33

Palestinian prisoners released during weeklong pause in fighting: 240

MUNITIONS

Number of rockets launched toward Israel: 14,000

Today in History: January 15, Martin Luther King Jr. is born

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Jan. 15, the 15th day of 2024. There are 351 days left in the year. This is Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

On Jan. 15, 1929, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta.

On this date:

In 1559, England's Queen Elizabeth I was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

In 1892, the original rules of basketball, devised by James Naismith, were published for the first time in Springfield, Massachusetts, where the game originated.

In 1919, in Boston, a tank containing an estimated 2.3 million gallons of molasses burst, sending the dark syrup coursing through the city's North End, killing 21 people.

In 1943, work was completed on the Pentagon, headquarters of the U.S. Department of War (now Defense).

In 1967, the Green Bay Packers of the National Football League defeated the Kansas City Chiefs of the American Football League 35-10 in the first AFL-NFL World Championship Game, known retroactively as Super Bowl I.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon announced the suspension of all U.S. offensive action in North Vietnam, citing progress in peace negotiations.

In 1974, the sitcom "Happy Days" premiered on ABC-TV.

In 1978, two students at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Lisa Levy and Margaret Bowman, were slain in their sorority house. (Ted Bundy was later convicted of the crime and was sentenced to death. But he was executed for the rape and murder of a 12-year-old girl, which occurred 3 weeks after the sorority slayings.)

In 1981, the police drama series "Hill Street Blues" premiered on NBC.

In 1989, NATO, the Warsaw Pact and 12 other European countries adopted a human rights and security agreement in Vienna, Austria.

In 1993, a historic disarmament ceremony ended in Paris with the last of 125 countries signing a treaty banning chemical weapons.

In 2009, US Airways Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger put his Airbus 320 down in the Hudson River after a flock of birds disabled both engines; all 155 people aboard survived.

In 2018, singer Dolores O'Riordan of the Irish rock band The Cranberries died at a London hotel at the age of 46; a coroner found that she had accidentally drowned in a bathtub after drinking.

In 2019, Musical comedy star Carol Channing -- best known to Broadway audiences for her role in "Hello, Dolly!" -- died in California at age 97.

In 2023, a plane making a 27-minute flight to a Nepal tourist town crashed into a gorge while attempting to land at a newly opened airport, killing all 72 people aboard.

Today's birthdays: Actor Margaret O'Brien is 86. Actor Andrea Martin is 77. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Randy White is 71. Actor-director Mario Van Peebles is 67. Rock musician Adam Jones (Tool) is 59. Actor James Nesbitt is 59. Actor Chad Lowe is 56. Alt-country singer Will Oldham (aka Bonnie Prince Billy) is 54. Actor Regina King is 53. Actor Dorian Missick is 48. Actor Eddie Cahill is 46. Former NFL quarterback Drew Brees is 45. Rapper/reggaeton artist Pitbull is 43. Actor Victor Rasuk is 39. Actor Jessy Schram is 38. Electronic dance musician Skrillex is 36. Actor/singer Dove Cameron is 28. Singer-songwriter Grace VanderWaal (TV: "America's Got Talent") is 20.