

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, April 15

Senior Menu: Beef tips on rice, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, cookie, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, diced potatoes.
JH Track at Ipswich 2 p.m.
Track at Britton, 2 p.m.
Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Senior Citizen meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study 6:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.
Groton Area Winter Sports Awards Night, 7 p.m., GHS Arena
State Smarter Balanced Testing: Grade 3-5, Science (Grade 5): Week of April 15-19 (Day TBD), ELA/Math: April 22-26

Tuesday, April 16

Senior Menu: Baked turkey crunch with dressing, Italian blend vegetables, carrot bars, corn muffin.
School Breakfast: Waffles.
School Lunch: Pizza burgers, cooked broccoli.
Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

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

"I firmly believe that respect is a lot more important and a lot greater, than popularity."

JULIUS ERVING



Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
City Council meeting, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, April 17

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, Oriental blend vegetables, cinnamon apple sauce, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg bake.
School Lunch: tacos.
FCCLA Banquet at GHS Arena Lobby 6 p.m.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
Emmanuel Lutheran: Pastor at Rosewood Court; Confirmation. 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.
United Methodist: Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 18

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, corn, garlic toast, fudge cake squares, fruit.
School Breakfast: pop tarts.
School Lunch: Corndogs, baked beans.
Girls Golf at Milbank, 10 a.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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1440

In partnership with **smartasset**[™]

Stephanie Clifford, also known as Stormy Daniels, and one other woman. Trump has denied the allegations since they first surfaced in 2018.

World No. 1 golfer Scottie Scheffler defeated Collin Morikawa to win yesterday's 2024 Masters Tournament. The win at Augusta National marks Scheffler's second Masters title, earning him a \$3.6M prize. Last year's champion, Jon Rahm—currently No. 3 in the world rankings—finished nine over par and tied for 45th place. Tiger Woods, a five-time Masters winner, endured a challenging 72 holes, ending the four days with the worst score of any tournament in his professional career.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

NBA regular season wraps with the play-in tournament set to begin tomorrow night; see playoff bracket. WNBA Draft is tonight (7:30 pm ET, ESPN) with Iowa's Caitlin Clark widely projected to be the top pick.

"Sunset Boulevard" is big winner with seven awards at the 2024 Olivier Awards, the British equivalent of the Tonys; "Operation Mincemeat" wins best new musical.

Denver tops Boston College to win 10th NCAA men's hockey national championship. NHL regular season wraps this week.

Science & Technology

SpaceX reaches milestone for reusable rockets, successfully launching satellites aboard a Falcon 9 rocket on its 20th liftoff.

Scientists discover cell structure in algae that naturally converts atmospheric nitrogen into useful chemicals; may one day allow crops to produce their own fertilizer from the air.

New study challenges view of bonobos as a largely peaceful primate species, finds they can be more aggressive than chimpanzees; conflicts play out mostly through individual fights between males.

Business & Markets

IRS says it received more than 100 million tax returns ahead of today's deadline to file returns or extensions for 2023.

Stocks fall Friday on slow start to earnings season (Dow -1.2%, S&P 500 -1.5%, Nasdaq -1.6%); S&P 500 closes worst week since October. JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, and Citigroup all report a drop on income from net interest in first quarter.

US Steel shareholders approve \$14.9B sale to Japan's Nippon Steel at \$55 per share, a roughly 33% premium over the stock's Friday price at close; deal for the second-largest US steelmaker still faces political opposition.

Politics & World Affairs

A 40-year-old man stabs and kills seven people Saturday at the Westfield Bondi shopping mall in Sydney, Australia, injuring at least a dozen more; police attribute the cause to mental illness.

Somali pirates release a Bangladeshi ship captured last month and its 23-person crew in exchange for a \$5M ransom from ship owner KSRM Group. More piracy attacks occurred in early 2024 than any other time in the last six years.

Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly (D) vetoes bill that would have banned transgender medical treatments for minors, including surgery and hormone replacement therapy.

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15 N Main St. - Ste. 101
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460
Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



Living Heart Fitness Center
Exercise helps ease arthritis
pain and stiffness. - Mayo Clinic

EMPLOYMENT

Dairy Queen in Groton is hiring! If you're looking for a fun job with lots of variety, look no further! We're looking for energetic, smiling people – we provide free meals, uniforms, competitive wages, fun atmosphere and flexible scheduling. Part-time – day, evening, week-end shifts available. We will work with your schedule. Stop in today and pick up an application.

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Middle School Music Contest Results

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 5-8 BAND STUDENTS for their wonderful job at the Aberdeen Contest this past Saturday.

- The MS BAND received a superior rating from all 3 judges
- All Ensembles received superior ratings
- All seven 5th graders received superiors

SUPERIOR + SOLOS: Novalea Warrington (Flute), Hudson Eichler (Snare Drum and Mallets), Amelia Ewalt (Flute), Liam Johnson (Alto Sax)

SUPERIOR SOLOS: Flute: Arianna Dinger 5th Flutes: Gracie Borg, Addison Steffes Clarinets: Aspen Beto, Haden Harder Bass Clarinet: Connor Kroll 5th Alto Sax: Lillian Davis, Amara El-Salahy, Tori Schuster Alto Sax: Xzavier Klebsch Tenor Sax: Wesley Borg Trumpet: Kason Oswald, Rowin Jansen van Rensburg Trombone: Logan Olson, Asher Zimmerman 5th Trombone: Ayce Warrington Tuba: TC Schuster, Liam Johnson Snare Drum: Kolton Antonsen, Jordan Schwan, Gavin Hanten, Ryder Schwan Mallets: Fernando Nava Remigio, Gavin Hanten

SUPERIOR ENSEMBLES: 8th Mixed: Makenna Krause and Addison Hoeft 8th Trombone: Libby Cole and Rylie Rose 5th Trumpet: Andi Iverson and Libby Johnson

EXCELLENT + SOLOS: Alto Sax: Zach Flihs, Lincoln Shilhanek Baritone: Eli Heilman Snare Drum: Owen Sperry Mallets: Ryder Schwan

EXCELLENT SOLOS: Flutes: Tenley Frost, Adeline Kotzer, Chloe Witchey Clarinet: Jameson Penning Alto Sax: Andi Gauer Trumpet: Shaydon Wood, GraceLynn Hubbs-Mullner Baritone: Ilyanna Dallaire Snare Drum: Wyatt Morehouse



Open House Bridal Shower

honoring

Jessica Bjerke

Saturday, April 20, 2024

1:00pm - 3:00pm

Olive Grove Golf Course

Registered at Target and Amazon



Lawrence County Double Fatality Crash

What: Two vehicle double fatality crash

Where: SD 34, mile marker 24, two miles west of Whitewood, SD

When: 1:55 p.m., Saturday, April 13, 2024

Driver 1: Male, 24, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2012 Dodge Avenger

Seat Belt Use: Under investigation

Driver 2: Male, 55, Serious non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 2: 2013 Chevrolet Silverado

Seat Belt Use: Yes

Passenger 1: Female, 87, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Lawrence County, S.D.- Two people died Saturday afternoon in a two-vehicle crash near Whitewood, SD. The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2012 Dodge Avenger was traveling eastbound on SD Highway 34 and crossed the centerline into the path of a westbound 2013 Chevrolet Silverado. The vehicles collided in the westbound lane near mile marker 24. The 24-year-old male driver of the Dodge was ejected as the vehicle came to rest in the eastbound lane and was pronounced deceased at the scene. The Chevrolet continued into the ditch. An 87-year-old female passenger in the truck was also pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the Chevrolet, a 55-year-old male, suffered serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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

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

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BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

April 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 #267 – Rezone
5. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign the Deadwood Grant Agreement forms from the SD State Historical Society Grant (Tuckpointing Project)
6. Approve Jr. Fair Board Members
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2024:
 - i. General Meeting
 - ii. Brown County Board of Equalization
 - iii. Consolidated Board of Equalization
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Lease Agreements
 - e. Travel Request
 - f. Claim Assignments
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. 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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AGENDA

BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024 – 7:00 PM

BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BASEMENT)

I. Call to Order: for Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission
II. Roll Call: David North - Vice Chair, Dale Kurth, Patrick Keatts, James Meyers, Carrie Weisenburger,
County Commissioner Mike Gage, Alternate Paul Johnson, and Stan Beckler-Chairman.

III. Approval of April 16, 2024, Agenda: _____

IV. Approval of March 19, 2024, Minutes

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

V. Old Business:

1. Sign-up sheet: On the table by the door entrance, and you can clearly mark YES or NO if you want to speak to the Board on any Agenda Item.
2. Permits: Anyone that has submitted a Variance Petition (VP) or a Conditional Use Petition (CUP) to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) is still required to get their required PERMITS from the Zoning Office before starting their project if their Petition gets approved. Penalties may be assessed per Ordinance when starting projects without proper permits in place.

VI. New Business: Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA).

1. Variance to Setbacks in a Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) described as Lot 1, "Moen Subdivision in Lot 1, Evelo's Outlots" in the SE1/4 of Section 35-T123N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (3602 387th Avenue S, Aberdeen Twp.)

2. Variance to an Approach Separation in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as The SE1/4 of Section 12-T124N-R65W, except the SE1/4 of the SE1/4 and except Highway R.O.W., of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (Approx. 37960 126th Street, Ravinia Twp.)

3. Variance for 3 Residences in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as The NE1/4 of Section 34-T127N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (37781 111th Street, Allison Twp.)

4. Conditional Use Petition (CUP) in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as The SE1/4 of Section 32-T125N-R61W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (40190 124th Street, Claremont Twp.)

5. Conditional Use Petition (CUP) in a Highway Commercial District (HC) described as "Yeoman's Outlot 2 and 3" and the South 700' of 50' immediately to the East of and abutting on said Outlots 2 and 3 which is designed as an Access Road in the NE1/4 of Section 27-T124N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (12849 386th Avenue, Lincoln Twp.)

6. Conditional Use Petition (CUP) in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as the unplatted portion of the SE1/4 of Section 24-T124N-R65W, except "Squire's First Addition" and except "Jerke's First Addition" of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (382018 N Shore Drive, Ravinia Twp.)

7. Variance to Approach Setbacks in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as the unplatted portion of the SE1/4 of Section 24-T124N-R65W, except "Squire's First Addition" and except "Jerke's First Addition" of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (382018 N Shore Drive, Ravinia Twp.)

8. Conditional Use Petition (CUP) in Highway Commercial District (HC) described as Outlot 1, "Rich Brothers Outlots" in the NW1/4 of Section 23-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (39231 133rd Street, Bath Twp.)

9. Variance to Building Setbacks in a Heavy Industrial District (H-I) described as "Mead's Outlot D" in the E1/2 of Section 20-T123N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (38390 West Highway 12, Aberdeen Twp.)

VII. Other Business:

Completed as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) & going to Planning Commission

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AGENDA BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, April 16, 2024 – 7:00 PM
BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BASEMENT)

PLANNING COMMISSION

- I. Old Business:
- II. New Business: Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as Planning Commission.
 10. Rezone Petition for a property described as proposed Lot 1, "Graf First Addition" in the SW1/4 of Section 19-T127N-R60W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (10952 406th Avenue, North Detroit Twp.) to be rezoned from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG).
 11. Rezone Petition for a property described as proposed Lot 1 & Lot 2, "Bendewald Farm Subdivision" in the SE1/4 of Section 12-T122N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13761 & 13767 382nd Avenue, Highland Twp.) to be rezoned from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG).
 12. Rezone Petition for a property described as proposed Lot A & Lot B, "Leibel First Addition" in the NE1/4 of Section 11-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13115 393rd Avenue, Bath Twp.) to be rezoned from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG).
 13. Preliminary & Final Plat for conveyance purposes on a property described as "Rivett Family Third Addition" in the SW1/4 & NW1/4 of Section 9-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (4407 8th Avenue NE, Aberdeen Twp.).
 14. Preliminary & Final Plat for conveyance purposes on a property described as "Leibel First Addition" in the NE1/4 of Section 11-T123N-R63W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13115 393rd Avenue, Bath Twp.)
 15. Preliminary & Final Plat for conveyance purposes on a property described as "Graf First Addition" in the SW1/4 of Section 19-T127N-R60W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (10952 406th Avenue, North Detroit Twp.).
 16. Other Business: Executive Session if requested.
 17. Motion to Adjourn:

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Quarterback is the most important position in football, and the Vikings' quarterback situation is the team's biggest question mark heading into the 2024 NFL season. However, there are other needs for a team that went 7-10 last year, so this week we look at the three other positions the Vikings will likely address through the draft.

Interior offensive line

Whoever ends up being the Vikings' quarterback in 2024, whether it's Sam Darnold or a rookie, will need solid blocking in front of them. The Vikings have one of the best offensive tackle tandems in the league with Christian Darrisaw at left tackle and Brian O'Neill on the right. Unfortunately, the interior of the offensive line is subpar. Bradbury was unspectacular at center, but he recently signed an extension, so he isn't going anywhere. Ed Ingram is the presumed starter at right guard, and although he had a poor rookie season in 2022, he showed signs of improvement in his sophomore season. Ezra Cleveland was the team's starting left guard to begin last season, but he was traded during the season and replaced with Dalton Risner. Risner was only signed for the remainder of the 2023 season and is still a free agent this offseason. I don't understand why the Vikings haven't brought him back, as he was solid last year (and seemed to enjoy his time in Minnesota). But as it sits now, the left guard spot is wide open.

If the Vikings end up holding on to picks 11 and 23, there's a slim chance the team could use one of those picks (likely the 23) to address the offensive line. If that happens, two names to keep an eye on are Jackson Powers-Johnson out of Oregon and Graham Barton out of Duke. More than likely, however, is the team using those picks on other positions, which means they will have to find a capable player in the middle rounds. Some names to keep an eye on in the middle round are Zach Frazier (West Virginia), Cooper Beebe (Kansas State), Christian Haynes (UConn), Mason McCormick (SDSU), and Dominick Puni (Kansas).

Interior defensive line

They say the best teams are built in the trenches from the middle, out. If that's the case, the Vikings are in trouble. The middle of the offensive line is the team's highest priority (after QB), but the middle of the defensive line is a close second. The team only has one good defensive lineman (Harrison Phillips), so the team may use one of their first-round picks on the position. Byron Murphy II out of Texas and Jer'Zhan Newton out of Illinois are two names to keep in mind, as both defensive linemen will likely be taken in the first round because of their ability to rush the passer. Luckily, there are a lot of solid defensive linemen in this draft, and with General Manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah's analytical approach to the draft, it wouldn't be surprising to see them wait to draft one. If the team wants a mammoth nose tackle to hold up at the point of attack, T'Vondre Sweat (Texas) and McKinnley Jackson (Texas A&M) would fit the bill. If they want more of a pass-rushing defensive lineman, they'll be looking for players like Braden Fiske (Florida State), Brandon Dorlus (Oregon), and Michael Hall Jr. (Ohio State).

Wide Receiver

The third area I'd like to see the team address is wide receiver. The Vikings have the best WR1 in the NFL (Justin Jefferson), a great WR2 (last year's first-round pick Jordan Addison), and a great tight end (T.J. Hockenson). However, the team let K.J. Osborn leave in free agency, which created a void at WR3. The chances of the Vikings taking a wide receiver in the first round are very slim, but there are some good options in the later rounds. A few notable names are Javon Baker (UCF), Jermaine Burton (Alabama), Luke McCaffrey (Rice), Tahj Washington (USC), and my personal favorite late-round WR prospect, Johnny Wilson out of Florida State (Wilson is 6'7", 237 pounds, and ran a 4.52 40-yard dash).

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Groton Area Tigers Varsity Beat Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club)

Groton Area Tigers Varsity outsted Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club) 5-2 on Sunday.

A sacrifice fly by Lane Schindler put Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club) on the board in the top of the first.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity took the lead in the bottom of the first. Logan Ringgenberg singled, scoring two runs, to give Groton Area Tigers Varsity the leg up, 2-1.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity added one run in the second. Kellen Antonsen grounded out, making the score 3-1.

Gavin Englund earned the win for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The starting pitcher allowed three hits and two runs (one earned) over seven innings, striking out seven and walking four. Jack Stein took the loss for Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club). The starting pitcher went four and one-third innings, giving up five runs (two earned) on three hits, striking out one and walking three.

Antonsen led Groton Area Tigers Varsity with two runs batted in from the number nine spot in the lineup. The right-handed hitter went 1 for 3 on the day. Ringgenberg, Dillon Abeln, and Antonsen each collected one hit for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. Colby Dunker stole two bases. Groton Area Tigers Varsity stole six bases in the game. Groton Area Tigers Varsity turned one double play in the game.

Colt Beck, Wyatt Osland, and Alec Aguilar each collected one hit for Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club). Eliot Erickson and Schindler each drove in one run for Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club). Erickson and Beck each stole multiple bases for Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club). Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club) stole four bases in the game. Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club) turned one double play in the game.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity Walk It Of Against WIN baseball

It came down to the wire on Sunday, as Groton Area Tigers Varsity grabbed the victory in walk-off fashion, 9-8, over WIN baseball. The game was tied at eight in the bottom of the seventh when Colby Dunker singled, scoring one run.

Dunker collected three hits in five at bats in the win. Dunker tripled in the third inning, singled in the seventh inning, and singled in the fifth inning.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity opened the scoring in the second after Nicholas Morris doubled, scoring one run.

A single by Logan Ringgenberg extended the Groton Area Tigers Varsity lead to 2-0 in the bottom of the third inning.

WIN baseball captured the lead, 8-2, in the top of the fifth after Lincoln Krol singled, Devon Fischbach walked, Xavier Kadlec walked, Alec Mikkelson walked, Dawson Ward singled, Levi Little walked, and Mikkelson scored after tagging up, each scoring one run.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity scored five runs on four hits in the bottom of the fifth inning. An error scored one run, Little induced Dillon Abeln to hit into a fielder's choice, but one run scored, Karsten Flihs singled, scoring one run, and Jarret Erdman tripled, scoring two runs.

Carter Simon singled, which helped Groton Area Tigers Varsity tie the game at eight in the bottom of the sixth.

Jarrett Erdmann earned the win for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The left-handed pitcher allowed one hit and one run over three innings, striking out five and walking two. Logan Fischbach took the loss for WIN baseball. The right-handed pitcher went one inning, surrendering one run (zero earned) on three hits, striking out one and walking one. Abeln led things off on the mound for Groton Area

Tigers Varsity. They gave up five hits and seven runs (six earned) over four innings, striking out five and walking two. Little stepped on the hill first for WIN baseball. They surrendered eight hits and seven runs (three earned) over five innings, striking out five and walking two.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity amassed 12 hits in the game. Erdman went 1 for 1 at the plate as they led the team with two runs batted in. Brevin Flihs and Simon each collected multiple hits for Groton Area Tigers Varsity.

Ward, Tristan Gosch, Drew Bakeburg, Mikkelson, Chays Mansfield, and Kroll each collected one hit for WIN baseball. Fischbach, Ward, Mikkelson, Mansfield, and Kroll each drove in one run for WIN baseball. WIN baseball turned one double play in the game.

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WIN baseball 8 - 9 Groton Area Tigers Varsity

📍 Home 📅 Sunday April 14, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
WNBS	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	8	6	3
GRTN	0	1	1	0	5	1	1	9	12	3

BATTING

WIN baseball	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Fischbach (SS)	3	2	0	1	1	0
X Kadlec (LF)	3	1	0	0	1	3
A Mikkelson (3B)	3	1	1	1	1	2
D Ward (1B)	4	0	1	1	0	1
L Little (P)	2	0	0	0	1	2
J Schmidt (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
L Fischbach (P)	1	0	0	0	0	0
C Mansfield (C)	3	1	1	1	0	0
T Gosch (RF)	3	1	1	0	0	1
L Kroll (DH)	3	1	1	1	0	0
D Bakeburg (CF)	3	1	1	0	0	1
Totals	28	8	6	5	4	10

TB: A Mikkelson, L Kroll, T Gosch, D Ward, D Bakeburg, C Mansfield, **SB:** D Fischbach, **LOB:** 3

Groton Area Tigers	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Flihs (SS)	5	0	2	0	0	2
C Dunker (LF)	5	3	3	1	0	0
B Althoff (1B)	4	1	1	0	0	0
L Ringgenberg (CF)	1	2	1	1	2	0
G Englund (DH)	3	0	0	1	0	1
C Simon (3B, RF)	2	0	2	1	0	0
D Abeln (P, 3B)	2	1	0	1	0	0
N Morris (C)	2	0	1	1	0	0
K Flihs (C)	2	1	1	1	0	1
N Groeblichhoff (...)	1	0	0	0	0	1
J Erdmann (RF, P)	1	0	0	0	0	0
H Sippel	0	0	0	0	0	0
J Erdman (DH)	1	1	1	2	1	0
K Antonsen (2B)	4	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	33	9	12	9	3	6

2B: N Morris, **3B:** C Dunker, J Erdman, **TB:** B Althoff, L Ringgenberg, C Dunker 5, B Flihs 2, C Simon 2, K Flihs, N Morris 2, J Erdman 3, **HBP:** L Ringgenberg, C Simon, **LOB:** 7

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Elkton Blue Sox (HS Club) **2 - 5** Groton Area Tigers Varsity

📍 Home 📅 Sunday April 14, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
ELKT	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	6
GRTN	2	1	0	2	0	0	X	5	3	1

BATTING

Elkton Blue Sox (H:	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
E Erickson (2B)	3	0	0	1	1	1
C Beck (C)	3	1	1	0	1	1
J Stein (P, 3B)	1	0	0	0	1	0
L Schindler (SS)	1	0	0	1	1	0
S Schuurman (3B,...	3	0	0	0	0	1
W Osland (LF)	3	0	1	0	0	0
A Neill (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	1
A Aguilar (RF)	2	0	1	0	0	1
L Anderson (DH)	3	1	0	0	0	1
C Crofutt (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	23	2	3	2	4	7

TB: A Aguilar, C Beck, W Osland, **SF:** L Schindler, **HBP:** J Stein, **SB:** E Erickson 2, C Beck 2, **LOB:** 6

PITCHING

Elkton Blue S	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Stein	4.1	3	5	2	3	1	0
S Schuurman	1.2	0	0	0	1	2	0
Totals	6.0	3	5	2	4	3	0

L: J Stein, **P-S:** J Stein 76-41, S Schuurman 22-13, **HBP:** J Stein 3, **BF:** J Stein 22, S Schuurman 7

Groton Area Tigers	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Fliehs (CF)	3	0	0	0	1	0
C Dunker (LF)	3	1	0	0	1	2
B Althoff (1B)	2	1	0	0	0	0
L Ringgenberg (RF)	2	0	1	1	0	0
G Englund (P)	2	0	0	0	0	1
C Simon (3B)	3	1	0	0	0	0
D Abeln (SS)	1	2	1	0	2	0
N Morris (C)	2	0	0	0	0	0
K Antonsen (2B)	3	0	1	2	0	0
Totals	21	5	3	3	4	3

TB: L Ringgenberg, K Antonsen, D Abeln, **SAC:** N Morris, **CS:** B Althoff, **HBP:** G Englund, L Ringgenberg, B Althoff, **SB:** L Ringgenberg, B Althoff, B Fliehs, D Abeln, C Dunker 2, **LOB:** 6

Groton Area T	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
G Englund	7.0	3	2	1	4	7	0
Totals	7.0	3	2	1	4	7	0

W: G Englund, **P-S:** G Englund 90-58, **WP:** G Englund 2, **HBP:** G Englund, **BF:** G Englund 29

“Reflecting on Progress”

It’s human nature to tell stories about the past, and doctors aren’t immune to that impulse. The second year medical students rotating through my clinic have me reflecting on my own years as a fledgling physician, and the changes I’ve seen in my decades of practice.

