

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, May 20

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, sweet potatoes, mixed Monterey blend, apple sauce bars, whole wheat bread.

High School Region baseball at highest two seeds

The Pantry open at the Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, Potluck at Noon

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

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

Girls Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 21

Senior Menu: Lemon baked fish, au gratin potatoes, 3 bean salad, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.

High School Region baseball at highest two seeds

Common Cents Community Thrift Store open, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry at the Groton Community Center, hours 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

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

Wednesday, May 22

Senior Menu: Hamburger on bun, lettuce/tomato/onion, potato salad, fruit, cookie.

High School Region baseball at highest two seeds

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, May 23

Senior Menu: Cheese tortellini Alfredo with diced chicken, green beans, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

State Track Meet at Sioux Falls

Girls Golf Regional at Groton, 10 a.m.

High School Region baseball at highest two seeds

Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 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

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A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and other officials crashed yesterday in dense fog, leaving no survivors, according to state media. Vice President Mohammad Mokhber is poised to assume the presidency, pending approval from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (see leadership structure). The country has 50 days to organize new elections.

Space tourism company Blue Origin successfully carried six passengers just past the edge of space yesterday, its first successful crewed launch since its New Shepard rockets were grounded over safety concerns two years ago.

Israeli war cabinet member Benny Gantz threatened to quit if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not advance a plan for postwar Gaza by June 8. If Gantz quits, Netanyahu's coalition would collapse, prompting early elections.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Seize the Grey wins 149th Preakness Stakes with Kentucky Derby winner Mystik Dan finishing second. Manchester City wins a record fourth straight English Premier League title.

Dabney Coleman, Emmy-winning character actor, dies at 92. Alice Stewart, CNN political commentator and GOP political adviser, dies at 58.

Xander Schauffele edges Bryson DeChambeau to win 2024 PGA Championship, Schauffele's first major title. Oleksandr Usyk defeats Tyson Fury to become boxing's first undisputed heavyweight champion in 24 years.

Science & Technology

Geologists discover evidence of a now-dry branch of the Nile River near the Giza Pyramids; may help explain the pyramids' location and how they were built.

Study links gut microbes produced by high-fat diets to tumor progression in mice; may help explain the correlation between obesity and increased risk of certain cancers.

Engineers develop thin film that can provide continuous monitoring of air quality and the presence of toxic gases in industrial or home environments.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed Friday (S&P 500 +0.1%, Dow +0.3%, Nasdaq -0.1%), with the Dow closing above 40,000 points for the first time after temporarily surpassing the benchmark Thursday.

Disneyland's character performers vote to join the Actors' Equity Association after calling for higher wages and more dependable schedules. Mercedes-Benz workers in Alabama vote against joining union.

Elon Musk launches Starlink satellite internet service in Indonesia to support nation's health service and education sector across the 17,000-island archipelago; details of the agreement were not made public.

Politics & World Affairs

The US and Saudi Arabia progress toward binational security deal in talks over the weekend; deal—reportedly days away—would include defense guarantees and cooperation on nuclear energy for civilian purposes, with a pathway for Israeli-Saudi normalization pending Israel's recognition of a Palestinian state.

Former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani charged with conspiracy, fraud, and forgery in Arizona case involving electors who defied state voters to cast votes for former President Donald Trump over President Joe Biden.

London's High Court to decide today whether Julian Assange will be extradited to the US to face espionage charges; determination rests on US assurances about Assange's First Amendment rights and protection from death penalty.

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

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Helping to prepare the Veterans Circle at the Groton Union Cemetery for the Memorial Day. (L-R) Rylan and Emery Blackwood. Both grandchildren of Bruce Babcock, Groton American Legion.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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2024 Groton Area "Tigers" State Track Meet Participants

Boys Events:

Lane Tietz: Sprint Medley Relay

Colby Dunker: Sprint Medley Relay, Javelin

Logan Ringgenberg: Shot Put

Blake Pauli: Sprint Medley Relay

Keegen Tracy: Sprint Medley Relay, 100m Dash, 200m Dash, 400m Dash

Girls Events:

Laila Roberts: 4x100m Relay, 4x200m Relay, 4x400m Relay, Sprint Medley Relay

Faith Traphagen: 4x800m Relay, Sprint Medley Relay

Emma Kutter: Shot Put

Rylee Dunker: 4x100m Relay, 4x200m Relay, Sprint Medley Relay

Jerica Locke: 4x100m Relay, 4x200m Relay, 4x400m Relay, Sprint Medley Relay

Taryn Traphagen: 4x800m Relay, 4x400m Relay, 400m Dash

Kella Tracy: 4x800m Relay, 4x100m Relay, 4x200m Relay, 4x400m Relay

McKenna Tietz: 4x100m Relay, 300m Hurdles

Ashlynn Warrington: 4x800m Relay, Sprint Medley Relay

Ryelle Gilbert: 4x800m Relay, Sprint Medley Relay

GROTON

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

New York may be the city that never sleeps, but football is the sport that never rests. The NFL season kicks off in August with pre-season games and wraps up in February with the Super Bowl. However, with all the off-season events, there's never any downtime. This week's highlight was the schedule release. (All times listed are CT.)