I remember one late evening spent in the PICU watching over a toddler who had meningitis. At one point I turned and bumped into a bedrail, which came crashing down. Both my preceptor and I jumped, and I probably even shrieked. The child, however, didn’t even blink. That’s when we knew her illness had left her profoundly deaf.

The seasoned pediatrician I was with that month had started practice before the introduction of the Hib vaccine. As we talked about what we could do now for the child in our care, he told me stories from “the old days”, when the PICU at Sioux Valley Hospital would perpetually have 2 or 3 children being treated for meningitis. Less than 10 years later, our unimmunized patient was the first case they’d had in months.

Early in my own practice, winter months would see at least a child or two here in Brookings hospitalized with rotavirus on any give day, and the occasional adult. They would be with us for a few days or even a week, getting IV fluids until the diarrhea slowed down. Our first vaccine had rare but serious side effects and was pulled off the market. The vaccine we’ve been using for nearly 20 years now has turned the illness into something that rarely lands a child in our hospital. To be sure, we still see rotavirus infections. It’s just that far fewer patients are so sick that they require IVs.

This last year, we got a new weapon against another common childhood scourge. RSV has been a terror for longer than I’ve been in practice. It results in the hospitalization of nearly 2% of children before they turn 1. We now have two ways to protect infants. The first is a traditional vaccine given to expectant mothers later in their pregnancy. Mom’s immune system responds by developing antibodies, which are transferred to the infant. Since babies’ immature immune systems can’t respond to the vaccine we have for RSV, we can’t give them that vaccine. However, we have an antibody against RSV that can be given directly to newborns. We’ve had something similar for most of my career, but it was expensive and had to be given monthly, so we only used it in the highest risk children. This new version is much less costly, and requires only one shot.

These strategies don’t teach the baby’s own immune system to fight the infection. Instead, they provide temporary soldiers to wage the battle. That protection will fade, and the baby’s immune system will still have to learn to fight RSV by catching it, but we will have delayed that day until the child is older, and less likely to get terribly sick.

I am optimistic that RSV, too, will become something we still see, but that doesn’t cause the suffering it once did. And I wonder, what will my young colleagues someday tell their future students about medicine in “the old days?”

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

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: I'm alarmed that a cement plant plans expansion behind our home. What are the potential health and environmental impacts of such a facility?

— Caren K, via e-mail

Cement is a component of concrete, mortar and other materials. It has many uses as a binding product—roads, sidewalks and patios would be very different without it. Cement production does have health and environmental risks. Manufacturing plants release sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide (NOx) and carbon monoxide. Also, particulate matter, lead and mercury are produced from heating limestone, which is linked to worsening asthma, heart attacks and premature death in those with heart or lung disease

While those living near cement plants have complained for decades about health and environmental effects, complaints carry more weight with data to back them up. A scientific review published in *Chemosphere* in 2019 suggests an increased risk of respiratory tract cancers for those living in proximity to cement plants. Higher levels of heavy metals and indications of kidney toxicity were found in people living in areas near cement plants. The review, however, found that many scientific studies had a risk of bias, leading the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to study air, water and soil quality in a cluster of industrial sites where cement is produced in Dallas, Texas. "There haven't been a lot of studies on [cumulative impact]," says the EPA's Aimee Wilson. "So, we want to see what's there because we don't know." The study concludes in July 2024, and results will be available to the public.

The environment is suffering from cement manufacturing, too. The EPA reports that NOx released from the plants contributes to ground-level ozone, acid rain, poor water quality and global warming. And heavy metals carried on the wind or washed into lakes or streams when it rains can have ripple effects through the ecosystem. Another source of environmental contamination is washout containers that have flooded. These large plastic or fiberboard containers temporarily hold water and slurry washed from concrete trucks, pumps and chutes after concrete is poured. When it rains heavily, they are prone to overflow and contaminate groundwater. If you live on a property with a well, you are responsible for ensuring the safety of your own drinking water—all the more reason to be mindful of cement plants in the area.

To ensure health and environmental compliance, these facilities need to be subject to tighter regulations, including more inspections and air quality monitoring. There is also the matter of proximity—right now, a required buffer zone of 440 yards is established between homes, schools and churches. Ongoing studies like the EPA's Dallas research will better inform guidance and policies moving forward.

If you don't want to live near a cement plant, organize your community to fight against it. Contact your representatives to educate them on the health risks. Monitor the air quality if you cannot move or avoid a cement plant. Stay indoors and change HEPA filters on your home filtration system when air quality is poor—especially if you have health conditions like asthma or cardiac disease. If you rely on a private water well, ask local health officials about your eligibility for help paying for testing and possible repairs or filters. Get your water tested every year, at a minimum, to make sure it has not become contaminated.



Cement is an essential building block for modern society, but it doesn't come without lots of environmental and health baggage. Credit: Pexels.com.



SD's prison tablet provider dinged for data breach by Federal Trade Commission

Critics say national firm's business model risks exploiting inmates, families

BY: JOHN HULT - APRIL 14, 2024 6:00 AM

The company that gave electronic tablets to South Dakota prison inmates under a contract with the state hid a 2020 data breach for nine months and then told only a fraction of affected users about it, according to a settlement filed in late February with the Federal Trade Commission.

The FTC's decision and order in the data breach and fraud case against Global Tel Link (GTL) was issued on Feb. 27, two weeks before the South Dakota Department of Corrections suspended tablet-based phone calls and text messages for about 3,600 inmates.

That suspension is thought to have contributed to multiple nights of unrest last month at the penitentiary in Sioux Falls, including an assault that injured an employee. Attorney General Marty Jackley has said inmates involved will be prosecuted "to the fullest extent of the law."

South Dakota Department of Corrections spokesman Michael Winder said via email that GTL did not inform the agency of any data breach. South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation spokesman Tony Mangan said the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division has yet to hear from the company about the number of South Dakotans affected by the breach, if any.

It's one of several legal issues faced by GTL (rebranded as ViaPath Technologies in 2022), which works with nearly 2,000 facilities across the U.S.

For years, critics have called the Virginia-based company's business practices exploitative and called on the federal government to step in and regulate rates – something the FTC has worked on for phone calls, most recently with an interim rate cap last reviewed in September.

The tablet communication shutdown in South Dakota wasn't announced publicly until March 20, when the DOC said it was the result of an investigation. Gov. Kristi Noem said inmates were using the GTL-provided devices for "nefarious" activities. The DOC has not responded to questions about whether tablet security was part of the problem.

One week after the DOC posted a memo on tablet restrictions to its website, media gathered outside the penitentiary on the first night of disturbances could hear inmates inside shouting "we want phones." The following night, inmates could be heard yelling "we have rights" and "water."

Family members had been unable to visit inmates on "the Hill," the area of the prison where the incidents took place, until this week.

A Monday memo from the DOC, posted to its visitation page, says that in-person visits will commence for those inmates on Saturdays, Sundays and the third Friday of each month.

Since last week, inmates have been allowed to make up to five phone calls a day with 20-minute time limits, using either tablets or wall phones. Electronic messaging remains suspended.

Inmates and their families have bristled at the restrictions on tablet-based communications, and some have complained about frozen inmate accounts with unusable balances.

Advocates who argue for rate caps and regulation of communications providers say the issues in South

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Dakota and across the nation come as prisons have become more isolated places. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, many prisons and jails stopped allowing in-person visits in favor of video visitation.

"At the end of the day, the fact that people are being exploited and still would rather have the technologies than not have them just goes to show how bad prison life is," said Wanda Bertram of the Prison Policy Initiative, a prison reform nonprofit based in Massachusetts.

Data security, financial practices scrutinized

South Dakota is far from alone in its use of private-company tablets for inmate communications, which typically double as correctional revenue engines. The state's contract with GTL specifies commission rates for messaging and prepaid phone calls.

The South Dakota DOC charges less than the FTC's interim 14-cent-per-minute cap for phone calls, but messaging services aren't capped federally, and the state has collected revenue from both messaging and phone calls. Between 2021 and February, South Dakota collected at least \$1.25 million in commission payments, according to data released to South Dakota Searchlight last month.

GTL has frequently been on the receiving end of political and legal scrutiny. In 2022, the company agreed to pay back \$67 million to settle a class action lawsuit launched in U.S. District Court in Georgia over its practice of pocketing money from dormant inmate accounts.

Just last month, families in Michigan sued GTL and other communications providers, alleging they conspired with jailers to end in-person visits in favor of paid-for video visits.

The recent FTC action against the company involved a data breach in August 2020. The company and its subsidiaries had placed personally identifying and financial information into the Amazon Web Services cloud to test software. The FTC alleged in November that it did so without encrypting or otherwise protecting customer information, leaving information like the Social Security numbers, dates of birth and credit card information of inmate families and friends vulnerable to hacking.

That's exactly what happened, according to the FTC's complaint.

"As early as November 2020, (GTL) received multiple complaints from consumers stating that the consumers' personally identifiable information obtained from Respondents had been located on the dark web," the complaint reads.

By then, a data security blog called Comparitech had asked GTL subsidiary Telmate about the incident. Telmate told the blog the issue was resolved, and that no passwords or financial information had been exposed.

Those statements were false, the FTC said.

It took nine months for the company to inform individual users, and it only reached out to 45,000 of the approximately 650,000 people affected.

The FTC's February order requires GTL to implement a host of security and consumer protection measures. Periodic third-party security assessments and reports back to the FTC on the results will be required for the next two decades.

The company will also need to inform all the impacted users – potentially including South Dakotans – that their personal information had been stored in an unsecure cloud computing environment later accessed by hackers, and to provide them with credit monitoring and identity protection services.

A spokesperson for the FTC said the agency does not have any information on whether the data of South Dakotans was part of the security breach or dark web data sales, referring South Dakota Searchlight to GTL for those answers.

GTL did not respond to an email on those questions.

Reform advocate: Prepaid communications a magnet for abuse

Inmates and their families are uniquely vulnerable to being squeezed by communication providers, according to Bertram of the Prison Policy Initiative.

Calls and messages to and from correctional institutions are tightly controlled, as they are subject to

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security screening by corrections officials and paid for under the terms of prison or jail contracts with providers that offer no choice on costs.

Tablets have become lifelines for people in prison and their families, Bertram said, particularly in the face of restrictions on other forms of communication. South Dakota shut down face-to-face visits for more than a year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In a lot of places, sending mail and visiting a loved one have become more difficult as prisons have imposed additional restrictions," Bertram said. "And that has only increased the value and the importance to incarcerated people's welfare that these tablets have."

Talk of tablets, phone calls and pricing schemes are important for the general public, she said.

Research suggests that maintaining family connections translates into a lower likelihood of continued criminal behavior after release. One study in Minnesota found that inmates who had regular visits were 13% less likely to return to prison on new felony charges. Another study of female inmates across multiple states found that "familial telephone contact was most consistently associated with reduction in recidivism."

High prices or strict limits can put financial stress on families who aim to stay connected, she said, which can have ripple effects across communities.

"You don't have to find space in your heart to be compassionate for people who have committed crimes," Bertram said. "But you do have to think about the implications for broader society when there's companies that are allowed to run rampant and do what they will with incarcerated people's money by turning them into a captive market."

The Prison Policy Initiative recommends free calling and messaging for inmates. Absent that, the organization argues that prisons and jails should not collect commission. Removing the financial incentive for correctional institutions tends to lower prices.

Dallas, Texas, ceased to collect commissions and was able to negotiate lower prices, now charging a cent a minute for phone calls through its provider, Securus, a GTL competitor commonly known as JPay.

In Connecticut, the Legislature made calls free, and barred both commission collections for its prison system and forced video visitation. California followed suit with free audio calls from tablets and wall phones.

Dropping commission payments also prevents the misuse of funds, she said. In Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, an investigation by the news outlet PennLive revealed that the county spent nearly \$300,000 in phone and messaging payouts between 2019 and 2021 to purchase gun range memberships for prison staff, the sheriff's department, the district attorney's criminal investigation division, and probation and parole.

Fulton County, Georgia, saw commission funds used to purchase thousands of honey-baked hams.

"You shouldn't be charging incarcerated people and their families for these basic needs and then turning around collecting money off of that," Bertram said.

Other models in use nationwide and in South Dakota

Bill Pope isn't so sure that dropping commission payments is always the right call. Pope is the CEO of NCIC, a Texas-based GTL competitor offering tablets that give hour-for-hour entertainment credits to inmates who use them for coursework.

Pope pointed to California to explain why. That state offers free calls, and the state's Public Utilities Commission opted to cap commission payments and set rates for prepaid calls in local jails at 7 cents a minute.

Pope said those moves "obliterated the inmate welfare fund" that had been propped up by payouts. That fund is meant to be "used for the benefit, education, and welfare of inmates of prisons and institutions."

Many institutions simply want to offer the lowest possible price in a communications contract, Pope said, but others view the commission payments as reasonable ways to cover the expenses of monitoring calls and messages. The bigger problem is hidden fees, he said, like connection fees that some providers charge. Pope would like to see those regulated.

"Eliminating commissions can probably hurt the incarcerated users more than help them," Pope said. "Unless, of course, the providers are overcharging."

Pope says his company is the largest privately held communications provider in the U.S.

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He sees his company's approach to tablets as more beneficial for inmates, families and institutions. NCIC has contracts in South Dakota with jails in Yankton and Sioux Falls, among others. Its contract with the Minnehaha County Jail includes commission payments for the Sioux Falls facility, but inmates needn't necessarily pay – at least for entertainment. Inmates can earn credits through coursework.

The NCIC contract charges 16 cents a minute for calls – more than double the rate listed for calls on the South Dakota DOC's website – but Pope said the calls subsidize the entertainment that keeps inmates busy and would otherwise be paid for by their families.

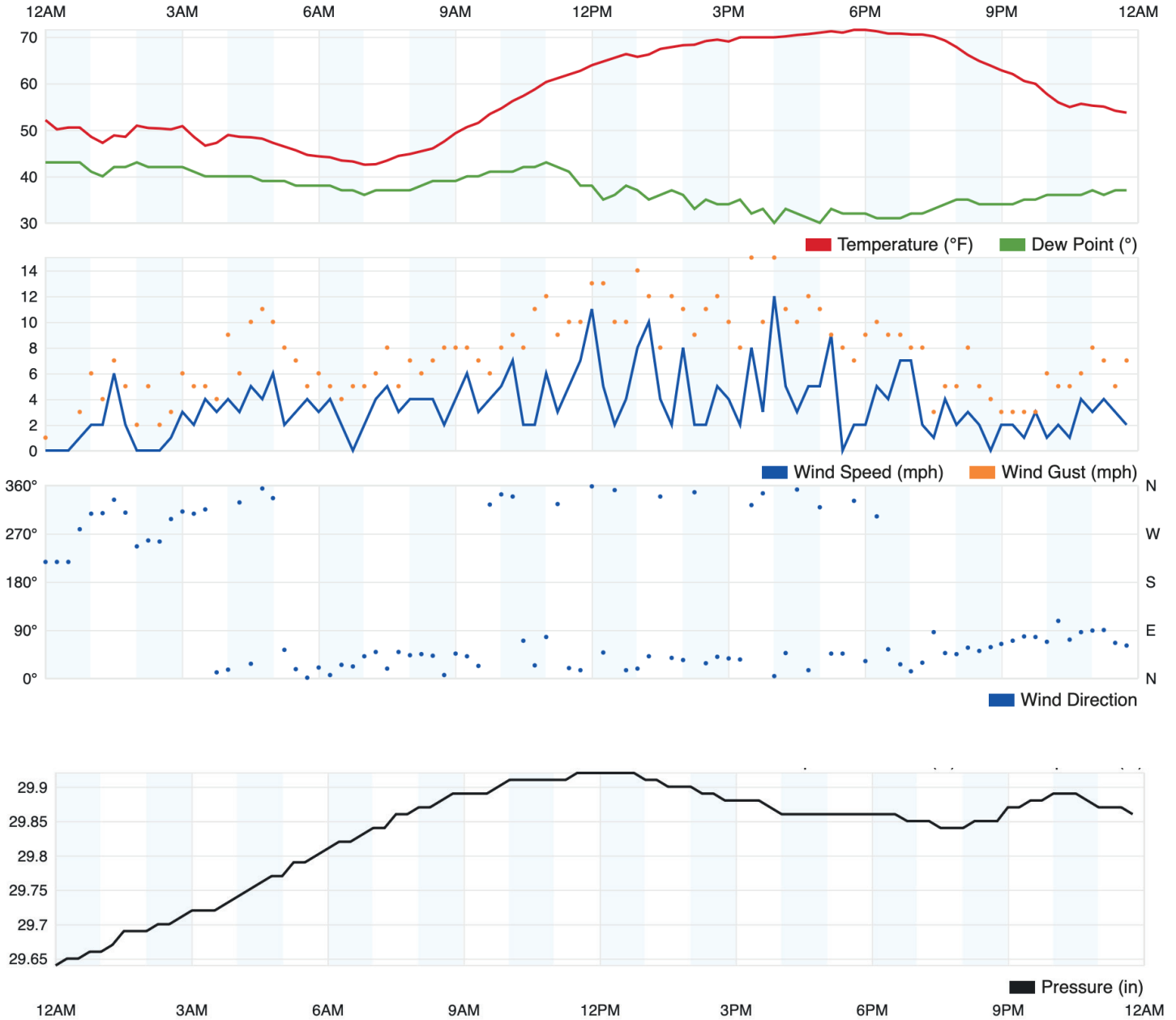
"Do your homework, and then you can watch TV or play games," Pope said.

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

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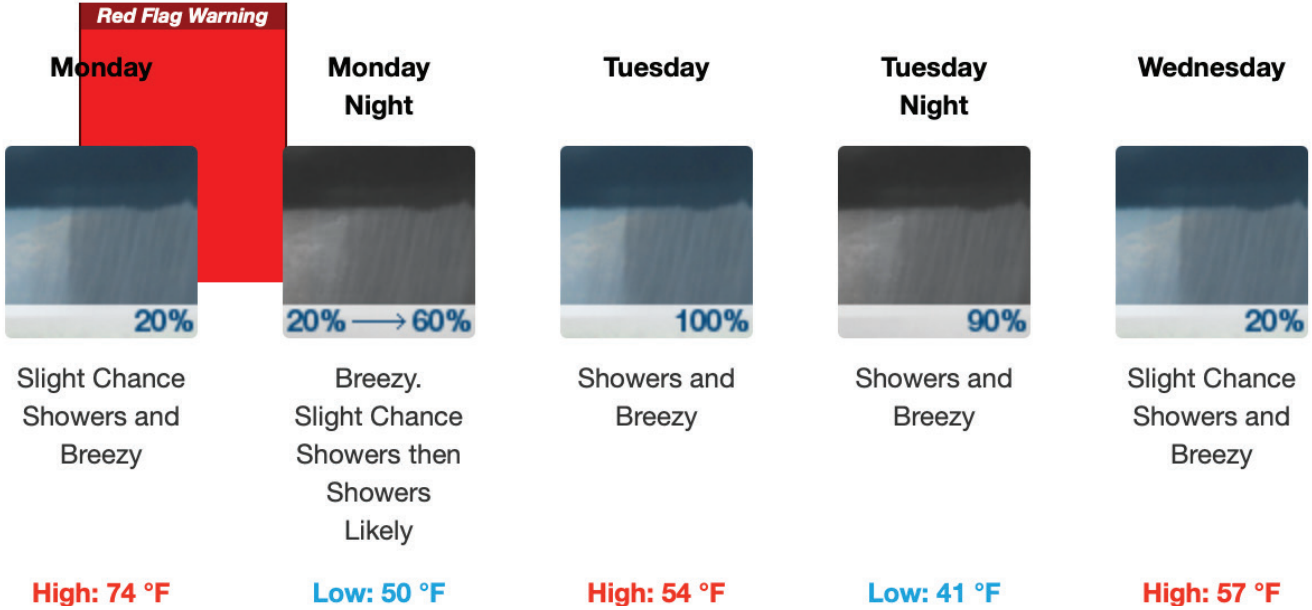
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Rain Chances Increasing Mon Night/Tue

April 14, 2024
2:27 PM

Monday
Increasing Clouds, Slight Chance Showers/Storms, Very High Fire Danger, Highs in the 70s

Tuesday
Increasing Rain Chances (60-90%), Highs 55-65°

Wednesday
Lingering Rain East, Highs in the 50s

	Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)												Maximum
	4/15 Mon				4/16 Tue				4/17 Wed				
	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	20	25	20	35	75	95	100	100	80	55	30	5	99
Britton	25	30	25	35	70	95	100	100	90	75	45	15	99
Brookings	5	10	5	30	90	95	100	100	85	80	35	15	98
Chamberlain	15	20	10	65	80	85	95	95	70	35	10	20	94
Clark	10	15	10	40	85	90	100	100	85	65	30	10	99
Eagle Butte	30	35	35	40	75	90	90	80	40	15	5	15	89
Ellendale	25	30	25	35	75	95	100	100	85	65	35	10	99
Eureka	20	35	25	50	80	100	100	95	75	45	20	10	98
Gettysburg	20	35	25	50	70	95	95	95	65	30	10	15	95
Huron	10	20	10	65	85	90	95	95	80	55	20	10	97
Kennebec	15	15	15	55	70	90	95	95	60	25	5	25	93
McIntosh	20	30	30	65	90	90	90	80	45	15	10	10	91
Milbank	10	15	10	30	65	90	100	100	90	80	45	15	99
Miller	15	25	15	65	80	90	95	95	75	45	20	15	97
Mobridge	20	35	25	50	85	95	95	90	60	25	10	10	95
Murdo	20	25	15	55	70	90	90	90	50	15	5	30	91
Pierre	20	25	25	55	75	90	90	90	55	20	5	20	92
Redfield	10	20	10	55	80	90	100	100	80	50	25	10	98
Sisseton	20	25	15	35	65	90	100	100	90	80	50	20	99
Watertown	10	10	5	35	80	95	100	100	90	75	35	15	99
Webster	15	20	15	35	75	95	100	100	90	70	40	15	99
Wheaton	30	30	25	30	55	85	100	100	90	75	50	20	98



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Slight chances (15-35%) of rain and storms for Monday with chances increasing to 70-100% Tuesday as a system moves through. Otherwise, High Fire Danger exists for Monday as well.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 72 °F at 5:47 PM

Low Temp: 42 °F at 7:07 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 12:20 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 36 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1926

Record Low: 8 in 2014

Average High: 58

Average Low: 31

Average Precip in April.: 0.73

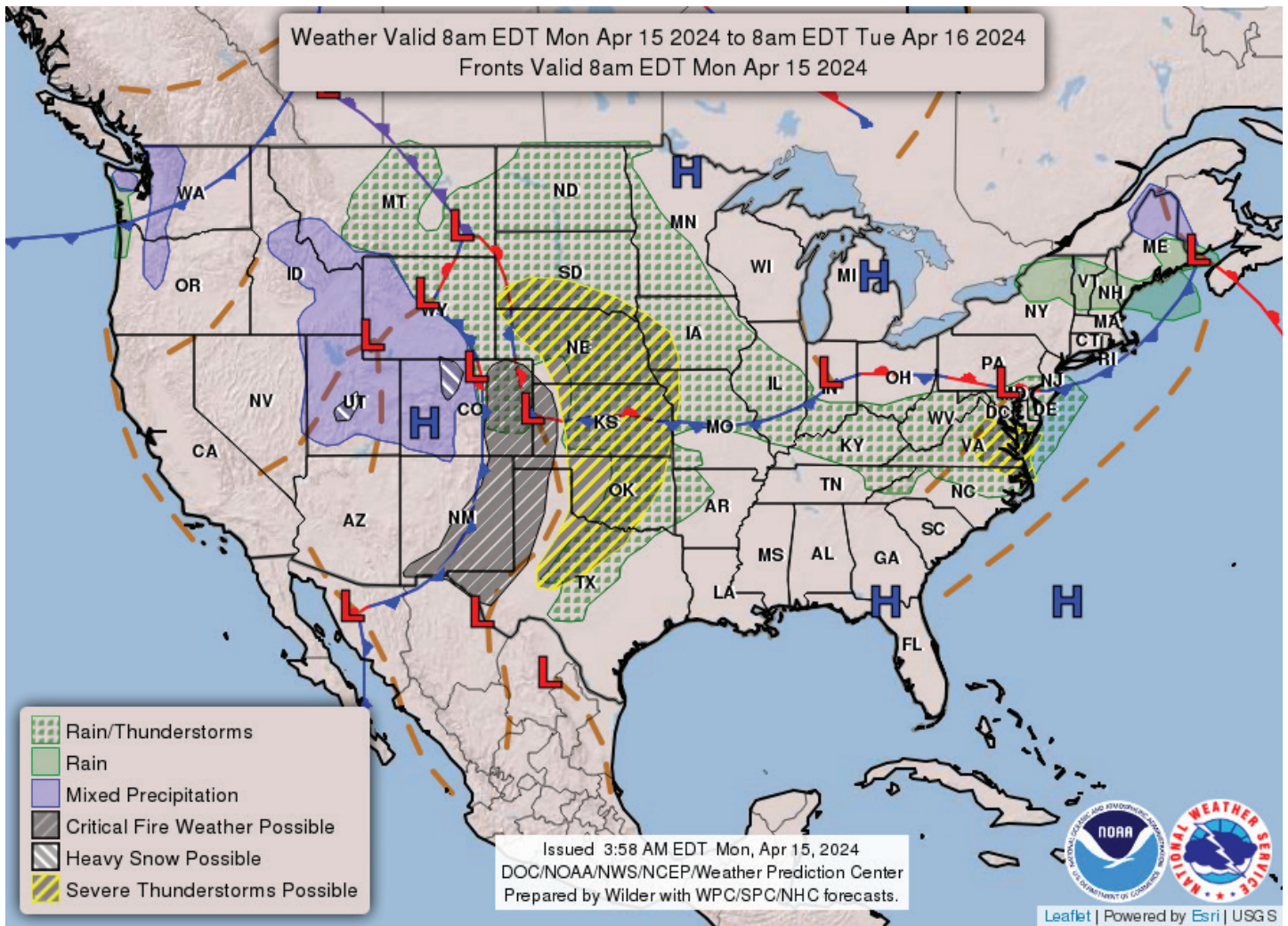
Precip to date in April: 1.19

Average Precip to date: 2.79

Precip Year to Date: 2.14

Sunset Tonight: 8:20:37 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:42:07 am



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Today in Weather History

April 15, 1896: A tornado, possibly an F3, moved northeast from Burkmere, which is 10 miles west of Faulkton. About half dozen farms were torn apart. Two children were killed, and the rest of the family critically injured as a home was leveled. 6 miles northwest of Faulkton, near Millard.

April 15, 2011: A strong upper-level low-pressure area brought widespread heavy snowfall to central and parts of northeast South Dakota. This early spring storm brought 6 to 14 inches of heavy snow to the area. The heavy wet snow caused a lot of travel problems along with a few accidents. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included 12 inches 12 SSW Harrold, 23 N Highmore, and Orient; 13 inches 14 NNE Isabel and Eureka with 14 inches at Eagle Butte.

1921 - Two mile high Silver Lake, CO, received 76 inches of snow in 24 hours, the heaviest 24 hour total of record for North America. The storm left a total of 87 inches in twenty-seven and a half hours. (David Ludlum)

1927: The Great Mississippi River Flood of 1927 continued to rage. Tremendous rains all over the Mississippi River Valley during the preceding autumn and winter sent floodwaters raging southward over a wide area. On this date, the government levee at Dorena, MO collapsed. The surge of floodwater continued pushing downriver toward the Mississippi Delta, bursting more dams as it went. Also on this day, New Orleans saw 15 inches of rain in 18 hours. More than 4 feet of water covered parts of the city.

1949 - A hailstone five inches by five and a half inches in size, and weighing four pounds, was measured at Troy NY. (The Weather Channel)

1958 - A tornado 300 yards in width skipped along a five mile path near Frostproof FL. A 2500 gallon water tank was found one mile from its original position (it is not known how much water was in the tank at the time). (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region. A tornado killed one person and injured seven others near Mount Dora FL. Drifts of hail up to two feet deep were reported in Davidson and Rowan counties in North Carolina. Myrtle Beach SC was deluged with seven inches of rain in three hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Death Valley, CA, was soaked with 1.53 inches of rain in 24 hours. Snow fell in the mountains of southern California. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms soaked the eastern U.S. with heavy rain, pushing the rainfall total for the month at Cape Hatteras NC past their previous April record of 7.10 inches. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced severe weather from west central Texas to west central Arkansas during the late afternoon and evening. Thunderstorms spawned a tornado which caused more than half a million dollars damage at Fort Stockton TX, produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Dennison TX, produced baseball size hail at Silo OK and near Capps Corner TX, and drenched southeastern Oklahoma with up to 4 inches of rain in two hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: An F3 tornado hits downtown Nashville causing extensive damage but no loss of life. An additional 62 tornadoes touched down in Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee. These tornadoes caused 12 fatalities and approximately 120 injuries.

2000: What a difference a day made (with the help of a strong cold front). Yesterday's 86 degrees in Goodland, Kansas, tied the record high for the date. Today's high of 29 degrees was also a date record high, but a record low high. It was a new record by 3 degrees.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The military is known for orderliness. Rarely does one see a uniform that is wrinkled or grounds that are unkempt. But there once was an exception.

When General George Marshall took command of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia before World War II, he found the post in a condition that was unacceptable to him. Having power beyond imagination and control over every individual assigned there, his options were unlimited. He could speak the word, and everyone would fall in line and make the installation glow in the dark. But he did not do that.

Instead of issuing orders to get the post up to his standards, he got out his lawnmower, rake, shovel and paintbrushes and began to make his quarters the example.

And it worked. Soon the officers next door did the same. Then their neighbors and on and on it went until it reached the last home on the grounds. Fort Benning became the example for the Army.

Often the best way to encourage someone to do the right thing is to become an example for them to follow. Paul gave that advice to Timothy: "Be an example to all believers." Paul gives that advice to us!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to live as You lived, to walk as You walked and to talk as You talked so that we will always be Your examples in this world. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 1 Timothy 4:12



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: 04.12.24

1 12 14 18 66 16

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$148,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 28
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

7 9 10 29 38 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,850,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 43 Mins 17
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.14.24

6 20 30 37 44 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 58 Mins 17
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

11 16 23 29 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$58,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 58
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

39 55 60 65 69 26

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 27 Mins 16
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

7 33 40 43 69 10

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$63,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 27 Mins 16
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Native American-led nonprofit says it bought 40 acres in the Black Hills of South Dakota

A Native American-led nonprofit has announced that it purchased nearly 40 acres (16.2 hectares) of land in the Black Hills of South Dakota amid a growing movement that seeks to return land to Indigenous people.

The Cheyenne River Youth Project announced in an April 11 statement that it purchased the tract of land adjacent to Bear Butte State Park in western South Dakota.

"One of the most sacred places for the Lakota Nation is Mato Paha, now part of Bear Butte State Park," the statement said. "Access to Bear Butte was severed in the late 19th century, when the U.S. government seized the Black Hills and broke up the Great Sioux Reservation into several smaller reservations."

Julie Garreau, executive director of the project, said in the statement that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1980 that the U.S. had illegally taken the Black Hills. The court awarded the Lakota people \$105 million, but they have refused to accept the money because the Black Hills were never for sale, the statement said.

Garreau said "opportunities to re-establish access to sacred places are being lost rapidly as metro areas grow and land values skyrocket," which contributed to the organization's decision to buy the land.

"Our people have deep roots in this region, yet we have to drive five hours round trip to be here, and summertime lodging prices are astronomical," she said. "The distance and the cost prevent access."

The statement did not say how much the organization paid to purchase the land.

In recent years, some tribes in the U.S., Canada and Australia have gotten their rights to ancestral lands restored with the growth of the Land Back movement.

How to tackle crime in Indian Country?

Empower tribal justice, ex-Justice Department official says

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A quarter-century ago, the Justice Department had few meaningful relationships with Native American tribes.

While the federal government worked with state and local police and courts, tribal justice systems did not have the same level of recognition, said Tracy Toulou, who oversaw the department's Office of Tribal Justice from 2000 until his recent retirement. "They were essentially invisible," he said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Toulou built the office from an idea into an "institution within the Justice Department."

Its relationships with the nation's 574 federally recognized tribes are important, in part because federal authorities investigate and prosecute a set of major crimes on most reservations.

Public safety statistics reflect the serious challenges. Native Americans and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely to be victims of a violent crime, and Native American women are at least two times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted compared with others.

For Toulou, a descendant of the Washington state-based Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, part of addressing those grim realities is expanding the power of tribal justice systems.

Tribes had been barred, for example, from prosecuting non-Natives under a 1978 Supreme Court decision, even if the crime happened on reservations, making it harder to seek justice in many cases. That changed somewhat in 2013 with a federal law that allows tribes to prosecute non-Natives in a limited set of domestic violence cases. The authority was expanded in 2022 to include cases such as violence against children and stalking.

"That was a key change ... tribes were now viewed as participants in the justice system on a more or less equal basis with everybody else, which should never have changed," said Toulou, who was a federal prosecutor in Montana early in his career.

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Still, much work remains to be done.

Tribal police and courts are stretched thin and are coping with conflicting jurisdictional issues and underfunding, leaders told the Senate Indian Affairs Committee at a session last month that drew more than 600 comments.

Police Chief Algin Young of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota said he has six to eight officers to patrol nearly 4,700 square miles (12,200 square kilometers) against an "influx of guns, illegal drugs including fentanyl, methamphetamine and heroin, and violent crime that can only be described as shocking and extremely dangerous."

"Our people don't feel safe in the communities, and our visitors do not, either," he said.

The challenges come against a historical backdrop of injustices committed by the federal government against Native Americans, including massacres, forced assimilation of Native children in abusive boarding schools and the removal of many tribes from their ancestral land.

One of Toulou's personal regrets is he does not speak his tribe's language because his grandparents were sent to boarding schools, breaking the links that would have passed it down through generations.

"We have a unique responsibility to Indian tribes," Toulou said, partly due to obligations the U.S. made in treaties, through Congress and other acts. "There is a moral responsibility that is underpinned by those treaties to support those tribal nations and interact with them on a government-to-government basis."

In recent years, that has meant heeding calls to address the crisis of Indigenous people who have been killed or gone missing. Thousands of those cases remain unsolved, hundreds have been closed due to issues such as jurisdictional conflicts and many families say authorities regularly fail to communicate about the status of pending cases.

Toulou was a leader in the effort to create a federal strategy to respond to violence against Native people in 2022, after the passage of the Not Invisible Act and Savanna's Act.

He also helped develop legislation such as the Safeguarding Objects of Tribal Patrimony Act of 2021 aimed at halting the removal of historic archaeological remains and the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. That law improved the collection and reporting of Native crime data, expanded the sentencing authority of tribal courts and allowed tribes such as the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians in Minnesota to expand their policing powers.

"That really makes a big difference," said the tribe's chief executive, Melanie Benjamin. "We have the experience, we have the commitment of our own tribal members and our community members that want to be a part of public safety to protect and serve."

Working within the federal bureaucracy can be like "pushing a big rock up a steep hill," said W. Ron Allen, chairman of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe in Washington state. But tribal leaders have become more sophisticated in navigating it over the past two decades, he said.

"Tracy has played a critical role," said Allen, citing Toulou's help in educating federal lawyers on Native culture, from restorative justice to traditional land management.

The Justice Department also takes part in civil litigation involving tribes, including environmental cases and hunting and fishing rights.

In Toulou's place as acting director is Daron Carreiro, a career attorney from the Environment and Natural Resources Division who is also steeped in laws and policies around tribal communities, sovereignty and public safety.

As he begins his retirement in Montana, Toulou is hoping to see improved communication between the federal law enforcement and victims' families and more Native people working at the Justice Department.

Garland said Toulou's "legacy will be felt at the Justice Department and in tribal communities for generations to come."

The Latest | World leaders urge Israel not to retaliate for the Iranian drone and missile attack

By The Associated Press undefined

World leaders are urging Israel not to retaliate after Iran launched an attack involving hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron told the BBC on Monday the U.K. does not support a retaliatory strike, while French President Emmanuel Macron said Paris will try to "convince Israel that we must not respond by escalating."

The Iranian attack on Saturday, less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building, marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

An Israeli military spokesman said that 99% of the drones and missiles launched by Iran were intercepted.

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's six-month war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. The war erupted after Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a devastating cross-border attack on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others.

An Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation and killed over 33,000 people, according to local health officials.

Currently:

— Iran's attack on Israel raised fears of a wider war, but all sides in the conflict also scored gains.

— US helps Israel shoot down 'nearly all' Iran-launched attack drones as Biden vows support.

Here is the latest:

ISRAELI MILITARY WARNS PALESTINIANS NOT TO RETURN TO NORTHERN GAZA

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — The Israeli military renewed warnings on Monday for Palestinians in Gaza not to return to the embattled territory's north, a day after five people were killed trying to reach their homes in the war-torn area.

The military said Palestinians should stay in southern Gaza where they have been told to shelter because the north is a "dangerous combat zone," Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee wrote on social platform X.

On Sunday, hundreds of Palestinians sheltering in central Gaza headed north in an attempt to return to their homes. Throngs of people were seen crowding a seaside road.

Hospital authorities in Gaza said five people were shot by Israeli forces while trying to head north. The Israeli military had no immediate comment and the precise circumstances behind the deaths were not immediately clear.

The returnees said they were prompted to make the journey north because they were fed up with the difficult conditions they are forced to live under while displaced.

Northern Gaza was an early target in Israel's war against Hamas, which it launched in response to the militant group's deadly Oct. 7 attack. The military is still operating in the north in a bid to stamp out militants that have regrouped.

Vast parts of northern Gaza have been flattened by Israel's offensive and much of its population displaced.

BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY URGES ISRAEL TO AVOID STRIKING BACK AT IRAN

LONDON — British Foreign Secretary David Cameron has urged Israel "to be smart as well as tough" and avoid striking back at Iran in response to its drone and missile barrage.

Cameron told the BBC that the U.K. does not support a retaliatory strike. The U.K.'s top diplomat said the attack had been a defeat for Iran and echoed President Joe Biden, who urged Israel to "take the win."

Cameron said Britain's message to Israel is: "Now is the time to be smart as well as tough, to think with head as well as heart."

He said British fighter jets had played an "important part" in shooting down some of the more than 300 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones fired at Israel from Iran, but did not provide details.

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MACRON SAYS IRAN'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL WAS A 'DISPROPORTIONATE RESPONSE'

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron said Iran's attack on Israel was a "disproportionate response" to the bombing of its consulate in the Syrian capital, Damascus. Firing a barrage of missiles and drones on Israel was an "unprecedented, very dangerous" act in the volatile Middle East, Macron said of Saturday's attacks.

Speaking to French media BFMTV and RMC on Monday, Macron said that France had carried out "interceptions" of missiles that Iran aimed at Israel at the request of Jordan.

"We have condemned, we have intervened, we will do everything to avoid an escalation, an inferno," Macron said.

He said France will try to "convince Israel that we must not respond by escalating."

Instead of retaliating by attacking Tehran, France will work to "isolate Iran, increase sanctions and find a path to peace in the region," Macron said.

GERMAN FM TELLS IRANIAN COUNTERPART NOT TO FURTHER ESCALATE TENSIONS

PARIS – Germany's foreign minister says she has made "unmistakably" clear to her Iranian counterpart that Tehran must not further escalate tensions in the Middle East.

Annalena Baerbock spoke by phone Sunday with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, following a previous conversation last week before Iran's attack on Israel. She said she "warned him unmistakably against a further escalation."

She said at a news conference in Paris on Monday that "Iran is isolated." She added that "Israel won in a defensive way" thanks to its strong air defense and the intervention of the U.S., Britain and Arab countries.

Baerbock said that "it is now important to secure this defensive victory diplomatically" and prevent a regional confrontation.

Asked whether Israel has the right to strike back against Iran, Baerbock said that "the right to self-defense means fending off an attack; retaliation is not a category in international law." She said she had made that point to Amirabdollahian last week.

SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS EMERGENCY MEETING ON IRAN ATTACK. NO ACTION TAKEN

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting Sunday to discuss Iran's attack on Israel. The meeting ended without any action by the council.

"Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said. "Now is the time for maximum restraint."

Israeli Ambassador Gilad Erdan told the council: "Last night, the world witnessed an unprecedented escalation that serves as the clearest proof for what happens when warnings aren't heeded. Israel is not the boy who cried wolf."

Iranian Ambassador Saeid Iravani said: "Iran's operation was entirely in the exercise of Iran's inherent right to self-defense. This concluded action was necessary and proportionate."

U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood said after the meeting ended, "There has to be a Security Council response to what happened last night."

ISRAELI MILITARY LIFTS RESTRICTIONS, SAYS SCHOOLS CAN REOPEN

The Israeli military says children can return to school after lifting a series of restrictions on public activities that were imposed ahead of Sunday's Iranian missile strike.

The military's Home Front command late Saturday canceled school and limited the size of public gatherings as a safety precaution ahead of the missile attack.

Monday's announcement reflected the determination that the threat of further attacks has passed.

The Home Front Command says the changes went into effect at midnight.

BIDEN SPEAKS WITH JORDAN'S KING ABDULLAH II

The White House says President Joe Biden spoke by phone Sunday with Jordan's King Abdullah II about the situation in the Middle East.

Biden strongly condemned the attack launched by Iran, which the White House says also "threatened Jordan and the Jordanian people." Both leaders said they continue to monitor the situation and will remain

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in close touch over the coming days.

They also discussed the situation in Gaza, and reaffirmed their cooperation to increase critical humanitarian assistance to Gaza and to find a path to end the crisis as soon as possible.

ISRAEL'S PRESIDENT SAYS RESPONSE TO IRAN ATTACK SHOWED 'IRONCLAD' ALLIANCE BETWEEN ISRAEL, US

Israel's President Isaac Herzog said on CNN Sunday afternoon that the last 24 hours had shown the "ironclad" alliance between the U.S. and Israel.

Herzog was referring to the Iranian drone and missile attack on Israel less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building. Israel and its coalition of partners, including the U.S., were able to defeat 99% of the munitions.

"We can argue on many things and it's legitimate," Herzog said. "We have our objectives and we are a small nation. The United States is a world superpower, has its interests. But at the end we must have a dialogue."

Herzog, referring to the Hamas attack on Israel in October and Israel's response, said everyone who watches and analyzes Israel must understand that "we have been met by an empire of evil. It's true. It's absolutely true. Our citizens were raped and butchered and burned and tortured and abducted in an unbelievably unprecedented massacre."

Herzog then called it a "Hamas-acre."

He said Israel is working closely with the U.S. and other allies on the situation in Gaza.

US SAYS IRAN'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL CLEARLY INTENDED TO CAUSE 'SIGNIFICANT' DAMAGE, DEATH
WASHINGTON — Senior Biden administration officials said Sunday it was clear Iran's attack on Israel was intended to cause significant damage and death, and U.S. officials had been in regular contact with their Israeli counterparts.

Israel and its coalition of partners were able to defeat 99% of the munitions, a senior administration official. If the assault had been successful, "this attack could have cause an uncontrollable escalation of broader regional conflict."

The heads of the G7 leading industrialized nations on their call Sunday were "totally united" in the condemnation of Iran and need to hold Iran to account for the assault, the official said.

Biden in his call with Netanyahu reaffirmed his unwavering support for Israel's defense, the official said, but then told the prime minister "that Israel really came out far ahead in this exchange."

ISRAEL ACTIVATING TWO RESERVE BRIGADES FOR OPERATIONS IN GAZA

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military says it is activating two reserve brigades for "operational activities" in Gaza.

Sunday's announcement comes as Israel prepares for a ground invasion of Rafah – the southern Gaza city that Israel says is Hamas' last major stronghold.

Israel last week withdrew most of its remaining ground forces from Gaza after six months of war, leaving its troop levels in the territory at the lowest level in months.

The Rafah invasion faces stiff international opposition, in large part because over 1 million people, roughly half of Gaza's population, are now crowded into the city after fleeing fighting elsewhere in the territory. They say they have nowhere else to go.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he is determined to complete the Gaza operation. He says Israel has even set a date for the operation and claimed that Israel has a plan to evacuate civilians from Rafah.

G7 COUNTRIES CONDEMN IRAN'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL

ROME — Leaders of the G7 — the informal gathering of industrialized countries that includes the United States, United Kingdom and France — issued a statement Sunday "unequivocally condemning in the strongest terms Iran's direct and unprecedented attack against Israel."

The statement came after the leaders met in a video conference hosted by the Italian presidency.

"Iran fired hundreds of drones and missiles towards Israel. Israel, with the help of its partners, defeated the attack," the statement reads. "We express our full solidarity and support to Israel and its people and

reaffirm our commitment towards its security.”

The group also stressed that Iran “with its actions, has further stepped toward the destabilization of the region and risks provoking an uncontrollable regional escalation.”

The G7 leaders said that scenario must be avoided.

“We will continue to work to stabilize the situation and avoid further escalation. In this spirit, we demand that Iran and its proxies cease their attacks, and we stand ready to take further measures now and in response to further destabilizing initiatives,” they said.

Are Americans feeling like they get enough sleep?

Dream on, a new Gallup poll says

By DEEPTI HAJELA and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If you’re feeling — YAWN — sleepy or tired while you read this and wish you could get some more shut-eye, you’re not alone. A majority of Americans say they would feel better if they could have more sleep, according to a new poll.

But in the U.S., the ethos of grinding and pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps is ubiquitous, both in the country’s beginnings and our current environment of always-on technology and work hours. And getting enough sleep can seem like a dream.

The Gallup poll, released Monday, found 57% of Americans say they would feel better if they could get more sleep, while only 42% say they are getting as much sleep as they need. That’s a first in Gallup polling since 2001; in 2013, when Americans were last asked, it was just about the reverse — 56% saying they got the needed sleep and 43% saying they didn’t.

Younger women, under the age of 50, were especially likely to report they aren’t getting enough rest.

The poll also asked respondents to report how many hours of sleep they usually get per night: Only 26% said they got eight or more hours, which is around the amount that sleep experts say is recommended for health and mental well-being. Just over half, 53%, reported getting six to seven hours. And 20% said they got five hours or less, a jump from the 14% who reported getting the least amount of sleep in 2013.

(And just to make you feel even more tired, in 1942, the vast majority of Americans were sleeping more. Some 59% said they slept eight or more hours, while 33% said they slept six to seven hours. What even IS that?)

THE REASONS AREN’T EXACTLY CLEAR

The poll doesn’t get into reasons WHY Americans aren’t getting the sleep they need, and since Gallup last asked the question in 2013, there’s no data breaking down the particular impact of the last four years and the pandemic era.

But what’s notable, says Sarah Fioroni, senior researcher at Gallup, is the shift in the last decade toward more Americans thinking they would benefit from more sleep and particularly the jump in the number of those saying they get five or less hours.

“That five hours or less category ... was almost not really heard of in 1942,” Fioroni said. “There’s almost nobody that said they slept five hours or less.”

In modern American life, there also has been “this pervasive belief about how sleep was unnecessary — that it was this period of inactivity where little to nothing was actually happening and that took up time that could have been better used,” said Joseph Dzierzewski, vice president for research and scientific affairs at the National Sleep Foundation.

It’s only relatively recently that the importance of sleep to physical, mental and emotional health has started to percolate more in the general population, he said.

And there’s still a long way to go. For some Americans, like Justine Broughal, 31, a self-employed event planner with two small children, there simply aren’t enough hours in the day. So even though she recognizes the importance of sleep, it often comes in below other priorities like her 4-month-old son, who still wakes up throughout the night, or her 3-year-old daughter.

“I really treasure being able to spend time with (my children),” Broughal says. “Part of the benefit of

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being self-employed is that I get a more flexible schedule, but it's definitely often at the expense of my own care."

THERE'S A CULTURAL BACKDROP TO ALL THIS, TOO

So why are we awake all the time? One likely reason for Americans' sleeplessness is cultural — a long-standing emphasis on industriousness and productivity.

Some of the context is much older than the shift documented in the poll. It includes the Protestants from European countries who colonized the country, said Claude Fischer, a professor of sociology at the graduate school of the University of California Berkeley. Their belief system included the idea that working hard and being rewarded with success was evidence of divine favor.

"It has been a core part of American culture for centuries," he said. "You could make the argument that it ... in the secularized form over the centuries becomes just a general principle that the morally correct person is somebody who doesn't waste their time."

Jennifer Sherman has seen that in action. In her research in rural American communities over the years, the sociology professor at Washington State University says a common theme among people she interviewed was the importance of having a solid work ethic. That applied not only to paid labor but unpaid labor as well, like making sure the house was clean.

A through line of American cultural mythology is the idea of being "individually responsible for creating our own destinies," she said. "And that does suggest that if you're wasting too much of your time ... that you are responsible for your own failure."

"The other side of the coin is a massive amount of disdain for people considered lazy," she added.

Broughal says she thinks that as parents, her generation is able to let go of some of those expectations. "I prioritize ... spending time with my kids, over keeping my house pristine," she said.

But with two little ones to care for, she said, making peace with a messier house doesn't mean more time to rest: "We're spending family time until, you know, (my 3-year-old) goes to bed at eight and then we're resetting the house, right?"

THE TRADEOFFS OF MORE SLEEP

While the poll only shows a broad shift over the past decade, living through the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected people's sleep patterns. Also discussed in post-COVID life is "revenge bedtime procrastination," in which people put off sleeping and instead scroll on social media or binge a show as a way of trying to handle stress.

Liz Meshel is familiar with that. The 30-year-old American is temporarily living in Bulgaria on a research grant, but also works a part-time job on U.S. hours to make ends meet.

On the nights when her work schedule stretches to 10 p.m., Meshel finds herself in a "revenge procrastination" cycle. She wants some time to herself to decompress before going to sleep and ends up sacrificing sleeping hours to make it happen.

"That's applies to bedtime as well, where I'm like, 'Well, I didn't have any me time during the day, and it is now 10 p.m., so I am going to feel totally fine and justified watching X number of episodes of TV, spending this much time on Instagram, as my way to decompress,'" she said. "Which obviously will always make the problem worse."

The IRS is quicker to answer the phone on this Tax Day

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — On this Tax Day, the IRS is promoting the customer service improvements the agency rolled out since receiving tens of billions in new funding dollars through Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act.

From cutting phone wait times to digitizing more documents and improving the "Where's My Refund" tool to show more account details in plain language, agency leadership is trying to bring attention to what's been done to repair the agency's image as an outdated and maligned tax collector.

The promotion also in part is meant to quickly normalize a more efficient and effective IRS before con-

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gressional Republicans threaten another round of cuts to the agency. So time is of the essence for both taxpayers and the agency this season.

"This filing season, the IRS has built off past successes and reached new milestones," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on a Friday call with reporters. "It's showing that when it has the resources it needs, it will provide taxpayers the service they deserve."

"Delivering tax season is a massive undertaking," said IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel. "We greatly appreciate people in many different areas working long hours to serve taxpayers as the tax deadline approaches."

For most people, April 15 is the last day to submit tax returns or to file an extension and the IRS says it has received more than 100 million tax returns, with tens of millions more expected to be filed.

The IRS says call wait times have been cut down to three minutes this tax season, compared with the average 28 minutes in 2022. That has saved taxpayers 1.4 million hours of hold time and the agency has answered 3 million more calls compared with the same time frame. Also, an updated "Where's My Refund" tool giving more specific information about taxpayers' refunds in plain language was rolled out to 31 million views online.

Werfel told The Associated Press earlier in the tax season that the agency's agenda is to deliver "better service for all Americans so that we can ease stress, frustration and make the tax filing process easier — and to increase scrutiny on complex filers where there's risk of tax evasion."

"When we do that," Werfel said, "not only do we make the tax system work better because it's easier and more streamlined to meet your tax obligations. But also we collect more money for the U.S. Treasury and lower our deficit. The IRS is a good investment."

Major new initiatives in recent months have included an aggressive pursuit of high-wealth earners who don't pay their full tax obligations, such as people who improperly deduct personal flights on corporate jets and those who just don't file at all.

This also is the first tax season that the IRS has rolled out a program called Direct File, the government's free electronic tax return filing system available to taxpayers in 12 states who have simple W-2 forms and claim a standard deduction.

If Direct File is successful and scaled up for the general public's use, the program could drastically change how Americans file their taxes and how much money they spend completing them. That is, if the agency can see the program through its development in spite of threats to its funding.

The Inflation Reduction Act initially included \$80 billion for the IRS.

However, House Republicans have successfully clawed back some of the money. They built a \$1.4 billion reduction to the IRS into the debt ceiling and budget cuts package passed by Congress last summer. A separate agreement will take an additional \$20 billion from the IRS over the next two years to divert to other nondefense programs.

Government watchdogs warn IRS funding cuts will reduce the amount of revenues the U.S. collects.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office reported in February that a \$5 billion rescission from the IRS would reduce revenues by \$5.2 billion over the next 10 years and increase the cumulative deficit by \$0.2 billion. A \$20 billion rescission would reduce revenues by \$44 billion and a \$35 billion rescission would reduce revenues by \$89 billion and increase the deficit by \$54 billion.

Sydney attack victims include a mother who saved her baby, a Chinese grad student and an architect

SYDNEY (AP) — The people killed and wounded by an assailant at a Sydney shopping mall were mostly women.

A police officer shot and killed the man who had attacked people at the busy Westfield Bondi Junction mall, and his family said he had a long history of schizophrenia, lacked social skills and had a fascination with knives. Police said their investigation would include why he targeted women and avoided men during his attack.

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Those killed were five women and one man. Twelve people were wounded, and police said they mostly were female.

Here's some information on those killed.

ASHLEE GOOD

Friends and family of 38-year-old osteopath Ashlee Good remembered her as a "beautiful mother, daughter, sister, partner, friend" and an "all-round outstanding human."

Good's 9-month-old daughter was wounded and was in serious but stable condition in a hospital Monday.

Good reportedly passed her baby to two strangers nearby before she lost consciousness. "To the two men who held and cared for our baby when Ashlee could not — words cannot express our gratitude," the family's statement read.

Good's father, Kerry Good, is a former Australian Rules football player and a current board member of the North Melbourne AFL club. In honor of Ashlee, the club wore black armbands in its match on Sunday.

DAWN SINGLETON

Dawn Singleton was the 25-year-old daughter of well-known businessman John Singleton.

She worked as an e-commerce assistant for a women's fashion outlet in Sydney, which said in a social media post they had "not only lost an employee but someone special to us who felt like a family member."

"Dawn was a sweet, kind hearted person who had her whole life ahead of her. She was really amazing," White Fox Boutique said in an Instagram post.

"We send our love and deepest condolences to her partner, the Singleton family and her friends."

Singleton's LinkedIn profile says she was a communications graduate from the University of Technology, Sydney and had worked at the trendy fashion line since 2020.

She was soon to be married to her police officer partner.

FARAZ TAHIR

The only male killed was Faraz Tahir, a 30-year-old Pakistani refugee who worked at the mall as a security guard.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Australia said Faraz had been in Australia for less than a year and was a "cherished member of our community" and was a dedicated security guard who tragically lost his life while serving the public during this attack.

"He quickly became an integral part of our community, known for his unwavering dedication and kindness," the organization said in a statement.

It also said Faraz contributed to charitable endeavors supporting Muslim youth in Sydney.

Faraz was credited with trying to stop the attack.

"We are devastated by Faraz's passing and recognise our team member's bravery and role as a first responder," Elliott Rusanow, CEO of the mall owner Scentre Group, said in a statement to Nine News. "Another member of our security team was injured and remains in hospital."

JADE YOUNG

Jade Young, 47, was a mother of two who had been an architect for more than two decades.

Young lived in Bellevue Hill, an eastern Sydney suburb near the shopping mall, and was a volunteer member of the Bronte Surf Life Saving Club.

"I sadly have to report that a Bronte SLSC member, Jade Young, lost her life during the tragic events in Bondi Junction yesterday," the club said in a statement to Nine News.

"Some of you might have known Jade as she and her family have been active in youth education."

PIKRIA DARCHIA

Pikria Darchia, 55, was named as the fifth victim late Sunday.

According to Darchia's profile on professional networking site LinkedIn, she was an artist and had worked as a designer for 10 years in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Prior to that she had finished a masters degree in performance art at the Tbilisi State Academy of Art.

In Australia, she studied business administration. Darchia's profile said she spoke English, Russian and Georgian.

Further details about her have not been released, and her family has requested privacy.

YIXUAN CHENG

Yixuan Cheng, a Chinese graduate student, was the final victim to be identified Monday.

Chinese news service Sydney Today reported the 27-year-old was studying for a master's degree in economics at the University of Sydney.

The report said she had called her fiance in China, who has only been identified as Wang, just minutes before the attack.

"She happily talked to me on the phone at around 3 p.m. She even tried on clothes for me to see," Wang said.

After the attack, Wang said he had tried to call Cheng "day and night, but there was no contact at all."

The family spent the next 24 hours watching news of the attack in hope of an update, before receiving the heartbreaking news of her death.

Wang said the pair had planned to marry after Cheng graduated.

Australian police probe why man who stabbed 6 people to death in a Sydney mall targeted women

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australian police are examining why a lone assailant who stabbed six people to death in a busy Sydney shopping mall and injured more than a dozen others targeted women while avoiding men, a police commissioner said on Monday. The killer's father blamed his son's frustration at not having a girlfriend.

Police shot and killed the homeless assailant, Joel Cauchi, during his knife attack in the Westfield Bondi Junction mall on Saturday near world-famous Bondi Beach.

Police have ruled out terrorism and said the 40-year-old had a history of mental illness.

New South Wales state Police Commissioner Karen Webb said detectives would question Cauchi's family in a bid to determine his motive. CCTV footage from the mall showed Cauchi targeted women with the 30 centimeter knife.

"The videos speak for themselves, don't they? And that's certainly a line of inquiry for us," Webb said.

"It's obvious to me, it's obvious to detectives that that seems to be an area of interest: that the offender had focused on women and avoided the men," Webb added.

The attacker's father, Andrew Cauchi, said he knew why his son, who suffered from schizophrenia, had targeted women.

"Because he wanted a girlfriend and he's got no social skills and he was frustrated out of his brain," the visibly distraught 76-year-old told reporters outside his home in Toowoomba in Queensland state, an 870-kilometer (540-mile) drive across the New South Wales border from Sydney.

"He's my son, and I'm loving a monster. To you, he's a monster. To me, he was a very sick boy. Believe me, he was a very sick boy," the father added.

The only male killed was Faraz Tahir, a Pakistani refugee who worked at the mall as a security guard. Tahir had not been armed.

Webb said most of the 12 victims who survived their wounds were also women.

The evidence will be provided to a coroner to report on the circumstances of the deaths.

Webb expected the coroner would also address the question of whether security guards at the mall, which is one of Australia's largest, should be armed.

The families of two victims based overseas had been advised of their deaths, police said. Those victims are Tahir, 30, from Pakistan, and Yixuan Cheng, 27, from China. Also killed were Jade Young, 47; Dawn Singleton, 25; Pikria Darchia, 55; and Ashlee Good, 38.

Eight victims who survived their injuries remained in hospitals on Monday, including Good's 9-month-old daughter. The baby's condition improved overnight Sunday from critical to serious, health authorities said.

The conditions of the other seven ranged from critical to stable.

Andrew Cauchi said his son had a "fascination with knives." The father took five U.S. military combat knives from his son while they were both living in the Toowoomba family home last year for fear they would be used for violence.

The father said his son had become angry and called police, accusing the father of theft. The knives were given to a friend for safekeeping.

"I told the police my son had schizophrenia and I'm worried for myself," Andrew Cauchi said.

"I said to my mate, 'Why do I feel I'm going to be killed in my own house by my own son with a U.S. combat knife?'" he added.

The killer's mother, Michele Cauchi, said his rampage was the "absolute worst nightmare" of any parent of a mentally ill child.

Flags on government buildings around Australia flew at half-staff on Monday as a day of national mourning was declared to honor the victims. A black ribbon appeared on the sails of the Sydney Opera House on Monday night as part of a light display.

Police had given control of the seven-story crime scene back to the mall operators on Sunday night, but a decision has yet to be announced on when it will reopen for business.

The police officer who has been credited with saving many lives by shooting Cauchi dead, Insp. Amy Scott, will be interviewed by detectives on Tuesday.

At birthplace of Olympics, performers at flame-lighting ceremony feel a pull of the ancient past

By THEODORA TONGAS and DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

ANCIENT OLYMPIA, Greece (AP) — No one knows what music in ancient Greece sounded like or how dancers once moved.

Every two years, a new interpretation of the ancient performance gets a global audience. It takes place in southern Greece at a site many still consider sacred: the birthplace of the Olympic Games.

Forty-eight performers, chosen in part for their resemblance to youths in antiquity as seen in statues and other surviving artwork, will take part Tuesday in the flame-lighting ceremony for the Paris Olympics.

Details of the 30-minute performance are fine-tuned — and kept secret — right up until a public rehearsal Monday.

The Associated Press got rare access to rehearsals that took place during weekends, mostly at an Olympic indoor cycling track in Athens.

As riders whiz around them on the banked cycling oval, the all-volunteer Olympic performers snatch poses from ancient vases. Sequences are repeated and re-repeated under the direction of the hyper-focused head choreographer Artemis Ignatiou.

"In ancient times there was no Olympic flame ceremony," Ignatiou said during a recent practice session.

"My inspiration comes from temple pediments, from images on vases, because there is nothing that has been preserved — no movement, no dance — from antiquity," she said. "So basically, what we are doing is joining up those images. Everything in between comes from us."

Ceremonies take place at Olympia every two years for the Winter and Summer Games, with the sun's rays focused on the inside of a parabolic mirror to produce the Olympic flame and start the torch relay to the host city.

Women dressed as priestesses are at the heart of the ceremony, first held for the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Leading the group is an actress who performs the role of high priestess and makes a dramatic appeal to Apollo, the ancient god of the sun, for assistance moments before the torch is lit.

Over the decades, new ingredients have been progressively added: music, choreography, new colors for the costumes, male performers known as "kouroi" and subtle style inclusions to give a nod to the culture of the Olympic host nation.

Adding complexity also has introduced controversy, inevitably amplified by social media. Criticism this

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year has centered on the dresses and tunics to be worn by the performers, styled to resemble ancient Greek columns. Faultfinders have called it a rude departure from the ceremony's customary elegance.

Organizers hope the attire will create a more positive impression when witnessed at the ruins of ancient Olympia.

Counting out the sequences, Ignatiou controls the music with taps on her cell phone while keeping track of the male dancers at the velodrome working on a stop motion-like routine and women who glide past them like a slowly uncoiling spring.

Ignatiou has been involved with the ceremony for 36 years, as priestess, high priestess, assistant and then head choreographer since 2008. She takes in the criticism with composure.

She's still moved to tears when describing the flame lighting, but defers to her dancers to describe their experience of the five-month participation at practices.

Most in their early twenties, the performers are selected from dance and drama academies with an eye on maintaining an athletic look and classic Greek aesthetic, the women with hair pulled back in neat double-braids.

Christiana Katsimpraki, a 23-year-old drama school student who is taking part at Olympia for the first time, said she wants to repay the kindness shown to her by older performers.

"Before I go to bed, when I close my eyes, I go through the whole choreography — a run through — to make sure I have all the steps memorized and that they're in the right order," she said. "It's so that the next time I can come to the rehearsal, it all goes correctly and no one gets tired."

The ceremony is performed to sparse music, and final routine modifications are made at Olympia, in part to cope with the pockmarked and uneven ground at the site.

Dancers describe the fun they have in messaging groups, the good-natured pranks played on newcomers and fun they have on the four-hour bus ride to the ancient site in southern Greece — but also the significance of the moment and the pull of the past.

"I'm in awe that we're going there and that I'm going to be part of this whole team," 23-year-old performer Kallia Vouidaski said. "I'm going to have this entire experience that I watched when I was little on TV. I would say, 'Oh! How cool would it be if I could do this at some point.' And I did it."

The flame-lighting ceremony will start at 0830 GMT Tuesday. A separate flame-handover ceremony to the Paris 2024 organizing committee will be held in Athens on April 26.

In Modi's India, opponents and journalists feel the squeeze ahead of election

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government are increasingly wielding strong-arm tactics to subdue political opponents and critics of the ruling Hindu-nationalist party ahead of the nationwide elections that begin this week.

A decade into power, and on the cusp of securing five more years, the Modi government is reversing India's decadeslong commitment to multiparty democracy and secularism.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has brought corruption charges against many officials from its main rival, the Congress Party, but few convictions. Dozens of politicians from other opposition parties are under investigation or in jail. And just last month, Modi's government froze the Congress party's bank accounts for what it said was non-payment of taxes.

The Modi administration says the country's investigating agencies are independent and that its democratic institutions are robust, pointing to high voter turnout in recent elections that have delivered Modi's party a clear mandate.

Yet civil liberties are under attack. Peaceful protests have been crushed with force. A once free and diverse press is threatened. Violence is on the rise against the Muslim minority. And the country's judiciary increasingly aligns with the executive branch.

To better understand how Modi is reshaping India and what is at stake in an election that begins Friday

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and runs through June 1, The Associated Press spoke with a lawyer, a journalist, and an opposition politician.

Here are their stories:

DEFENDING MODI'S CRITICS

Mihir Desai has fought for the civil liberties and human rights of India's most disadvantaged communities, such as the poor and Muslims, for nearly four decades.

The 65-year-old lawyer from India's financial capital Mumbai is now working on one of his — and the country's — most high-profile cases: defending a dozen political activists, journalists and lawyers jailed in 2018 on accusations of plotting to overthrow the Modi government. The accusations, he says, are baseless — just one of the government's all-too-frequent and audacious efforts to silence critics.

One of the defendants in the case, a Jesuit priest and longtime civil rights activist, died at age 84 after about nine months in custody. The other defendants remain in jail, charged under anti-terror laws that rarely result in convictions.

"First authorities came up with a theory that they planned to kill Modi. Now they are being accused of being terrorist sympathizers," he said.

The point of it all, Desai believes, is to send a message to any would-be critics.

According to digital forensics experts at U.S.-based Arsenal Consulting, the Indian government hacked into the computers of some of the accused and planted files that were later used as evidence against them.

To Desai, this is proof that the Modi government has "weaponized" the country's once-independent investigative agencies.

He sees threats to Indian democracy all around him. Last year, the government removed the country's chief justice as one of three people who appoint commissioners overseeing elections; Modi and the opposition leader in parliament are the others. Now, one of Modi's cabinet ministers has a vote in the process, giving the ruling party a 2-1 majority.

"It's a death knell to free and fair elections," Desai said.

A POLITICIAN'S PLIGHT IN KASHMIR

Waheed-Ur-Rehman Para, 35, was long seen as an ally in the Indian government's interests in Kashmir. He worked with young people in the majority-Muslim, semi-autonomous region and preached to them about the benefits of embracing India and its democratic institutions — versus seeking independence, or a merger with Pakistan.

Beginning in 2018, though, Para was viewed with suspicion by the Modi government for alleged connections to anti-India separatists. Since then, he has been jailed twice: in 2019 on suspicion that he and other political opponents could stoke unrest; and in 2020 on charges of supporting militant groups — charges he denies.

The accusations stunned Para, whose People's Democratic Party once ruled Kashmir in an alliance with Modi's party.

But he believes the motivation was clear: "I was arrested to forcibly endorse the government's 2019 decision," he said, referring to a clampdown on the resistance in Kashmir after the elimination of the region's semi-autonomous status.

Modi's administration argues the move was necessary to fully integrate the disputed region with India and foster economic development there.

After his 2020 arrest, Para remained in jail for nearly two years, often in solitary confinement, and was subjected to "abusive interrogations," according to U.N. experts.

"My crime was that I wanted the integration of Kashmir, not through the barrel of the gun," said Para, who is seeking to represent Kashmir's main city in the upcoming election.

Para sees his own plight within the larger context of the Modi government's effort to silence perceived opponents, especially those with ties to Muslims, who make up 14% of India's population.

"It is a huge ethical question ... that the largest democracy in the world is not able to assimilate, or offer dignity to, the smallest pocket of its people," he said.

The campaign to turn once-secular India into a Hindu republic may help Modi win elections in the short

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term, Para said, but something much bigger will be lost.

"It risks the whole idea of this country's diversity," he said.

A JOURNALIST FIGHTS CHARGES

In October 2020, independent journalist Sidhique Kappan was arrested while trying to report on a government clampdown in the northern Uttar Pradesh state ruled by Modi's party.

For days, authorities had been struggling to contain protests and outcry over a gruesome rape case. Those accused of the crime were four upper caste Hindu men, while the victim belonged to the Dalit community, the lowest rung of India's caste hierarchy.

Kappan, a 44-year-old Muslim, was detained and jailed before he even reached the crime site, accused of intending to incite violence. After two years in jail, his case reached India's top court in 2022. While he was quickly granted bail, the case against him is ongoing.

Kappan's case is not unique, and he says it highlights how India is becoming increasingly unsafe for journalists. Under intense pressure from the state, many Indian news organizations have become more pliant and supportive of government policies,

"Those who have tried to be independent have come under relentless attack by the government," he said.

Foreign journalists are banned from reporting in Kashmir, for example. Same goes for India's northeast Manipur state, which has been embroiled in ethnic violence for almost a year.

Television news is increasingly dominated by stations touting the government's Hindu nationalist agenda, such as a new citizenship law that excludes Muslim migrants. Independent TV stations have been temporarily shut down, and newspapers that run articles critical of Modi's agenda find that any advertising from the government – an important source of revenue – quickly dries up.

Last year, the India offices of the BBC were raided on tax irregularities just days after it aired a documentary critical of Modi.

The advocacy group Reporters Without Borders ranks India 161st on a worldwide list of countries' press freedoms.

Kappan said he has barely been able to report news since his arrest. The trial keeps him busy, requiring him to travel to a court hundreds of miles away every other week. The time and money required for his trial have made it difficult for him to support his wife and three children, Kappan said.

"It is affecting their education, their mental health," he said.

The shadow war between Iran and Israel has been exposed.

What happens next?

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Iran's unprecedented attack on Israel early Sunday marked a change in approach for Tehran, which had relied on proxies across the Middle East since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in October. All eyes are now on whether Israel chooses to take further military action, while Washington seeks diplomatic measures instead to ease regional tensions.

Iran says the attack was in response to an airstrike widely blamed on Israel that destroyed what Iran says were consular offices in Syria and killed two generals with its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard earlier this month.

Israel said almost all the over 300 drones and missiles launched overnight by Iran were shot down by its anti-missile defense system, backed by the U.S. and Britain. The sole reported casualty was a wounded girl in southern Israel, and a missile struck an Israeli airbase, causing light damage.

Still, the chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guard called the operation successful.

Iran has managed to strike a balance between retaliating publicly for the strike in Damascus and avoiding provoking further Israeli military action at least initially, which could lead to a much wider conflict, said Mona Yacoubian, vice president of the Middle East and North Africa center at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

"Both (Iran and Israel) are able at this point to claim victory and step down off the precipice, particularly

since there were no Israeli civilians killed," Yacoubian said.

The world was still waiting, however, for the result of an Israeli War Cabinet meeting on Sunday. Israeli hard-liners have pushed for a response, but others have suggested restraint, saying Israel should focus on strengthening budding ties with Arab partners.

"We will build a regional coalition and collect the price from Iran, in the way and at the time that suits us," said Benny Gantz, a member of the War Cabinet.

Analysts say Iran sent a message that it would be willing to escalate and change its rules of engagement in its shadow war with Israel.

"It's a warning shot, saying that if Israel breaks the rules, there are consequences," said Magnus Ranstorp, strategic adviser at the Swedish Defense University.

Iran's attack has further stoked fears of the war in Gaza causing regional havoc.

But Iran maintains that it does not seek all-out war across the region. Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdo-lahian said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that Iran has "no intention of continuing defensive operations" at this point unless it is attacked.

Iran stressed that it targeted Israeli facilities involved in the Damascus attack, not civilians or "economic areas."

After Israel began its offensive in Gaza against Hamas, Iran-backed groups were involved militarily while Tehran sat on the sidelines. Lebanon's Hezbollah group fired rockets into northern Israel. Yemen's Houthi rebels attacked Western ships on the Red Sea. An umbrella group of Iran-backed Iraqi militias attacked U.S. military positions in Iraq and Syria.

Now, Tehran is "willing to up the ante" without relying on proxies, said the director of the Carnegie Middle East Center, Maha Yahya.

Still, Iran only went so far.

"They gave enough warning that this was coming, and I think they knew that they (the drones and mis-siles) would be brought down before they reached Israeli territory," Yahya said.

She also noted that the recent mounting pressure on Israel over its conduct in Gaza has now shifted to deescalating regional tensions instead.

Yacoubian says Washington has a critical role to play in avoiding further escalations.

Israel taking further military action does not seem popular among its allies including the United States, said Eldad Shavit, who heads the Israel-U.S. Research Program at Israeli think tank the Institute for National Security Studies.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby told NBC that President Joe Biden does not want an escalation in the regional conflict or a "wider war" with Iran, and is "working on the diplomatic side of this personally."

Urgent meetings of the G7 — the informal gathering of industrialized countries that includes the United States, United Kingdom, and France — and the U.N. Security Council were being held Sunday.

G7 meeting participants in a statement unanimously condemned Iran's attack, saying "we stand ready to take further measures now and in response to further destabilizing initiatives."

Biden to host Iraqi leader as Mideast tensions soar, raising more questions about US troop presence

By MATTHEW LEE and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is set to host Iraq's leader this week for talks that come as tensions across the Middle East have soared over the war in Gaza and Iran's unprecedented weekend attack on Israel in retaliation for an Israeli military strike against an Iranian facility in Syria.

The sharp rise in security fears has raised further questions about the viability of the two-decade American military presence in Iraq, through which portions of Iran's Saturday drone and missile attack on Israel flew or were launched from. A U.S. Patriot battery in Irbil, Iraq, knocked down at least one Iranian ballistic missile, according to American officials.

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In addition, Iranian proxies have initiated attacks against U.S. interests throughout the region from inside Iraq, making Monday's meeting between Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Shia al-Sudani all the more critical. The talks will include a discussion of regional stability and future U.S. troop deployments but will also focus on economic, trade and energy issues that have become a major priority for Iraq's government, according to U.S. officials.

Biden and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin are both expected to address the U.S. troop presence in meetings with al-Sudani. "It is not the primary focus of the visit ... but it is almost certainly going to come up," one senior U.S. official said last week.

The U.S. and Iraq began formal talks in January about ending the coalition created to help the Iraqi government fight the Islamic State, with some 2,000 U.S. troops remaining in the country under an agreement with Baghdad. Iraqi officials have periodically called for a withdrawal of those forces.

The two countries have a delicate relationship due in part to Iran's considerable sway in Iraq, where a coalition of Iran-backed groups brought al-Sudani to power in October 2022.

The U.S. in recent months has urged Iraq to do more to prevent attacks on U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria that have further roiled the Middle East in the aftermath of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Iran's weekend attacks on Israel through Iraqi airspace have further underscored U.S. concerns, although al-Sudani had already left Baghdad and was en route to Washington when the drones and missiles were launched.

The U.S. has also sought to apply financial pressure over Baghdad's relationship with Tehran, restricting Iraq's access to its own dollars in an effort to stamp out money laundering said to benefit Iran and Syria.

Most previous Iraqi prime ministers have visited Washington earlier in their tenure. Al-Sudani's visit was delayed because of tensions between the U.S. and Iran and regional escalation, including the Gaza war and the killing of three U.S. soldiers in Jordan in a drone attack in late January. That was followed by a U.S. strike that killed a leader in the Kataib Hezbollah militia whom Washington accused of planning and participating in attacks on U.S. troops.

Al-Sudani came to power in late 2022 after a power struggle between prominent Shiite cleric and political leader Muqtada Sadr and opposing Shiite factions that are close to Iran after the 2021 elections. Sadr ultimately withdrew from the political process, giving the opportunity to the remaining Shia politicians to form a government headed by al-Sudani.

Since then, al-Sudani has attempted to maintain a balancing act between Iran and America despite being seen as being close to Tehran and despite several incidents that have put his government in an embarrassing position in relation to Washington.

Early in al-Sudani's term, a U.S. citizen, Stephen Edward Troell, was shot and killed by armed men who accosted him as he pulled up to the street where he lived in Baghdad's central Karrada district with his family. An Iraqi criminal court convicted five men last August and sentenced them to life in prison in the case, which officials described as a kidnapping gone wrong.

A few months later, Elizabeth Tsurkov, an Israeli-Russian doctoral student at Princeton, was kidnapped while doing research in Iraq. Al-Sudani's visit will come about a year after Tsurkov's abduction. She is believed to be held by Kataib Hezbollah.

The senior U.S. official said Tsurkov's case would also be raised.

"We are concerned by and closely tracking this case," the official said. "We have strongly condemned her abduction. We've urged ... and continue to urge senior Iraqi officials to find Elizabeth and to secure her release as soon as possible."

Al-Sudani started his term with promises to focus on economic development and fight corruption, but his government has faced economic difficulties, including a discrepancy in the official and market exchange rates between the Iraqi dinar and the U.S. dollar.

The currency issues came in part as a result of a U.S. tightening of the dollar supply to Iraq, as part of a crackdown on money laundering and smuggling of funds to Iran. The U.S. has disallowed more than 20 Iraqi banks from dealing in dollars as part of the campaign.

The al-Sudani government recently renewed Iraq's contract to purchase natural gas from Iran for another five years, which could lead to American displeasure.

The Iraqi prime minister will return to Iraq and meet with the Turkish president following his trip to Washington, which could finally lead to a solution to a long-running dispute over exports of oil from Kurdish areas of Iraq to Turkey. Washington has sought to get the flow of oil to resume.

The Civil War raged and fortune-seekers hunted for gold. This era produced Arizona's abortion ban

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Union and Confederate armies clashed in a bloody fourth year of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln tasked one man to create the legal code for Arizona, almost 50 years before the territory became a state.

New York judge William Thompson Howell wrote 500 pages that spanned provisions on dueling, accidental homicides by ax and age of consent that would govern the newly formed territory of fewer than 7,000 people. But tucked within the "Howell Code," just after the section on duels, was an abortion law criminalizing the administering of "any medicinal substances ... with the intention to procure the miscarriage of any woman then being with child."

That was 160 years ago. Last week, that same 1864 provision was resurrected by the Arizona Supreme Court, which upheld the near-total ban on abortion with no exceptions for rape or incest, a decision that quickly rippled across the political landscape of one of the nation's most important presidential battleground states.

This law's revival is just the latest instance of long-dormant restrictions influencing current abortion policies after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, which once granted a federal right to abortion.

"This is just one more example of a century-old zombie law coming back to life," said Jessica Arons, senior policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union. "This is what the U.S. Supreme Court set the stage for when *Roe* fell."

In the 1860's, Arizonan settlers faced what was widely seen at the time as a remote and dangerous landscape. Settlers clashed with Apache tribes as they encroached on the region. And miners had just begun to discover the gold and silver that would attract droves of fortune seekers in the next decades.

Arizona's 1864 code elaborately describes restrictions on duels, ruling any person involved in the fighting of a duel would be imprisoned for one to three years and meting out punishments for "mayhem" for those who "unlawfully cut out or disable the tongue, put out an eye, slit the nose, ear or lip, or disable any limb or member of another."

Howell's code includes exceptions for homicides, such as when "a man is at work with an axe, and the head flies off and kills a bystander or where a parent is moderately correcting his child ... and happens to occasion death." The code also appears to set the age of consent at 10 years old, proclaiming, "Every person of the age fourteen years and upwards, who shall have carnal knowledge of any female child under the age of ten years, either with or without her consent, shall be adjudged guilty of the crime of rape."

Meanwhile, William Claude Jones, who presided over the 1st Arizona Territorial Legislative Assembly in 1864, was described by a biographer as a "pursuer of nubile females" and had throughout his life married a 12-year-old, a 15-year-old and a 14-year-old, according to a 1990 biography in the *Journal of Arizona History*.

"That's the period of time that this abortion law is from," said Prof. Barbara Atwood, law professor at University of Arizona's law school. "The code reads as if you're going back to this time of this barbaric, wild west."

The state's Civil War-era law is now likely to become one of the strictest abortion bans nationwide, a dynamic that already is shaping the races for president and U.S. Senate. Attorney General Kris Mayes decried the decision and noted that it came from era decades before women even had the right to vote.

She said the court's ruling "will go down in history as a stain on our state."

Similar words came from the White House as President Joe Biden said called it a "cruel ban" resurrected from history.

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Some Arizona Republicans also criticized the ruling, though in more muted language. Republican state Sen. T.J. Shope called it “disappointing.”

While many states repealed their pre-Roe abortion laws after the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that granted a constitutional right to abortion, about a dozen states, including Arizona, kept theirs on the books. These laws often were referred to as “trigger laws” because the overturning of Roe would put them into effect.

Several legal experts said Arizona’s law is likely the oldest state abortion ban that will now be enforced. But century-old abortion restrictions passed by all-male legislatures during time periods when women couldn’t vote and scientific knowledge of pregnancy and abortion were limited have influenced post-Roe abortion policies in Alabama, Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

The laws tend to be more severe. They often don’t include exceptions for rape and incest, call for the imprisonment of providers and ban the procedure in the first few weeks of pregnancy. Some have since been repealed while others are being challenged in court.

“These century-old laws are really having a tangible impact on women’s lives today,” said Jessie Hill, a law professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland. “And they’ve really contributed to the post-Dobbs uncertainty across America.” The U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* overturned Roe.

In Michigan, a 1931 law would have criminalized abortion except when a woman’s life was in danger. But Michigan voters in 2022 overwhelmingly voted to enshrine abortion rights into the state’s constitution and earlier that year a judge ruled the 93-year-old law was unconstitutional. The law was formally repealed by a 2023 statute.

“New Mexico and Michigan realized the threat of these zombie laws and took action,” said Arons of the ACLU. “In Michigan, it was a major driver for pursuing a constitutional amendment enshrining abortion rights.”

An 1849 abortion ban is now at the center of a lawsuit in Wisconsin that is expected to make its way to the state supreme court, which has a new liberal majority. In other states, such as Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas, newer abortion laws have been layered onto older restrictions still on the books.

Abortion rights advocates also are warning about another 19th century law called the Comstock Act that could have national impacts. It’s been revived by anti-abortion groups seeking to use it to block the mailing of the abortion pill mifepristone nationwide. Medication abortions account for most abortions in the U.S.

Originally passed in 1873, the Comstock Act was intended to prohibit the mailing of contraceptives, “lewd” writings and any “instrument, substance, drug, medicine, or thing” that could be used in an abortion, though its scope has been narrowed by federal courts and Congress.

Mary Ruth Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California, Davis School of Law, said anti-abortion groups are pressuring presidential candidates to wield the law to block most abortions nationwide, even in states where it is currently legal, by barring the mailing of any drugs or equipment required for abortions.

“The Comstock Act means what happened in Arizona is possible for all of us across the country,” Ziegler said.

There also are long-dormant laws in many states related to contraception and same-sex marriage that have not been revived, she added.

“This is just a reminder that laws on the books that may seem irrelevant and antiquated can come back and be enforced,” she said.

Tax Day reveals a major split in how Joe Biden and Donald Trump would govern

By JOSH BOAK and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tax Day reveals a major split in how Joe Biden and Donald Trump would govern: The presidential candidates have conflicting ideas about how much to reveal about their own finances and the best ways to boost the economy through tax policy.

Biden, the sitting Democratic president, plans to release his income tax returns on Monday, the IRS fil-

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ing deadline. And on Tuesday, he is scheduled to deliver a speech in Scranton, Pennsylvania, about why the wealthy should pay more in taxes to reduce the federal deficit and help fund programs for the poor and middle class.

Biden is proud to say that he was largely without money for much of his decades-long career in public service, unlike Trump, who inherited hundreds of millions of dollars from his father and used his billionaire status to launch a TV show and later a presidential campaign.

"For 36 years, I was listed as the poorest man in Congress," Biden told donors in California in February. "Not a joke."

In 2015, Trump declared as part of his candidacy, "I'm really rich."

The Republican former president has argued that voters have no need to see his tax data and that past financial disclosures are more than sufficient. He maintains that keeping taxes low for the wealthy will supercharge investment and lead to more jobs, while tax hikes would crush an economy still recovering from inflation that hit a four-decade peak in 2022.

"Biden wants to give the IRS even more cash by proposing the largest tax hike on the American people in history when they are already being robbed by his record-high inflation crisis," said Karoline Leavitt, press secretary for the Trump campaign.

The split goes beyond an ideological difference to a very real challenge for whoever triumphs in the November election. At the end of 2025, many of the tax cuts that Trump signed into law in 2017 will expire — setting up an avalanche of choices about how much people across the income spectrum should pay as the national debt is expected to climb to unprecedented levels.

Including interest costs, extending all the tax breaks could add another \$3.8 trillion to the national debt through 2033, according to an analysis last year by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Biden would like to keep the majority of the tax breaks, based on his pledge that no one earning less than \$400,000 will have to pay more. But he released a budget proposal this year with tax increases on the wealthy and corporations that would raise \$4.9 trillion in revenues and trim forecasted deficits by \$3.2 trillion over 10 years.

Still, he's telling voters that he's all for letting the Trump-era tax cuts lapse.

"Does anyone here think the tax code is fair? Raise your hand," Biden said Tuesday at a speech in Washington's Union Station to a crowd predisposed to dislike Trump's broad tax cuts that helped many in the middle class but disproportionately favored wealthier households.

"It added more to the national debt than any presidential term in history," Biden continued. "And it's due to expire next year. And guess what? I hope to be president because it expires — it's going to stay expired."

Trump has called for higher tariffs on foreign-made goods, which are taxes that could hit consumers in the form of higher prices. But his campaign is committed to tax cuts while promising that a Trump presidency would reduce a national debt that has risen for decades, including during his Oval Office tenure.

"When President Trump is back in the White House, he will advocate for more tax cuts for all Americans and reinvigorate America's energy industry to bring down inflation, lower the cost of living, and pay down our debt," Leavitt said.

Most economists say Trump's tax cuts could not generate enough growth to pay down the national debt. An analysis released Friday by Oxford Economics found that a "full-blown Trump" policy with tax cuts, higher tariffs and blocking immigration would slow growth and increase inflation.

Among Biden's proposals is a "billionaire minimum income tax" that would apply a minimum rate of 25% on households with a net worth of at least \$100 million.

The tax would directly target billionaires such as Trump, who refused to release his personal taxes as presidents have traditionally done. But six years of his tax returns were released in 2022 by Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee.

In 2018, Trump earned more than \$24 million and paid about 4% of that in federal income taxes. The congressional panel also found that the IRS delayed legally mandated audits of Trump during his presidency, with the panel concluding the audit process was "dormant, at best."

Biden has publicly released more than two decades of his tax returns. In 2022, he and his wife, Jill, made

\$579,514 and paid nearly 24% of that in federal income taxes, more than double the rate paid by Trump.

Trump has maintained that his tax records are complicated because of his use of various tax credits and past business losses, which in some cases have allowed him to avoid taxes. He also previously declined to release his tax returns under the claim that the IRS was auditing him for pre-presidential filings.

His finances recently received a boost from the stock market debut of Trump Media, which controls Trump's preferred social media outlet, Truth Social. Share prices initially surged, adding billions of dollars to Trump's net worth, but investors have since soured on the company and shares by Friday were down more than 50% from their peak.

The former president is also on the hook for \$542 million due to legal judgments in a civil fraud case and penalties owed to the writer E. Jean Carroll because of statements made by Trump that damaged her reputation after she accused him of sexual assault.

In the civil fraud case, New York Judge Arthur Engoron looked at the financial records of the Trump Organization and concluded after looking at the inflated assets that "the frauds found here leap off the page and shock the conscience."

Trump's history-making hush money trial starts Monday with jury selection

By JENNIFER PELTZ and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In a singular moment for American history, the hush money trial of former President Donald Trump begins Monday with jury selection.

It's the first criminal trial of a former commander in chief and the first of Trump's four indictments to go to trial. Because Trump is the presumptive nominee for this year's Republican ticket, the trial will also produce the head-spinning split-screen of a presidential candidate spending his days in court and, he has said, "campaigning during the night."

And to some extent, it is a trial of the justice system itself as it grapples with a defendant who has used his enormous prominence to assail the judge, his daughter, the district attorney, some witnesses and the allegations — all while blasting the legitimacy of a legal structure that he insists has been appropriated by his political opponents.

Against that backdrop, scores of ordinary citizens are due to be called Monday into a cavernous room in a utilitarian courthouse to determine whether they can serve, fairly and impartially, on the jury.

"The ultimate issue is whether the prospective jurors can assure us that they will set aside any personal feelings or biases and render a decision that is based on the evidence and the law," Judge Juan M. Merchan wrote in an April 8 filing.

Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records as part of an alleged effort to keep salacious — and, he says, bogus — stories about his sex life from emerging during his 2016 campaign.

The charges center on \$130,000 in payments that Trump's company made to his then-lawyer, Michael Cohen. He paid that sum on Trump's behalf to keep porn actor Stormy Daniels from going public, a month before the election, with her claims of a sexual encounter with the married mogul a decade earlier.

Prosecutors say the payments to Cohen were falsely logged as legal fees in order to cloak their actual purpose. Trump's lawyers say the disbursements indeed were legal expenses, not a cover-up.

Trump himself casts the case, and his other indictments elsewhere, as a broad "weaponization of law enforcement" by Democratic prosecutors and officials. He maintains they are orchestrating sham charges in hopes of impeding his presidential run.

After decades of fielding and initiating lawsuits, the businessman-turned-politician now faces a trial that could result in up to four years in prison if he's convicted, though a no-jail sentence also would be possible.

Regardless of the eventual outcome, the trial of an ex-president and current candidate is a moment of extraordinary gravity for the American political system, as well as for Trump himself. Such a scenario

would have once seemed unthinkable to many Americans, even for a president whose tenure left a trail of shattered norms, including twice being impeached and acquitted by the Senate.

The scene inside the courtroom may be greeted with a spectacle outside. When Trump was arraigned last year, police broke up small skirmishes between his supporters and protesters near the courthouse in a tiny park, where a local Republican group has planned a pro-Trump rally Monday.

Trump's attorneys lost a bid to get the hush money case dismissed and have since repeatedly sought to delay it, prompting a flurry of last-minute appeals court hearings last week.

Among other things, Trump's lawyers maintain that the jury pool in overwhelmingly Democratic Manhattan has been tainted by negative publicity about Trump and that the case should be moved elsewhere.

An appeals judge turned down an emergency request to delay the trial while the change-of-venue request goes to a group of appellate judges, who are set to consider it in the coming weeks.

Manhattan prosecutors have countered that a lot of the publicity stems from Trump's own comments and that questioning will tease out whether prospective jurors can put aside any preconceptions they may have. There's no reason, prosecutors said, to think that 12 fair and impartial people can't be found amid Manhattan's roughly 1.4 million adult residents.

The process of choosing those 12, plus six alternates, will begin with scores of people filing into Merchan's courtroom. They will be known only by number, as he has ordered their names to be kept secret from everyone except prosecutors, Trump and their legal teams.

After hearing some basics about the case and jury service, the prospective jurors will be asked to raise hands if they believe they cannot serve or be fair and impartial. Those who do so will be excused, according to Merchan's filing last week.

The rest will be eligible for questioning. The 42 preapproved, sometimes multi-pronged queries include background basics but also reflect the uniqueness of the case.

"Do you have any strong opinions or firmly held beliefs about former President Donald Trump, or the fact that he is a current candidate for president, that would interfere with your ability to be a fair and impartial juror?" asks one question.

Others ask about attendance at Trump or anti-Trump rallies, opinions on how he's being treated in the case, news sources and more — including any "political, moral, intellectual, or religious beliefs or opinions" that might "slant" a prospective juror's approach to the case.

Based on the answers, the attorneys can ask a judge to eliminate people "for cause" if they meet certain criteria for being unable to serve or be unbiased. The lawyers also can use "peremptory challenges" to nix 10 potential jurors and two prospective alternates without giving a reason.

"If you're going to strike everybody who's either a Republican or a Democrat," the judge observed at a February hearing, "you're going to run out of peremptory challenges very quickly."

AI-generated models could bring more diversity to the fashion industry — or leave it with less

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — London-based model Aleksandrah has a twin, but not in the way you'd expect: Her counterpart is made of pixels instead of flesh and blood.

The virtual twin was generated by artificial intelligence and has already appeared as a stand-in for the real-life Aleksandrah in a photo shoot. Aleksandrah, who goes by her first name professionally, in turn receives credit and compensation whenever the AI version of herself gets used — just like a human model.

Aleksandrah says she and her alter-ego mirror each other "even down to the baby hairs." And it is yet another example of how AI is transforming creative industries — and the way humans may or may not be compensated.

Proponents say the growing use of AI in fashion modeling showcases diversity in all shapes and sizes, allowing consumers to make more tailored purchase decisions that in turn reduces fashion waste from product returns. And digital modeling saves money for companies and creates opportunities for people

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who want to work with the technology.

But critics raise concerns that digital models may push human models — and other professionals like makeup artists and photographers — out of a job. Unsuspecting consumers could also be fooled into thinking AI models are real, and companies could claim credit for fulfilling diversity commitments without employing actual humans.

“Fashion is exclusive, with limited opportunities for people of color to break in,” said Sara Ziff, a former fashion model and founder of the Model Alliance, a nonprofit aiming to advance workers’ rights in the fashion industry. “I think the use of AI to distort racial representation and marginalize actual models of color reveals this troubling gap between the industry’s declared intentions and their real actions.”

Women of color in particular have long faced higher barriers to entry in modeling and AI could upend some of the gains they’ve made. Data suggests that women are more likely to work in occupations in which the technology could be applied, and are more at risk of displacement than men.

In March 2023, iconic denim brand Levi Strauss & Co. announced that it would be testing AI-generated models produced by Amsterdam-based company Lalaland.ai to add a wider range of body types and underrepresented demographics on its website. But after receiving widespread backlash, Levi clarified that it was not pulling back on its plans for live photo shoots, the use of live models or its commitment to working with diverse models.

“We do not see this (AI) pilot as a means to advance diversity or as a substitute for the real action that must be taken to deliver on our diversity, equity and inclusion goals and it should not have been portrayed as such,” Levi said in its statement at the time.

The company last month said that it has no plans to scale the AI program.

The Associated Press reached out to several other retailers to ask whether they use AI fashion models. Target, Kohl’s and fast-fashion giant Shein declined to comment; Temu did not respond to a request for comment.

Meanwhile, spokespeople for Neiman Marcus, H&M, Walmart and Macy’s said their respective companies do not use AI models, although Walmart clarified that “suppliers may have a different approach to photography they provide for their products but we don’t have that information.”

Nonetheless, companies that generate AI models are finding a demand for the technology, including Lalaland.ai, which was co-founded by Michael Musandu after he was feeling frustrated by the absence of clothing models who looked like him.

“One model does not represent everyone that’s actually shopping and buying a product,” he said. “As a person of color, I felt this painfully myself.”

Musandu says his product is meant to supplement traditional photo shoots, not replace them. Instead of seeing one model, shoppers could see nine to 12 models using different size filters, which would enrich their shopping experience and help reduce product returns and fashion waste.

The technology is actually creating new jobs, since Lalaland.ai pays humans to train its algorithms, Musandu said.

And if brands “are serious about inclusion efforts, they will continue to hire these models of color,” he added.

London-based model Aleksandrah, who is Black, says her digital counterpart has helped her distinguish herself in the fashion industry. In fact, the real-life Aleksandrah has even stood in for a Black computer-generated model named Shudu, created by Cameron Wilson, a former fashion photographer turned CEO of The Diigitals, a U.K.-based digital modeling agency.

Wilson, who is white and uses they/them pronouns, designed Shudu in 2017, described on Instagram as the “The World’s First Digital Supermodel.” But critics at the time accused Wilson of cultural appropriation and digital Blackface.

Wilson took the experience as a lesson and transformed The Diigitals to make sure Shudu — who has been booked by Louis Vuitton and BMW — didn’t take away opportunities but instead opened possibilities for women of color. Aleksandrah, for instance, has modeled in-person as Shudu for Vogue Australia, and

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writer Ama Badu came up with Shudu's backstory and portrays her voice for interviews.

Alexsandrah said she is "extremely proud" of her work with The Diigitals, which created her own AI twin: "It's something that even when we are no longer here, the future generations can look back at and be like, 'These are the pioneers.'"

But for Yve Edmond, a New York City area-based model who works with major retailers to check the fit of clothing before it's sold to consumers, the rise of AI in fashion modeling feels more insidious.

Edmond worries modeling agencies and companies are taking advantage of models, who are generally independent contractors afforded few labor protections in the U.S., by using their photos to train AI systems without their consent or compensation.

She described one incident in which a client asked to photograph Edmond moving her arms, squatting and walking for "research" purposes. Edmond refused and later felt swindled — her modeling agency had told her she was being booked for a fitting, not to build an avatar.

"This is a complete violation," she said. "It was really disappointing for me."

But absent AI regulations, it's up to companies to be transparent and ethical about deploying AI technology. And Ziff, the founder of the Model Alliance, likens the current lack of legal protections for fashion workers to "the Wild West."

That's why the Model Alliance is pushing for legislation like the one being considered in New York state, in which a provision of the Fashion Workers Act would require management companies and brands to obtain models' clear written consent to create or use a model's digital replica; specify the amount and duration of compensation, and prohibit altering or manipulating models' digital replica without consent.

Alexsandrah says that with ethical use and the right legal regulations, AI might open up doors for more models of color like herself. She has let her clients know that she has an AI replica, and she funnels any inquires for its use through Wilson, who she describes as "somebody that I know, love, trust and is my friend." Wilson says they make sure any compensation for Alexsandrah's AI is comparable to what she would make in-person.

Edmond, however, is more of a purist: "We have this amazing Earth that we're living on. And you have a person of every shade, every height, every size. Why not find that person and compensate that person?"

Scottie Scheffler unstoppable and wins another Masters green jacket

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Scottie Scheffler spent more time looking at his feet than any of the white lead-boards at Augusta National, all of them showing what everyone was watching — a Masters champion again, the undisputed best player in golf.

He prefers to stay in his own little world, population one.

Nobody is close to him in the game at the moment.

Scheffler is No. 1 in the world by a margin not seen since Tiger Woods in his prime. In nine tournaments this year, he doesn't have a round over par and has earned over \$15 million. And on Sunday, he delivered the greatest piece of evidence when he slipped into that green jacket.

Scheffler pulled ahead with magnificent shots around the turn, poured it on along the back nine as his challengers melted away with mistakes and closed with a 4-under 68 to claim his second Masters in three years with a four-shot victory.

"I had a lot of really talented players trying to chase me down, and I knew pars weren't going to get it done," Scheffler said.

Unlike two years ago when he won his first major, there were no doubts Sunday morning, no tears, and no wife to reassure him he was built for a moment like this. His wife, Meredith, was home in Dallas expecting their first child at the end of the month.

Scheffler made sure there was no drama, either.

Much like Woods he made the outcome look inevitable with sublime control, the difference being a peach shirt instead of Sunday red, and no fist pumps until it was over.

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After sharing hugs with caddie Ted Scott and Collin Morikawa, Scheffler turned to face the crowd with both arms raised. "WOOOOOO!" he yelled, slamming his fist.

Masters newcomer Ludvig Aberg, among four players who had a share of the lead at one point, lost ground with his approach went into the pond left of the 11th hole and he made double bogey. Against a player like Scheffler, those mistakes are not easy to overcome.

Aberg closed with a 69 and was the runner-up, not a bad debut for someone playing in his first major championship.

Morikawa, who had two double bogeys to fall out of the hunt, shot 74 and tied for third with Tommy Fleetwood (69) and Max Homa (73), whose hopes ended on the par-3 12th with a double bogey from the bushes, not Rae's Creek.

"He is pretty amazing at letting things roll off his back and stepping up to very difficult golf shots and treating them like their own," Homa said about Scheffler. "He's obviously a tremendous talent, but I think that is his superpower."

Woods, meanwhile, closed with a 77 and finished in last place at 16-over 304, the highest 72-hole score of his career. This came two days after he set the Masters record for making his 24th consecutive cut.

The 27-year-old Scheffler is the fourth-youngest player to have two green jackets. He now has three victories against the strongest fields — Bay Hill, The Players Championship and the Masters — in his last four starts. The other was a runner-up finish in Houston.

Scheffler finished at 11-under 277 and earned \$3.6 million from the \$20 million purse.

Perhaps even more daunting for the rest of golf is that Scheffler now has 10 victories worldwide dating to his first PGA Tour title at the Phoenix Open just two years and two months ago.

During that stretch, Scheffler has finished in the top 10 a staggering 65% of the time.

It was the fourth straight Masters when the winner came to the 18th green with one arm in the green jacket. That doesn't mean Sunday was a walk in golf's most gorgeous garden.

"I felt like I was battling the whole week," Scheffler said. "It was a long week. I had to battle some ups and downs. And, you know, I'm very fortunate to be sitting here with you."

Four players had a share of the lead at various points along the front nine, and then Scheffler began to assert himself with three straight birdies around the turn.

He got up-and-down with a 10-foot birdie putt at the par-5 eighth. He hit the perfect wedge that caught the ridge and came inches within going in on No. 9, leaving him a tap-in birdie. And then he holed another 10-foot birdie putt on the 10th to build a two-shot lead.

"I hadn't hit many good iron shots, which is a bit unusual for me," Scheffler said. "And going into No. 9, it was nice to get that feeling of hitting a really well-struck shot and then it set me up to have a really nice back nine."

And then, just like in the best days of Woods, he let everyone else make the big numbers.

In the group ahead, Aberg's approach to the 11th slammed off the bank and into the water, leading to double bogey.

Homa managed a tough par on the 11th, only to hit it so long over the par-3 12th the golf ball plunged deep into bushes and left him no choice but to take a penalty drop. His chip didn't reach the green, and two putts later he had double bogey.

Morikawa already had begun to slide by taking two shots to get out of a deep bunker left of the ninth green for double bogey. He all but sealed his fate with a shot into the water on the 11th and took double bogey.

Aberg was the only one who battled back, and Scheffler kept answering with birdies. He hit the 13th green in two and two-putted for birdie. His approach to the 14th hit the slope toward the back and rolled down to a foot from the pin.

His final birdie came from just inside 10 feet on the 16th.

Defending champion Jon Rahm, now with Saudi-funded LIV Golf, closed with a 76 and tied for 45th, 20 shots behind Scheffler. He was in Butler Cabin to help Scheffler into the green jacket.

Rahm had not faced Scheffler all year and witnessed what the PGA Tour players are up against each week. His tee-to-green play is reminiscent of Woods, though certainly not the emotion, the worldwide appeal or the number of victories.

Scheffler's emotions came when he thought about the next prize.

"You're about to make me cry here in Butler Cabin," Scheffler said when asked about the impending birth. "It's a very special time for both of us. I can't put into words what it means to win this tournament again. I really can't put into words what it's going to be like to be a father for the first time. I'm looking forward to getting home and celebrating with Meredith.

"Its been a long week here without her, but I'm just looking forward to getting home."

World paid little attention to Sudan's war for a year. Now aid groups warn of mass death from hunger

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — On a clear night a year ago, a dozen heavily armed fighters broke into Omaina Farouq's house in an upscale neighborhood in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. At gunpoint, they whipped and slapped the woman, and terrorized her children. Then they expelled them from the fenced two-story house.

"Since then, our life has been ruined," said the 45-year-old schoolteacher. "Everything has changed in this year."

Farouq, who is a widow, and her four children now live in a small village outside the central city of Wad Madani, 136 kilometers (85 miles) southeast of Khartoum. They depend on aid from villagers and philanthropists since international aid groups can't reach the village.

Sudan has been torn by war for a year now, ever since simmering tensions between its military and the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into street clashes in the capital Khartoum in mid-April 2023. The fighting rapidly spread across the country.

The conflict has been overshadowed by the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza Strip, which since October has caused a massive humanitarian crisis for Palestinians and a threat of famine in the territory.

But relief workers warn Sudan is hurtling towards an even larger-scale calamity of starvation, with potential mass death in coming months. Food production and distribution networks have broken down and aid agencies are unable to reach the worst-stricken regions. At the same time, the conflict has brought widespread reports of atrocities including killings, displacement and rape, particularly in the area of the capital and the western region of Darfur.

Justin Brady, head of the U.N. humanitarian coordination office for Sudan, warned that potentially tens or even hundreds of thousands could die in coming months from malnutrition-related causes.

"This is going to get very ugly very quickly unless we can overcome both the resource challenges and the access challenges," Brady said. The world, he said, needs to take fast action to pressure the two sides for a stop in fighting and raise funds for the U.N. humanitarian effort.

But the international community has paid little attention. The U.N. humanitarian campaign needs some \$2.7 billion this year to get food, health care and other supplies to 24 million people in Sudan — nearly half its population of 51 million. So far, funders have given only \$145 million, about 5%, according to the humanitarian office, known as OCHA.

The "level of international neglect is shocking," Christos Christou, president of the medical charity Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, said in a recent statement.

The situation in fighting on the ground has been deteriorating. The military, headed by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the RSF, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, have carved up Khartoum and trade indiscriminate fire at each other. RSF forces have overrun much of Darfur, while Burhan has moved the government and his headquarters to the Red Sea city of Port Sudan.

The Sudanese Unit for Combating Violence Against Women, a government organization, documented at least 159 cases of rape and gang rape the past year, almost all in Khartoum and Darfur. The organization's head, Sulima Ishaq Sharif, said this figure represents the tip of the iceberg since many victims don't

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speak out for fear of reprisal or the stigma connected to rape.

In 2021, Burhan and Dagalo were uneasy allies who led a military coup. They toppled an internationally recognized civilian government that was supposed to steer Sudan's democratic transition after the 2019 military overthrow of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir amid a popular uprising. Burhan and Dagalo subsequently fell out in a struggle for power.

The situation has been horrific in Darfur, where the RSF and its allies are accused of rampant sexual violence and ethnic attacks on African tribes' areas. The International Criminal Court said it was investigating fresh allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the region, which was the scene of genocidal war in the 2000s.

A series of attacks by the RSF and allied militias on the ethnic African Masalit tribe killed between 10,000 and 15,000 people in Geneina, the capital of West Darfur near the Chad border, according to a report by United Nations experts to the Security Council earlier this year. It said Darfur is experiencing "its worst violence since 2005."

With aid groups unable to reach Darfur's camps for displaced people, eight out of every 10 families in the camps eat only one meal a day, said Adam Rijal, the spokesman for the Coordination for Displaced Persons and Refugees in Darfur.

In Kelma camp in South Darfur province, he said an average of nearly three children die every 12 hours, most due to diseases related to malnutrition. He said the medical center in the camp receives between 14 and 18 cases of malnutrition every day, mostly children and pregnant women.

Not including the Geneina killings, the war has killed at least 14,600 people across Sudan and created the world's largest displacement crisis, according to the United Nations. More than 8 million people have been driven from their homes, fleeing either to safer areas inside Sudan or to neighboring countries.

Many flee repeatedly as the war expands.

When fighting reached his street in Khartoum, Taj el-Ser and his wife and four children headed west to his relatives in Darfur in the town of Ardamata.

Then the RSF and its allies overran Ardamata in November, rampaging through the town for six days. El-Ser said they killed many Masalit and relatives of army soldiers.

"Some were shot dead or burned inside their homes," he said by phone from another town in Darfur. "I and my family survived only because I am Arab."

Both sides, the military and RSF, have committed serious violations of international law, killing civilians and destroying vital infrastructure, said Mohamed Osman, Sudan researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Food production has crashed, imports stalled, movement of food around the country is hampered by fighting, and staple food prices have soared by 45% in less than a year, OCHA says. The war wrecked the country's healthcare system, leaving only 20 to 30% of the health facilities functional across the country, according to MSF.

At least 37% of the population at crisis level or above in hunger, according OCHA. Save the Children warned that about 230,000 children, pregnant women and newborn mothers could die of malnutrition in the coming months.

"We are seeing massive hunger, suffering and death. And yet the world looks away," said Arif Noor, Save the Children's director in Sudan.

About 3.5 million children aged under 5 years have acute malnutrition, including more than 710,000 with severe acute malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization.

About 5 million people were one step away from famine, according to a December assessment by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, considered the global authority on determining the severity of hunger crises. Overall, 17.7 million people were facing acute food insecurity, it found.

Aid workers say the world has to take action.

"Sudan is described as a forgotten crisis. I'm starting to wonder how many people knew about it in the first place to forget about it," said Brady, from OCHA. "There are others that have more attention than Sudan. I don't like to compare crises. It's like comparing two cancer patients. ... They both need to be treated."

US works to prevent an escalation across the Mideast as Biden pushes Israel to show restraint

By ZEKE MILLER and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States on Sunday highlighted its role in helping Israel thwart Iran's aerial attack as President Joe Biden convened leaders of the Group of Seven countries in an effort to prevent a wider regional escalation and coordinate a global rebuke of Tehran.

The U.S. assisted Israel in shooting down dozens of drones and missiles fired by Iran on Saturday in what was the first time it had launched a direct military assault on Israel. Israeli authorities said 99% of the inbound weapons were shot down without causing any significant damage.

U.S. officials said that despite the high interception rate, Iran's intent was to "destroy and cause casualties" and that if successful, the strikes would have caused an "uncontrollable" escalation across the Mideast. U.S. officials said Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in an effort to contain tensions, that Washington would not participate in any offensive action against Iran, and the president made "very clear" to Netanyahu "that we do have to think carefully and strategically" about risks of escalation.

The push to encourage Israel to show restraint mirrored ongoing American efforts to curtail Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza, which is now in its seventh month, and to do more to protect civilian lives in the territory.

While the U.S. and its allies were preparing for days for such an attack, the launches were at the "high end" of what was anticipated, according to the officials, who were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity.

At one point, at least 100 ballistic missiles from Iran were in the air simultaneously with just minutes of flight time to Israel, the officials said. Biden and senior officials monitored the firings and interception attempts in real time in the White House Situation Room. The officials said there was "relief" in the room once they saw that the missile defense efforts had succeeded.

The Pentagon said U.S. Central Command and European Command forces destroyed more than 80 attack drones and at least six ballistic missiles intended to strike Israel from Iran and Yemen.

"At my direction, to support the defense of Israel, the U.S. military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defense destroyers to the region over the course of the past week," Biden said in a statement late Saturday. "Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles."

Administration officials said the call demonstrated that despite differences over the war in Gaza, the U.S. commitment to Israel's defense was "ironclad" and that the U.S. would mount a similar effort again if needed.

The officials rejected the notion that Iran intentionally gave Israel and the U.S. time to prepare for an attack, but said they took advantage of the time Iran needed before it was ready to launch the assault to prepare their response. The officials said Iran passed word to the U.S. while the attack was unfolding late Saturday that what was seen was the totality of their response. The message was sent through the Swiss government since the two countries don't have direct diplomatic ties.

Biden, in a Saturday evening call with Netanyahu, urged that Israel claim victory for its defense prowess as the president aimed to persuade America's closest Middle East ally not to undertake a larger retaliatory strike against Iran, the officials said.

"I told him that Israel demonstrated a remarkable capacity to defend against and defeat even unprecedented attacks — sending a clear message to its foes that they cannot effectively threaten the security of Israel," Biden said in his statement after the call.

Biden had a call Sunday with Jordan's King Abdullah II in which the king said any "escalatory measures" by Israel would lead to a broader conflict in the region, according to the Royal Court. The White House said the situation in Gaza was discussed, and the leaders reaffirmed their cooperation "to find a path to end the crisis as soon as possible."

The president also spoke with some of the U.S. forces involved in shooting down the Iranian drones.

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Later Sunday, Biden spoke with the leaders of the House and Senate, emphasizing the urgent need for the House to pass additional wartime funding for Israel and Ukraine.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke Sunday with foreign ministers from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey to underscore the "importance of avoiding escalation and coordinating on a diplomatic response," a department spokesman said.

After the G7 videoconference Sunday, the leaders issued a joint statement "unequivocally condemning in the strongest terms" the direct attack by Iran while expressing "our full solidarity and support to Israel" and reaffirming "our commitment towards its security."

The group of advanced democracies — the U.S., Italy, Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Canada — also said that Iran, "with its actions, has further stepped toward the destabilization of the region and risks provoking an uncontrollable regional escalation." They said their nations "stand ready to take further measures now and in response to further destabilizing initiatives."

A senior U.S. administration official said some of the countries discussed listing Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization and unlocking further sanctions against Tehran, though no final decisions were made.

The Israel-Hamas war was referenced in the G7 statement, with the leaders saying they will bolster "our cooperation to end the crisis in Gaza, including by continuing to work towards an immediate and sustainable ceasefire and the release of hostages by Hamas, and deliver increased humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in need."

The United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting Sunday to discuss the attack. "Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said. "Now is the time for maximum restraint."

Israeli Ambassador Gilad Erdan called the attack "an unprecedented escalation," while Iranian Ambassador Saeid Iravani said, "Iran's operation was entirely in the exercise of Iran's inherent right to self-defense."

After the meeting ended without any council action, U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood said, "There has to be a Security Council response to what happened last night."

The U.S. and Israel had been bracing for an attack for days after Iran said it would retaliate for a suspected Israeli strike this month on an Iranian consular building in Syria that killed 12 people, including two senior Iranian generals in the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, the top Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, criticized the White House for "leaking it to the press" that Biden told Netanyahu to take the win and not retaliate.

Rubio told CNN's "State of the Union" that it was "part of the White House's efforts to appease" people calling for a cease-fire in Gaza.

Gene Herrick, AP photographer who covered the Korean War and civil rights, dies at 97

RICH CREEK, Va. (AP) — Gene Herrick, a retired Associated Press photographer who covered the Korean War and is known for his iconic images of Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and the trial of the killers of Emmett Till in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement, died Friday. He was 97.

In 1956, Herrick photographed Rosa Parks being fingerprinted after refusing to move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That same year, Herrick captured an image of King smiling while being kissed by Coretta Scott King on the courthouse steps after being found guilty of conspiracy to boycott the city's buses.

In a 2020 interview with The Associated Press, Herrick said it was rare to get a photo of King smiling. "I knew he was going to be let out of jail that morning," Herrick said. "And all these people were out there on the steps waiting for him, including his wife, who reached out and gave him a big kiss."

Herrick's longtime companion Kitty Hylton said he died at a nursing home in Rich Creek, Virginia, surrounded by people who loved him.

"He was so proud to be a journalist. That was his life," Hylton said. "He loved The Associated Press. He

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loved the people of the AP. He was so grateful to have had all the adventures that he had."

Herrick also covered the trial of two white men in the killing of the 14-year-old Till, a Black youth who was abducted, tortured and lynched in Mississippi after being accused of flirting with a white woman. The two men were found not guilty in 1955 by an all-white jury, and admitted to the murder a year later in an interview with Look Magazine.

Herrick was particularly proud of his Korean War coverage. "Good journalists want to go where the action is, wherever it is," he said for an AP article in 2018.

In a 2015 interview for AP's corporate archives, Herrick acknowledged the danger of war photography but added, "So is civilian photography. I've come pretty close to getting killed many times with guns and having guns put in my chest in the riots in Clinton, Tennessee and places like that."

He also covered sports including Major League Baseball, Elvis Presley and five U.S. presidents.

"God and the AP have given me opportunities I could never have had," Herrick said in the 2018 AP story. "I mean, I'm the luckiest kid in the world to have done what I've done."

AP Executive Editor Julie Pace said Sunday that Herrick "captured history for the AP. We, and so many people around the world, benefited from his sharp eye and the power of his visual storytelling."

Herrick joined the AP at age 16 in Columbus, Ohio, as an office assistant. Two years later he transferred to Cleveland, where he lived with an AP photographer and often assisted him. Herrick got his big break when his roommate was unable to cover a Cleveland Indians game, and he was asked to take his place.

"They've got to be stupid," Herrick said he thought at the time. "Me cover a ball game for the AP?"

Herrick was equally stunned when, not long after, he was promoted to AP photographer in Memphis. He still didn't have much experience when he volunteered for Korea in 1950, and found himself at the front lines, standing in the middle of a road, totally exposed.

"It's a beautiful war going on. I mean, the planes are coming in, dropping napalms, and machine guns, and right there on the mountainside, and I've got a picture here of wounded being carried on a litter, coming up the road right at me, and, oh, I thought, man, this is great," Herrick recalled in 2015, laughing at the memory. "I'm bam-bamming with the old four-by-five Speed Graphic, the film pack in those days. And I look around, and some GI over in a ditch says, 'Sir?' I said, 'Yes?' He said, 'Do you see that dirt popping up there ... do you know what that is?'"

And I said, 'No. What is it?' He said, 'Those are bullets!' ... so I got off the road and got in the ditch with him. But I got some really nice pictures."

He retired from the AP in 1970 to start a second career working with the developmentally disabled in Columbus, and later in Rocky Mount, Virginia.

At age 91, Herrick was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame at Virginia Commonwealth University – an event he considered a highlight of his life.

Herrick, who was born in Columbus and was previously married, is survived by two sons, Chris and Mark Herrick of the Indianapolis area, daughter Lola Reece of Peterstown, W. Va., five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Israel is quiet on next steps against Iran — and on which partners helped shoot down missiles

By TIA GOLDENBERG and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli leaders on Sunday credited an international military coalition with helping thwart a direct Iranian attack involving hundreds of drones and missiles, calling the coordinated response a starting point for a "strategic alliance" of regional opposition to Tehran.

But Israel's War Cabinet met without making a decision on next steps, an official said, as a nervous world waited for any sign of further escalation of the former shadow war.

The military coalition, led by the United States, Britain and France and appearing to include a number of Middle Eastern countries, gave Israel support at a time when it finds itself isolated over its war against Hamas in Gaza. The coalition also could serve as a model for regional relations when that war ends.

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"This was the first time that such a coalition worked together against the threat of Iran and its proxies in the Middle East," said the Israeli military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari.

One unknown is which of Israel's neighbors participated in the shooting down of the vast majority of about 350 drones and missiles Iran launched. Israeli military officials and a key War Cabinet member noted additional "partners" without naming them. When pressed, White House national security spokesman John Kirby would not name them either.

But one appeared to be Jordan, which described its action as self-defense.

"There was an assessment that there was a real danger of Iranian marches and missiles falling on Jordan, and the armed forces dealt with this danger. And if this danger came from Israel, Jordan would take the same action," Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi said in an interview on Al-Mamlaka state television. U.S. President Joe Biden spoke with Jordan's King Abdullah on Sunday.

The U.S. has long tried to forge a regionwide alliance against Iran as a way of integrating Israel and boosting ties with the Arab world. The effort has included the 2020 Abraham Accords, which established diplomatic relations between Israel and four Arab countries, and having Israel in the U.S. military's Central Command, which oversees operations in the Middle East and works closely with the armies of moderate Arab states.

The U.S. had been working to establish full relations between Israel and regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia before the Oct. 7 Hamas attack sparked Israel's war in Gaza. The war, which has claimed over 33,700 Palestinian lives, has frozen those efforts due to widespread outrage across the Arab world. But it appears that some behind-the-scenes cooperation has continued, and the White House has held out hopes of forging Israel-Saudi ties as part of a postwar plan.

Just ahead of Iran's attack, the commander of CENTCOM, Gen. Erik Kurilla, visited Israel to map out a strategy.

Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, on Sunday thanked CENTCOM for the joint defensive effort. Both Jordan and Saudi Arabia are under the CENTCOM umbrella. While neither acknowledged involvement in intercepting Iran's launches, the Israeli military released a map showing missiles traveling through the airspace of both nations.

"Arab countries came to the aid of Israel in stopping the attack because they understand that regional organizing is required against Iran, otherwise they will be next in line," Amos Yadlin, a former head of Israel's military intelligence, wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

Israel's defense minister, Yoav Gallant, said he had spoken with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and that the cooperation "highlighted the opportunity to establish an international coalition and strategic alliance to counter the threat posed by Iran."

The White House signaled that it hopes to build on the partnerships and urged Israel to think twice before striking Iran. U.S. officials said Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Washington would not participate in any offensive action against Iran.

Israel's War Cabinet met late Sunday to discuss a possible response, but an Israeli official familiar with the talks said no decisions had been made. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was discussing confidential deliberations.

Asked about plans for retaliation, Hagari declined to comment directly. "We are at high readiness in all fronts," he said.

"We will build a regional coalition and collect the price from Iran, in the way and at the time that suits us," said a key War Cabinet member, Benny Gantz.

Iran launched the attack in response to a strike widely blamed on Israel that hit an Iranian consular building in Syria this month and killed two Iranian generals.

By Sunday morning, Iran said the attack was over, and Israel reopened its airspace. Iran's president, Ebrahim Raisi, claimed Iran had taught Israel a lesson and warned that "any new adventures against the interests of the Iranian nation would be met with a heavier and regretful response from the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The foes have been engaged in a shadow war for years, but Sunday's assault was the first time Iran

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launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran said it targeted Israeli facilities involved in the Damascus strike, and that it told the White House early Sunday that the operation would be "minimalistic."

But U.S. officials said Iran's intent was to "destroy and cause casualties" and that if successful, the strikes would have caused an "uncontrollable" escalation. At one point, at least 100 ballistic missiles were in the air with just minutes of flight time to Israel, the officials said.

Israel said more than 99% of what Iran fired was intercepted, with just a few missiles getting through. An Israeli airbase sustained minor damage.

Israel has over the years established — often with the help of the U.S. — a multilayered air-defense network that includes systems capable of intercepting a variety of threats, including long-range missiles, cruise missiles, drones and short-range rockets.

That system, along with collaboration with the U.S. and others, helped thwart what could have been a far more devastating assault at a time when Israel is already deeply engaged in Gaza as well as low-level fighting on its northern border with Lebanon's Hezbollah militia. Both Hamas and Hezbollah are backed by Iran.

While thwarting the Iranian onslaught could help restore Israel's image after the Hamas attack in October, what the Middle East's best-equipped army does next will be closely watched in the region and in Western capitals — especially as Israel seeks to develop the coalition it praised Sunday.

In Washington, Biden pledged to convene allies to develop a unified response. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. would hold talks with allies. After an urgent meeting, the Group of Seven countries unanimously condemned Iran's attack and said they stood ready to take "further measures."

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's war in Gaza. In the Oct. 7 attack, militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, also backed by Iran, killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others. Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed over 33,000 people, according to local health officials.

Hamas welcomed Iran's attack, saying it was "a natural right and a deserved response" to the strike in Syria. It urged the Iran-backed groups in the region to continue to support Hamas in the war.

Hezbollah also welcomed the attack. Almost immediately after the war in Gaza erupted, Hezbollah began attacking Israel's northern border. The two sides have been involved in daily exchanges of fire, while Iranian-backed groups in Iraq, Syria and Yemen have launched rockets and missiles toward Israel.

Iran and Israel have a history of enmity.

What key recent events led to Iran's assault on Israel?

Associated Press undefined

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Iran's dramatic aerial attack on Israel follows years of enmity between the countries and marks the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel. The hostility between the countries has only worsened in the six months since Hamas launched its attack on Israel, which set off a war that continues to threaten to drag the entire region toward a broader conflict.

Here is a look at the key events leading up to Iran's assault:

HAMAS ATTACKS ISRAEL

Oct. 7 - Thousands of Hamas-led militants storm across the border into Israel, killing 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking roughly 250 captive, according to Israeli authorities. The assault triggers a devastating war that has killed more than 33,700 people, mostly women and children, according to local health officials. In launching the assault, Hamas hopes other regional enemies of Israel's will join. U.S. President Joe Biden warns Israel's regional foes not to get involved and sends military support to the Middle East.

HEZBOLLAH JOINS THE WAR, AT A LOW LEVEL

Oct. 8 - A day after Hamas' attack, the Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah begins firing toward Israel, setting off months of low intensity but deadly cross-border fighting that displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border.

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HOUTHIS STAGE ATTACKS

November - The Yemeni rebels, who are supported by Iran, launch a campaign of drone and missile attacks on shipping assets in the Red Sea beginning in November, describing their efforts as a way to pressure Israel to end the war against Hamas. They also fire missiles toward Israel, although those largely fall short or are intercepted.

ISRAEL WIDELY BLAMED FOR DAMASCUS STRIKE

Apr. 1 - Two Iranian generals with the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guards are killed in the Syrian capital in a strike on an Iranian consular building that is widely blamed on Israel, although it does not publicly acknowledge it. Iran promises revenge.

IRAN LAUNCHES MAJOR AERIAL ASSAULT ON ISRAEL

April 14 - Israel says more than 300 drones, cruise and ballistic missiles are launched by Iran, an extraordinary assault that is thwarted almost entirely by Israel's aerial defense array and a coalition of countries repelling the onslaught. While no major damage is caused, the world braces for Israel's response.

House Speaker Mike Johnson says he will push for aid to Israel and Ukraine this week

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Mike Johnson said Sunday he will try to advance wartime aid for Israel this week as he attempts the difficult task of winning House approval for a national security package that also includes funding for Ukraine and allies in Asia.

Johnson, R-La., is already under immense political pressure from his fellow GOP lawmakers as he tries to stretch between the Republican Party's divided support for helping Kyiv defend itself from Moscow's invasion. The Republican speaker has sat for two months on a \$95 billion supplemental package that would send support to the U.S. allies, as well as provide humanitarian aid for civilians in Ukraine and Gaza and funding to replenish U.S. weapons provided to Taiwan.

The attack by Iran on Israel early Sunday further ratcheted up the pressure on Johnson, but also gave him an opportunity to underscore the urgency of approving the funding.

Johnson told Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" that he and Republicans "understand the necessity of standing with Israel" and he would try this week to advance the aid.

"The details of that package are being put together right now," he said. "We're looking at the options and all these supplemental issues."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer at a news conference also said that President Joe Biden held a phone call Sunday with the top Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate, including Johnson. The New York Democrat said there was consensus "among all the leaders that we had to help Israel and help Ukraine, and now hopefully we can work that out and get this done next week."

"It's vital for the future of Ukraine, for Israel and the West," Schumer said.

The White House said Biden "discussed the urgent need for the House of Representatives to pass the national security supplemental as soon as possible."

Johnson has also "made it clear" to fellow House Republicans that he will this week push to package together the aid for Israel, Ukraine and allies in Asia and pass it through the House, said GOP Rep. Mike Turner of Ohio, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, on NBC's "Meet the Press."

The speaker has expressed support for legislation that would structure some of the funding for Kyiv as loans, pave the way for the U.S. to tap frozen Russian central bank assets and include other policy changes. Johnson has pushed for the Biden administration to lift a pause on approvals for Liquefied Natural Gas exports and at times has also demanded policy changes at the U.S. border with Mexico.

But currently, the only package with wide bipartisan support in Congress is the Senate-passed bill that includes roughly \$60 billion for Ukraine and \$14 billion for Israel.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby called on the speaker to put that package "on the

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floor as soon as possible.”

“We didn’t need any reminders in terms of what’s going on in Ukraine,” Kirby said on NBC. “But last night certainly underscores significantly the threat that Israel faces in a very, very tough neighborhood.”

As Johnson searches for a way to advance the funding for Ukraine, he has been in conversations with both the White House and former president Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee.

With his job under threat, Johnson traveled to Florida on Friday for an event with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago club. Trump expressed support for Johnson and said he had a “very good relationship” with him.

“He and I are 100% united on these big agenda items,” Johnson said. “When you talk about aid to Ukraine, he’s introduced the loan-lease concept which is a really important one and I think has a lot of consensus.”

But Trump, with his “America First” agenda, has inspired many Republicans to push for a more isolationist stance. Support for Ukraine has steadily eroded in the roughly two years since the war began, and a cause that once enjoyed wide support has become one of Johnson’s toughest problems.

When he returns to Washington on Monday, Johnson also will be facing a contingent of conservatives already angry with how he has led the House in maintaining much of the status quo both on government spending and more recently, a U.S. government surveillance tool.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a right-wing Republican from Georgia, has called for Johnson’s ouster. She departed the Capitol on Friday telling reporters that support for her effort was growing. And as Johnson on Sunday readied to advance the aid, Greene said on X that it was “antisemitic to make Israeli aid contingent” on aid for Ukraine.

While no other Republicans have openly joined Greene in calling to oust Johnson, a growing number of hardline conservatives are openly disparaging Johnson and defying his leadership.

Meanwhile, senior GOP lawmakers who support aid to Ukraine are growing frustrated with the months-long wait to bring it to the House floor. Kyiv’s troops have been running low on ammunition and Russia is becoming emboldened as it looks to gain ground in a spring and summer offensive. A massive missile and drone attack destroyed one of Ukraine’s largest power plants and damaged others last week.

“What happened in Israel last night happens in Ukraine every night,” said Rep. Michael McCaul, the Republican chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, on CBS’s “Face the Nation.”

The divided dynamic has forced Johnson to try to stitch together a package that has some policy wins for Republicans while also keeping Democrats on board. Democrats, however, have repeatedly called on the speaker to put the \$95 billion package passed by the Senate in February on the floor.

Although progressive Democrats have resisted supporting the aid to Israel over concerns it would support its campaign into Gaza that has killed thousands of civilians, most House Democrats have gotten behind supporting the Senate package.

“The reason why the Senate bill is the only bill is because of the urgency,” Rep. Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said last week. “We pass the Senate bill, it goes straight to the president’s desk and you start getting the aid to Ukraine immediately. That’s the only option.”

Many Democrats also have signaled they would likely be willing to help Johnson defeat an effort to remove him from the speaker’s office if he puts the Senate bill on the floor.

“I’m one of those who would save him if we can do Israel, Taiwan, Ukraine and some reasonable border security,” said Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat.

News organizations urge Biden and Trump to commit to presidential debates during the 2024 campaign

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Twelve news organizations on Sunday urged presumptive presidential nominees Joe Biden and Donald Trump to agree to debates, saying they were a “rich tradition” that have been part of every general election campaign since 1976.

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While Trump, who did not participate in debates for the Republican nomination, has indicated a willingness to take on his 2020 rival, the Democratic president has not committed to debating him again.

Although invitations have not been formally issued, the news organizations said it was not too early for each campaign to say publicly that it will participate in the three presidential and one vice presidential forums set by the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates.

"If there is one thing Americans can agree on during this polarized time, it is that the stakes of this election are exceptionally high," the organizations said in a joint statement. "Amidst that backdrop, there is simply no substitute for the candidates debating with each other, and before the American people, their visions for the future of our nation."

ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, PBS, NBC, NPR and The Associated Press all signed on to the letter.

Biden and Trump debated twice in 2020. A third debate was canceled after Trump, then president, tested positive for COVID-19 and would not debate remotely.

Asked on March 8 whether he would commit to a debate with Trump, Biden said, "it depends on his behavior." The president was visibly miffed by his opponent in the freewheeling first 2020 debate, at one point saying, "will you shut up?"

Trump campaign managers Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita said in a letter this past week that "we have already indicated President Trump is willing to debate anytime, any place and anywhere — and the time to start these debates is now."

They cited the seven 1858 Illinois Senate debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, saying "certainly today's America deserves as much."

The Republican National Committee voted in 2022 to no longer participate in forums sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. The Trump campaign has not indicated it would adhere to that, but did have some conditions. The campaign managers said the commission selected a "demonstrably anti-Trump moderator" in then-Fox News host Chris Wallace in 2020 and wants assurances the commission debates are fair and impartial.

The Trump campaign also wants the timetable moved up, saying that many Americans will have already voted by Sept. 16, Oct. 1 and Oct. 9, the dates of the three debates set by the commission.

The Biden campaign declined comment on the news organizations' letter, pointing to the president's earlier statement. There was no immediate response from the Trump campaign.

But on Saturday, Trump held a rally in northeast Pennsylvania with two lecterns set up on the stage: one for him to give a speech, the other to symbolize what he said was Biden's refusal to debate him. The second lectern had a placard that read, "Anytime. Anywhere. Anyplace."

Midway through his campaign speech, Trump turned to his right and pointed to the second lectern.

"We have a little, look at this, it's for him," he said. "See the podium? I'm calling on Crooked Joe Biden to debate anytime, anywhere, any place. Right there. And we have to debate because our country is going in the wrong direction so badly and while it's a little bit typically early we have to debate. We have to explain to the American people what the hell is going on," Trump said.

C-SPAN, NewsNation and Univision also joined the letter calling for debates. Only one newspaper, USA Today, added its voice. The Washington Post declined a request to join.

Certainly the broadcasters could use the juice that debates may bring. Television news ratings are down significantly compared with the 2020 campaign, although there are other factors involved, such as cord-cutting and the pandemic, that increased interest in news four years ago.

There were no Democratic debates this presidential cycle, and Trump's refusal to participate in the GOP forums depressed interest in them.

An AP photographer explains how he captured the moment of eclipse totality

By LM OTERO Associated Press
FORT WORTH, TEXAS (AP) — Photographer Mat Otero has been working at the AP in the Dallas bureau for nearly 30 years. In that time, he's covered an annular and partial solar eclipse, so he was prepared for the challenge of making a photo of the only total solar eclipse on this scale he will likely cover in his career (the next coast-to-coast eclipse in the U.S. is expected in 21 years). This is what he said about making this extraordinary image.

Why this photo

My job is to create and curate eye catching images that will draw a viewer in, communicating from my lens to their eyes and brain. That's part of the magic of AP — our work makes a truly massive journey every day, from the field to viewers around the world.

With millions interested in such a historic and widely photographed event as this eclipse, I knew that anything I produced would need to grab attention immediately and be dispatched ASAP after the moment. We joke at AP that every millisecond is our deadline.

Our modern cameras can capture massive amounts of photos, requiring us to manage and edit for best choices in a very fast fashion. In the minutes and seconds before the eclipse, clouds flowed in and out. I thought I was going to get skunked and have nothing. Ultimately the clouds opened, parting for a few minutes and allowing the light into my camera to make this photo.

How I made this photo

Leading up to the eclipse, I had illustrated an AP story about research at the Fort Worth Zoo into how animals react to the darkness, so it was decided to position me there for the actual eclipse. We were just inside the edge of totality, so the event was going to be a little bit faster than locations near the center of its path across the country.

I have an assortment of neutral density filters because I had previously photographed an annular eclipse, when the moon is farther away in its Earth orbit and therefore doesn't block the entirety of the sun. An "annulus" of bright sunlight rings the moon, but the spectacular corona isn't visible as it would be during a total eclipse. This time, I used the filters to make a solar optical filter for use with a new 200-600mm lens — that would be my primary camera. I also had wide and mid-range angled cameras, both mounted on a tripod to be triggered by remotes.

I read as much as I could about photographing a total eclipse. I ran tests with gear, shooting position and sun placement. A sun tracking app was a useful guide for where the sun would be in the sky. Because the sun was at such a high angle above, I decided the best position was to lay flat on my back looking up. I practiced laying on a yoga block and mat holding a long-lensed camera and keeping as still as possible.

Seeking to get the lushest look out of the camera and reducing the possibility of digital noise, I chose to photograph at a slower shutter speed (1/50 of a sec.) and ISO (160) with a 6.3 aperture to better show possible solar prominences — the reddish trails of plasma that loop off the sun's surface.



The moon covers the sun during a total solar eclipse, as seen from Fort Worth, Texas, Monday, April 8, 2024. (AP

Photo/LM Otero)

Yoga mat in tow, I made sure to pack a small lunch for myself and a reporter working our spot in the Zoo gallery. As totality moved in, there were a couple of technical issues that needed working out: changing to a hard wire when my remote did not work and repositioning the tripod to frame the sky — where's the sun again? I sometimes describe my job as looking through a straw and now it's also on a cloudy day.

I had read and talked with other photogs about how fast the light-burst phase of the eclipse would pass but, wow, was it faster and more dazzling than I expected.

I might have audibly gasped as I "prayed and sprayed," firing frames and watching the ever-changing light. I even said to myself aloud, "You can see the fire." Thankfully, the clouds stayed open long enough to allow a good look. As soon as the giant shadow passed over, I tagged my possible best photos in the camera, then ingested them into my laptop for a quick edit and dispatch to the photo desk editors.

Why this photo works

Visual communication can be timeless, needing no translation. This photo captured a fraction of a second in time, showing wisps of solar energy and light fighting to get around the dark side of the moon. It feels like a secret look into the cosmos and the celestial dance of the Earth, moon and sun, all running rings around each other at incomprehensible speeds. The photo reminds me of ancient Native American rock art, depicting the solar eclipses our ancestors watched, just like us.

Wife of ex-Harvard morgue manager pleads guilty to transporting stolen human remains

WILLIAMSPORT. Pa. (AP) — The wife of a former Harvard Medical School morgue manager has pleaded guilty to a federal charge after investigators said she shipped stolen human body parts — including hands, feet and heads — to buyers.

Denise Lodge, 64, of Goffstown, New Hampshire, pleaded guilty Friday in U.S. District Court in the Middle District of Pennsylvania to a charge of interstate transportation of stolen goods, according to court records.

Federal prosecutors last year announced charges against Lodge, her husband Cedric and five other people in an alleged scheme in which a nationwide network of people bought and sold human remains stolen from Harvard and a mortuary in Arkansas.

Prosecutors allege that Denise Lodge negotiated online sales of a number of items between 2018 and March 2020 including two dozen hands, two feet, nine spines, portions of skulls, five dissected human faces and two dissected heads, PennLive.com reported.

Authorities said dissected portions of cadavers donated to the school were taken between 2018 and early 2023 without the school's knowledge or permission. A Pennsylvania man, Jeremy Pauley of Thompson, is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty last year to conspiracy and interstate transportation of stolen property.

Denise Lodge's attorney, Hope Lefeber, told WBUR in an interview in February that her client's husband "was doing this and she just kind of went along with it." She said "what happened here is wrong" but no one lost money and the matter was "more of a moral and ethical dilemma ... than a criminal case."

Bodies donated to Harvard Medical School are used for education, teaching or research purposes. Once they are no longer needed, the cadavers are usually cremated and the ashes are returned to the donor's family or buried in a cemetery.

Polish opponents of abortion march against recent steps to liberalize strict law

By MONIKA SCISLOWSKA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) —

Thousands of Polish opponents of abortion marched in Warsaw on Sunday to protest recent steps by the new government to liberalize the predominantly Catholic nation's strict laws and allow termination of pregnancy until the 12th week.

Many participants in the downtown march were pushing prams with children, while others were carrying white-and-red national flags or posters representing a fetus in the womb.

Poland's Catholic Church has called for Sunday to be a day of prayer "in defense of conceived life" and has supported the march, organized by an anti-abortion movement.

"In the face of promotion of abortion in recent months, the march will be a rare occasion to show our support for the protection of human life from conception to natural death," a federation of anti-abortion movements said in a statement.

They were referring to an ongoing public debate surrounding the steps that the 4-month-old government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk is taking to relax the strict law brought in by its conservative predecessor.

Last week, Poland's parliament, which is dominated by the liberal and pro-European Union ruling coalition, voted to approve further detailed work on four proposals to lift the near-ban on abortions.

The procedure, which could take weeks or even months, is expected to be eventually rejected by conservative President Andrzej Duda, whose term runs for another year. Last month Duda vetoed a draft law that would have made the morning-after pill available over the counter from the age of 15.

A nation of some 38 million, Poland is seeking ways to boost the birth rate, which is currently at some 1.2 per woman — among the lowest in the European Union. Poland's society is aging and shrinking, facts that the previous right-wing government used among its arguments for toughening the abortion law.

Currently, abortions are only allowed in cases of rape or incest or if the woman's life or health is at risk. According to the Health Ministry, 161 abortions were performed in Polish hospitals in 2022. However, abortion advocates estimate that some 120,000 women in Poland have abortions each year, mostly by secretly obtaining pills from abroad.

Women attempting to abort themselves are not penalized, but anyone assisting them can face up to three years in prison. Reproductive rights advocates say the result is that doctors turn women away even in permitted cases for fear of legal consequences for themselves.

One of the four proposals being processed in parliament would decriminalize assisting a woman to have an abortion. Another one, put forward by a party whose leaders are openly Catholic, would keep a ban in most cases but would allow abortions in cases of fetal defects — a right that was eliminated by a 2020 court ruling. The two others aim to permit abortion through the 12th week.

Unfazed by danger and power,

Guatemalan cardinal keeps up fight for migrants and the poor

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

HUEHUETENANGO, Guatemala (AP) — As more than 100 men carrying an elaborate float of Jesus halted before him, Cardinal Álvaro Ramazzini lost no time in calling for social justice — the hallmark of the Catholic bishop's decades-long frontline ministry.

"Let's hope that this procession may revive in the heart the willingness to discover Jesus Christ present in the person who suffers," Ramazzini said in an impromptu speech, pointing to the dozens of elderly and disabled lining a street in Guatemala City's oldest neighborhood. "If we don't have that ability, don't tell me you're Christian — I won't believe that."

Elevated by Pope Francis to the top hierarchy of the Catholic Church, Ramazzini has continued his unflinching focus on the poor, the Indigenous and the migrant. That has garnered him great affection from the marginalized and many threats of violence, including rumors of an arrest warrant, as his native Guatemala struggles through political turmoil and remains a hotspot of migration to the United States.

At the procession during the Easter season, he didn't mince words for Guatemala's government. He denounced the lack of social security provisions for the elderly that left many feeling like "indigent beggars," before placing on the float a plaque honoring the eldercare volunteers at whose invitation he had driven six hours from his diocese.

Many of the elderly whom volunteers had taken in their wheelchairs and walkers to the processional route could hardly believe their eyes when they saw the 76-year-old cardinal saunter down the street to

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mingle with them, said group organizer Teresita Samayoa Bautista.

"This is to evangelize with actions," she said. "To me, he was the voice of a people who can't speak and are suffering. Just like Jesus would do. This is what you call commitment to a people, no matter if they're religious or not."

In a recent interview with The Associated Press in his modest office in Huehuetenango, Ramazzini said experiencing Guatemala's challenges, from the civil war onward, cemented his commitment to translating faith into action.

"Here's how we will be judged at life's end, right? 'I was hungry, you didn't give something to eat. I was thirsty, you didn't give me something to drink. I was in prison, and you didn't visit me,'" Ramazzini said, quoting from the Gospel. "I try, as far as my human weaknesses and my limitations allow, to make this what guides my life."

Out of more than 400,000 Catholic priests in the world, there are only 128 cardinal electors – the role Ramazzini assumed in 2019 — charged with serving the pope as his main counselors in governing the church, and electing the next one.

That opens doors across continents "at levels to which many Guatemalans have no access," Ramazzini said. He tries to leverage his meetings with church and political leaders "to convey the concerns and needs of the people I serve with every day."

For most of the 50-plus years since his ordination, Ramazzini has been bishop in San Marcos and then Huehuetenango. These mountainous, predominantly Indigenous regions were hard-hit by Guatemala's civil war, which only ended in 1996, and have struggled with extreme poverty and drug-trafficking since, pushing hundreds of thousands of local youths to migrate to the United States.

Outspoken in the defense of Indigenous groups, natural resources, and democratic rights, Ramazzini has also been advocating for what he calls a "strictly and essentially human" approach to migration. Last fall, he became president of the Latin American Bishops Conference's migration network.

Ramazzini argues that as long as people can't find jobs that pay them enough to ensure they and their families can survive, they will continue to embark on dangerous journeys — where pervasive criminal networks prey on them en route and their rights are hardly protected once they arrive at their destination.

And while the United States has no problem allowing in the likes of Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi, who recently moved to Miami, the cardinal added, "For the hundreds of migrants who are working day and night, day and night to support the U.S. economy ... for them nothing, the migration situation cannot be fixed."

Supporting migrants on both sides of the border is as much a priority for Ramazzini as for his counterpart in the United States, Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, who has a shelter literally in the backyard of his diocesan headquarters and chairs the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' migration committee.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find another leader in the church or otherwise in Central America who is more trusted by the poor than he," said Seitz of Ramazzini, with whom he's been working for a few years to find ways for the church to address the root causes of migration.

Not that the church in Huehuetenango has the financial resources to alter the dire situation — there isn't enough money to create jobs that would keep people in country or even "to guarantee that people don't miss three meals a day," Ramazzini said.

Nonprofits that work in the region, such as Global Refuge (formerly known as Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service) and Pop No'j, which focuses on Indigenous groups, say that every hamlet has sent migrants north because of poverty and the allure of U.S. jobs. Staggering smuggling debts mean most of those who are deported only try again, lest they lose the small land plots families put up as collateral and need to grow what little they eat.

Even some of the volunteers in the Catholic diocesan migrant ministry have recently migrated themselves, said the Rev. Fredrick Gandiny, who leads the program from his parish in Santa Ana Huista, a village less than a dozen miles from the border with Mexico.

The ministry's main mission has become assisting children and empowering women who tend to be excluded from decision-making, even though they are the vast majority of those left in their communities.

But migrant ministry can be dangerous because networks of smugglers operate all along the border, Gandiny said, so they rely on "the grace of God."

During the civil war, Ramazzini received death threats and needed bodyguards. Late last year, during a series of attempts by Guatemalan prosecutors to prevent progressive President-elect Bernardo Arévalo from taking office, the cardinal heard he might be charged and detained.

The country's bishops conference had urged respect for the electoral process. Ramazzini said he wrote a personal letter to the attorney general, asking if she was acting in a manner coherent with her Catholic faith, but didn't receive a response.

Having ministered to prisoners in Huehuetenango's jail, Ramazzini has worried about the conditions he'd face if he ended up behind bars like others who fought against corruption.

"So yes, I imagined myself a bit like that, right? Without freedom. But well, these are the risks," Ramazzini said. "One knows that life is in the hands of God."

US helps Israel shoot down 'nearly all' Iran-launched attack drones as Biden pledges support

By ZEKE MILLER and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden lauded American forces who helped Israel down "nearly all" of the drones and missiles fired by Iran and vowed to coordinate a global response to Tehran's unprecedented attack. The Pentagon said U.S. forces intercepted "dozens of missiles" and drones launched from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen that were headed toward Israel.

With regional tensions at their highest since the Israel-Hamas war began six months ago, Biden pledged on Saturday that American support for Israel's defense against attacks by Iran and its proxies is "ironclad." The attack marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, risking a wider regional conflict.

Biden made clear in a call to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the U.S. would not participate in any offensive action against Iran, according to a senior administration official who was not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. and Israel had been bracing for an attack for days after Iran said it would retaliate for a suspected Israeli strike this month on an Iranian consular building in Syria that killed 12 people, including two senior Iranian generals in the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force.

"At my direction, to support the defense of Israel, the U.S. military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defense destroyers to the region over the course of the past week," Biden said in a statement late Saturday. "Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles."

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in a statement said the U.S. took out dozens of the attacks, but did not provide details on ships or aircraft involved in the operation that commanders had been preparing for over the past two weeks.

"Our forces remain postured to protect U.S. troops and partners in the region, provide further support for Israel's defense, and enhance regional stability," Austin said, adding that troops are standing ready to prevent any further conflict.

Biden had cut short a weekend stay at his Delaware beach house to meet with his national security team at the White House, returning to Washington minutes before Israeli officials confirmed that they had detected drones being launched toward their territory from Iran.

He convened a principals meeting of the National Security Council in the White House Situation Room to discuss the unfolding situation, the White House said, before speaking with Netanyahu.

"I told him that Israel demonstrated a remarkable capacity to defend against and defeat even unprecedented attacks — sending a clear message to its foes that they cannot effectively threaten the security of Israel," Biden said.

Biden added that he would convene a meeting of the Group of Seven advanced democracies on Sunday

“to coordinate a united diplomatic response to Iran’s brazen attack.”

The Pentagon reported that Austin had spoken twice with his Israeli counterpart to praise the “extraordinary defensive measures and strong cooperation undertaken to defeat this Iranian attack against Israel” and again stated clearly that “Israel could count on full U.S. support to defend Israel against any future attacks by Iran and its regional proxies.” National security adviser Jake Sullivan also spoke with his counterpart to reinforce Washington’s “ironclad commitment to the security of Israel.”

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement that “Iran has begun an airborne attack against Israel.” She added: “The United States will stand with the people of Israel and support their defense against these threats from Iran.”

Biden on Friday said the United States was “devoted” to defending Israel and that “Iran will not succeed.” Asked by reporters what his message was for Iran, the president’s only reply was: “Don’t.”

He ignored a question about what would trigger a direct U.S. military response.

The U.S., along with its allies, have sent direct messages to Tehran to warn against further escalating the conflict.

During the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, there have been near-daily exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group along the Israel-Lebanon border. U.S. officials have recorded more than 150 attacks by Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria on U.S. forces at bases in those countries since war started on Oct. 7.

One attack in late January killed three U.S. service members in Jordan. In retaliation, the U.S. launched a massive air assault, hitting more than 85 targets at seven locations in Iraq and Syria.

Meantime, on Saturday, commandos from Iran’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard rappelled from a helicopter onto an Israeli-affiliated container ship near the Strait of Hormuz and seized the vessel.

Watson, the NSC spokesperson, said the U.S. strongly condemned the seizure and urged Iran to release the ship and crew immediately.

“We will work with our partners to hold Iran to account for its actions,” she said.

Also Saturday, the Israeli-occupied West Bank also saw some of the worst violence since Hamas’ attack on Israel.

How to tackle crime in Indian Country?

Empower tribal justice, ex-Justice Department official says

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A quarter-century ago, the Justice Department had few meaningful relationships with Native American tribes.

While the federal government worked with state and local police and courts, tribal justice systems did not have the same level of recognition, said Tracy Toulou, who oversaw the department’s Office of Tribal Justice from 2000 until his recent retirement. “They were essentially invisible,” he said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Toulou built the office from an idea into an “institution within the Justice Department.”

Its relationships with the nation’s 574 federally recognized tribes are important, in part because federal authorities investigate and prosecute a set of major crimes on most reservations.

Public safety statistics reflect the serious challenges. Native Americans and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely to be victims of a violent crime, and Native American women are at least two times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted compared with others.

For Toulou, a descendant of the Washington state-based Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, part of addressing those grim realities is expanding the power of tribal justice systems.

Tribes had been barred, for example, from prosecuting non-Natives under a 1978 Supreme Court decision, even if the crime happened on reservations, making it harder to seek justice in many cases. That changed somewhat in 2013 with a federal law that allows tribes to prosecute non-Natives in a limited set of domestic violence cases. The authority was expanded in 2022 to include cases such as violence against

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children and stalking.

"That was a key change ... tribes were now viewed as participants in the justice system on a more or less equal basis with everybody else, which should never have changed," said Toulou, who was a federal prosecutor in Montana early in his career.

Still, much work remains to be done.

Tribal police and courts are stretched thin and are coping with conflicting jurisdictional issues and underfunding, leaders told the Senate Indian Affairs Committee at a session last month that drew more than 600 comments.

Police Chief Algin Young of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota said he has six to eight officers to patrol nearly 4,700 square miles (12,200 square kilometers) against an "influx of guns, illegal drugs including fentanyl, methamphetamine and heroin, and violent crime that can only be described as shocking and extremely dangerous."

"Our people don't feel safe in the communities, and our visitors do not, either," he said.

The challenges come against a historical backdrop of injustices committed by the federal government against Native Americans, including massacres, forced assimilation of Native children in abusive boarding schools and the removal of many tribes from their ancestral land.

One of Toulou's personal regrets is he does not speak his tribe's language because his grandparents were sent to boarding schools, breaking the links that would have passed it down through generations.

"We have a unique responsibility to Indian tribes," Toulou said, partly due to obligations the U.S. made in treaties, through Congress and other acts. "There is a moral responsibility that is underpinned by those treaties to support those tribal nations and interact with them on a government-to-government basis."

In recent years, that has meant heeding calls to address the crisis of Indigenous people who have been killed or gone missing. Thousands of those cases remain unsolved, hundreds have been closed due to issues such as jurisdictional conflicts and many families say authorities regularly fail to communicate about the status of pending cases.

Toulou was a leader in the effort to create a federal strategy to respond to violence against Native people in 2022, after the passage of the Not Invisible Act and Savanna's Act.

He also helped develop legislation such as the Safeguarding Objects of Tribal Patrimony Act of 2021 aimed at halting the removal of historic archaeological remains and the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. That law improved the collection and reporting of Native crime data, expanded the sentencing authority of tribal courts and allowed tribes such as the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians in Minnesota to expand their policing powers.

"That really makes a big difference," said the tribe's chief executive, Melanie Benjamin. "We have the experience, we have the commitment of our own tribal members and our community members that want to be a part of public safety to protect and serve."

Working within the federal bureaucracy can be like "pushing a big rock up a steep hill," said W. Ron Allen, chairman of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe in Washington state. But tribal leaders have become more sophisticated in navigating it over the past two decades, he said.

"Tracy has played a critical role," said Allen, citing Toulou's help in educating federal lawyers on Native culture, from restorative justice to traditional land management.

The Justice Department also takes part in civil litigation involving tribes, including environmental cases and hunting and fishing rights.

In Toulou's place as acting director is Daron Carreiro, a career attorney from the Environment and Natural Resources Division who is also steeped in laws and policies around tribal communities, sovereignty and public safety.

As he begins his retirement in Montana, Toulou is hoping to see improved communication between the federal law enforcement and victims' families and more Native people working at the Justice Department.

Garland said Toulou's "legacy will be felt at the Justice Department and in tribal communities for generations to come."

Donald Trump and Lindsey Graham are again at odds, now over abortion. The strife could help both men

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The long and occasionally quixotic relationship between Donald Trump and Lindsey Graham has again turned negative after the South Carolina senator criticized the former president for refusing to support a federal abortion ban.

Trump repeatedly disparaged Graham on his social media site and said he regretted endorsing the senator during his last reelection campaign. Graham, a staunch abortion opponent who has pushed for a national ban, did not back down from his criticism, saying Trump's view was an "error."

But some observers of the Trump-Graham dynamic think both Republicans benefit from their public strife.

For Trump, they say, creating public distance from anti-abortion advocates might help him blunt President Joe Biden's attacks on an issue that Democrats have long credited for electoral victories since the U.S. Supreme Court, with three justices Trump nominated, overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Graham, meanwhile, gets to burnish his conservative bona fides against years of home-state criticism that he is too liberal.

State Rep. John McCravy, a Republican who sponsored South Carolina's new law that bans most abortions at six weeks, said he could not see how the back-and-forth really harmed either Trump or Graham with voters.

Trump "wants to get elected, and I think that appearing to be moderate helps him to get elected," McCravy said. "Regardless of what they say, I think he's taking the practical side of this. He's pointing out something that's true and using that to show that he's not an extremist."

Spokespeople for Trump's campaign and Graham's Senate office did not immediately comment when asked Friday about the squabble.

A smashed cellphone; a vow to 'count me out'

The two have been at odds before.

They started off that way in the 2016 campaign when both sought the presidential nomination. Shortly after Trump launched his bid, Graham questioned Trump's mental fitness for office, calling him a "jackass" who "shouldn't be commander in chief" for making disparaging remarks about then-Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., one of Graham's closest allies.

Campaigning in Graham's home state a day later, Trump opened a rally by calling Graham a "lightweight" and "idiot" before reading out the senator's private cellphone number to the crowd's delight and disbelief. That move led Graham to poke fun at destroying the device after being deluged with angry messages.

Graham ultimately abandoned his own presidential effort and did not attend the 2016 convention, saying he would back neither Trump nor Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton and that the Republican Party had been "conned."

But after Trump's election, Graham was all in. He became one of the president's top Senate confidants and a frequent golf partner. Saying there was "an obligation" to help a president, especially a fellow Republican, Graham told *The Associated Press* in a 2018 interview that he had warmed to Trump and suggested he had used that relationship to shape decisions. Graham did not cite specifics.

"I've tried to be helpful where I could because I think he needs all the help he can get," Graham said. "You can be a better critic when people understand that you're trying to help them be successful."

Graham helped shepherd the three Supreme Court nominees who were in the conservative majority that overturned *Roe* in 2022. That included Brett Kavanaugh, whom Graham defended against allegations of sexual assault. Graham called the Senate Judiciary Committee proceedings in which they unfolded "the most unethical sham since I've been in politics."

That pivot toward Trump paid off when Graham ran for reelection in 2020. The senator's popularity among Republicans in his home state grew as he developed a relationship with Trump.

In the days after that election, when Trump lost to Biden, Graham would be drawn into Trump's legal woes. Graham was ordered to testify before a special grand jury investigating whether Trump and others illegally tried to influence the vote in Georgia. Trump and others eventually faced charges of trying to

interfere in the outcome.

Not long after, Graham would take to the Senate floor to deliver an emotional farewell to Trump's term, saying he felt the then-president must accept his own role in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol and that the whole matter had been a disappointing "self-inflicted wound" in the administration's closing days.

"Trump and I, we've had a hell of a journey. I hate it to end this way. Oh my God, I hate it," he said. "From my point of view, he's been a consequential president, but today, first thing you'll see. All I can say is count me out, enough is enough."

A union of mutual convenience

Just weeks later, Graham visited Trump at his Florida home. And Graham stood by Trump as the former president launched latest White House campaign and faced a succession of criminal indictments.

Dating back more than a decade, Graham has been criticized by South Carolina conservatives who have accused him of kowtowing to Democrats on issues from immigration and bank bailouts to gun restrictions and climate change. But he also hews to Republican priorities on national security and a strong defense of allies against Russia and China, defending Trump when he is criticized for suggesting he would encourage Russia to attack NATO allies he considers delinquent.

Trump's backing helped blunt some conservative backlash in 2020, when Graham vanquished both primary challenges from the right and the best-funded Democratic opponent in history — Jaime Harrison, now the Democratic National Committee chairman — sailing to victory by double digits, even as Trump lost.

Graham joined Trump's leadership team in South Carolina for the 2024 campaign, and Trump easily won the first-in-the-South primary.

But the anti-Graham voices among Trump's supporters have grown louder.

Campaigning for Trump across the early-voting states, Graham drew boos at rallies in New Hampshire and South Carolina, where Trump supporters jeered Graham for more than five minutes during his remarks in July. After Trump's South Carolina victory in February, Trump introduced his ally as someone who "happens to be a little bit further left" than his other backers, adding, "I always say, when I'm in trouble on the left, I call up Lindsey Graham."

With his seat up in 2026, Graham may be thinking of the discontented conservative voices he will likely face while campaigning, conservative strategist Dave Wilson said.

"You know when you have two people who have never danced before, but they both know how to do the salsa, and the music starts playing, and they just know how to do the dance?" Wilson asked. "It's like that. Trump and Graham know how to do the dance of Washington, and they're doing it effectively. They know what they're doing, and they're doing it on purpose."

Iran's attack on Israel raises fears of a wider war, but all sides have also scored gains

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — The unprecedented attack by Iran on Israel early Sunday ratcheted up regional tensions, confirming long-held fears about the Israel-Hamas war spiraling into a broader conflagration. But Iran, Israel, the United States and Hamas also walked away with some gains.

Here's a look at the fallout.

ISRAEL'S RESPONSE COULD RESTORE FAITH IN ITS MILITARY

As the more than 300 drones and missiles headed toward Israel in the early hours of Sunday, the country was able to successfully put to the test its aerial defense array, which, along with help from allies, blocked 99% of the projectiles and prevented any major damage.

By contrast, Israel's military had suffered a bruising defeat at the hands of a far less equipped enemy when Hamas stormed from Gaza into Israel on Oct. 7. That was a major blow to Israel's image as a regional military powerhouse and shattered any sense of invincibility. The response to Iran's attack could be what restores faith in the country's military, even as its forces are bogged down in Gaza, more than six months after Israel declared war on Hamas there.

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Israel has also boasted about the coalition of forces that helped it repel the Iranian assault. It's a much-needed show of support at a time when Israel is at its most isolated because of concerns surrounding its conduct during the war against Hamas, including a worsening humanitarian crisis and a staggering death toll in Gaza.

IRAN SHOWS OFF ITS MIGHT

Iran vowed repeatedly that it would respond to an apparent Israeli strike on an Iranian diplomatic compound in Damascus on April 1 that killed two generals. Sunday's assault allowed Iran to show to its citizens that it won't stand by when its assets are attacked and that it was serious when it threatened revenge.

With its strike, Iran was able to exhibit its fierce firepower, instill fear in some Israelis and disrupt the lives of many through school cancellations. But with little damage actually caused in Israel, Iran might hope that any response will be measured. Several hours after it launched the drones and missiles, Iran said the operation was over.

THE UNITED STATES STOOD BY ISRAEL

The U.S. was a key player in repelling the assault, demonstrating to its allies around the world the power and reliability of American support.

Now, as Israel mulls how and whether to respond, that alliance will be put to the test, with the Biden administration seeking to exert its leverage on Israel and prevent it from carrying out a response that might worsen the conflict.

HAMAS MAY BENEFIT FROM IRAN'S DIRECT INVOLVEMENT

Hamas, which is backed by Iran, welcomed the strike on Israel. Since launching its Oct. 7 attack, Hamas had hoped that regional partners might come to its assistance and drag Israel into a broader war. While some have done — including the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon and Yemen's Houthis — Iran had not directly entered the fray until Sunday.

Hamas could hope that the attack is the first salvo in deeper Iranian engagement in the war in Gaza. It also could hope that violence in the West Bank, where an Israeli teen was killed and settlers rampaged in Palestinian towns, continues to heat up. At the very least, Iran's attack may have emboldened Hamas to dig in its heels in current negotiations over a cease-fire, hoping the increased military pressure on Israel might lead it to accept the militant group's harder-line terms for a deal.

Today in History: April 15

The Titanic sinks in the North Atlantic, more than 1,500 die

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, April 15, the 106th day of 2024. There are 260 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 15, 1912, the British luxury liner RMS Titanic foundered in the North Atlantic off Newfoundland more than 2 1/2 hours after hitting an iceberg; 1,514 people died, while less than half as many survived.

On this date:

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln died nine hours after being shot the night before by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington; Andrew Johnson became the nation's 17th president.

In 1892, General Electric Co., formed by the merger of the Edison Electric Light Co. and other firms, was incorporated in Schenectady, New York.

In 1945, during World War II, British and Canadian troops liberated the Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who died on April 12, was buried at the Roosevelt family home in Hyde Park, New York.

In 1947, Jackie Robinson, baseball's first Black major league player of the modern era, made his official debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers on opening day at Ebbets Field. (The Dodgers defeated the Boston Braves, 5-3.)

In 1955, Ray Kroc opened the first franchised McDonald's restaurant in Des Plaines, Illinois.

In 1974, members of the Symbionese Liberation Army held up a branch of the Hibernia Bank in San

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Francisco; a member of the group was SLA kidnap victim Patricia Hearst, who by this time was going by the name "Tania" (Hearst later said she'd been forced to participate).

In 1989, 96 people died in a crush of soccer fans at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, England. Students in Beijing launched a series of pro-democracy protests; the demonstrations culminated in a government crackdown at Tiananmen Square.

In 1998, Pol Pot, the notorious leader of the Khmer Rouge, died at age 72, evading prosecution for the deaths of 2 million Cambodians.

In 2009, whipped up by conservative commentators and bloggers, tens of thousands of protesters staged "tea parties" around the country three months into the presidency of Barack Obama to tap into the collective angst stirred up by a bad economy, government spending and bailouts.

In 2012, passengers and crew of the cruise ship MS Balmoral said prayers at the spot in the North Atlantic where the Titanic sank 100 years earlier.

In 2013, two bombs made from pressure cookers exploded at the Boston Marathon finish line, killing two women and an 8-year-old boy and injuring more than 260.

In 2019, fire swept across the top of the Notre Dame Cathedral as the soaring Paris landmark underwent renovations; the blaze collapsed the cathedral's spire and spread to one of its landmark rectangular towers, but fire officials said the church's structure had been saved.

In 2020, the government reported that the nation's industrial output in March registered its biggest decline since the U.S. demobilized at the end of World War II as factories shut down amid the coronavirus epidemic.

In 2022, it was revealed that more than 900 civilian bodies had been discovered in the region surrounding the Ukrainian capital following the withdrawal of Russian forces. Police said many were "simply executed."

Today's Birthdays: Actor Claudia Cardinale is 86. Author and politician Jeffrey Archer is 84. Rock singer-guitarist Dave Edmunds is 81. Actor Michael Tucci is 78. Actor Lois Chiles is 77. Writer-producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason is 77. Actor Amy Wright is 74. Actor Sam McMurray is 72. Actor-screenwriter Emma Thompson is 65. Bluegrass musician Jeff Parker is 63. Singer Samantha Fox is 58. Olympic gold, silver and bronze medal swimmer Dara Torres is 57. Rock musician Ed O'Brien (Radiohead) is 56. Actor Flex Alexander is 54. Actor Danny Pino is 50. Actor Douglas Spain is 50. Country singer-songwriter Chris Stapleton is 46. Actor Luke Evans is 45. Rock musician Patrick Carney (The Black Keys) is 44. Rock musician Zach Carothers (Portugal. The Man) is 43. Actor-writer Seth Rogen is 42. Actor Alice Braga is 41. Americana singer-songwriter Margo Price is 41. Rock musician De'Mar Hamilton (Plain White T's) is 40. Actor Samira Wiley is 37. Actor Leonie Elliott is 36. Actor Emma Watson is 34. Actor Maisie Williams is 27.