Week 1 - @ New York Giants (Sept. 8, 12 pm)

This will be the first time the Vikings open the season on the road against the Giants since 1969, when Giants' QB Fran Tarkenton (yes, you read that right) beat the Vikings 24-23.

Week 2 - Vs San Francisco 49ers (Sept. 15, 12 pm)

The Vikings have won the past eight games against the 49ers in Minnesota. The defending NFC champs will look to snap that streak.

Week 3 - Vs Houston Texans (Sept. 22, 12 pm)

The Vikings have never lost to the Texans (knock on wood), but this will be a tougher contest than in years past. This will be a "revenge" game for both sides, with former Texans pass rusher Jonathan Greenard facing off against former Vikings Danielle Hunter and Stephon Diggs.

Week 4 - @ Green Bay Packers (Sept. 29, 12 pm)

This border battle is always intense. Hopefully, the Vikings don't leave Lambeau with a key player injured, which has happened the last two times the teams met in Green Bay (Brian O'Neill in 2022 and Kirk Cousins in 2023).

Week 5 - Vs New York Jets (Oct. 6, 8:30 am)

The Vikings are undefeated in the United Kingdom but will be facing a Jets team led by future Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers.

Week 6 - Bye week

This is an early bye week, leading to a stretch of four out of the next six games on the road.

Week 7 - Vs Detroit Lions (Oct. 20, 12 pm)

Detroit is coming off their first NFC North title and just locked up their core players, including QB Jared Goff, OT Penei Sewell, and WR Amon-Ra St. Brown.

Week 8 - @ Los Angeles Rams (Oct. 24, 7:15 pm)

This Thursday Night Football matchup will feature Vikings' Head Coach Kevin O'Connell returning to LA and matching wits with his former mentor Sean McVay.

Week 9 - Vs Indianapolis Colts (Nov. 3, 12 pm)

The last time these two teams met, the Vikings had one of the worst first halves in NFL history but managed to complete a 33-point comeback (NFL record) to get the win.

Week 10 - @ Jacksonville Jaguars (Nov. 10, 12 pm)

This game begins a stretch of three straight road games for the Vikings.

Week 11 - @ Tennessee Titans (Nov. 17, 12 pm)

The Vikings haven't played in Tennessee since 2016, a 25-16 season-opening win.

Week 12 - @ Chicago Bears (Nov. 24, 12 pm)

The Vikings have won the previous four matchups against the Bears, but Chicago has undergone a huge transformation and will be led by number one overall pick Caleb Williams.

Week 13 - Vs Arizona Cardinals (Dec. 1, 12 pm)

Minnesota's 11-game home win streak against Arizona is the longest active streak in the NFL.

Week 14 - Vs Atlanta Falcons (Dec. 8, 12 pm)

Kirk Cousins will make his return to the Twin Cities. Expect a warm welcome before the game begins, and a cascade of boos whenever Atlanta's offense is on the field.

Week 15 - Vs Chicago Bears (Dec. 16, 7 pm)

This will be the fourth time in five seasons the Vikings and Bears have met on Monday Night Football.

Week 16 - @ Seattle Seahawks (Dec. 22, 3:05 pm)

The Vikings have lost their last five games in Seattle.

Week 17 - Vs Green Bay Packers (Dec. 29, 12 pm)

This is the second matchup against the Packers and the Vikings' final home game of the season (unless they win the NFC North and get a home playoff game, of course).

Week 18 - @ Detroit Lions (TBD, TBD)

This game's date and start time are to be determined. This will be the third time in five years the Vikings have finished a season on the road in Detroit.

That's Life by Tony Bender: Started a joke

Whew, the bleeding has stopped. Last week, I told a joke on Facebook. At least, I thought it was a joke. An innocuous joke, even. It turns out it was a personal affront to every single woman in the world.

Here's what I wrote: "There's click bait that keeps popping up. Headline: 'How do you tell if a woman is a psychopath?' Me to myself: Because she's a woman?"

Boy, did I get taken to the woodshed. Then they barred the door and started it on fire. I even got backlash from my daughter, but at least she had the decency to do it in a text instead of calling me out in public—because once in a while she needs a bailout.

"It's a joke," I mansplained to the suffragettes, and that ticked them off even more. I felt like the wrong chicken at a pecking party, if a misogynist pig can be pecked to death.

Not only was I browbeaten, I was psychoanalyzed based on my three-line joke. One of them is an actual psychologist. My understating of the analysis is that they're going to be watching me carefully because I'm likely to invade Poland any minute now. However, in the words of Ingrid Freud, "Sometimes a joke is just a joke."

The funny thing is that for a goose-stepper, I've long been an ally of the feminist movement. I don't want my daughter, sisters, or mom treated unfairly. Heck, my mom was liberated long before Gloria Steinem burned a bra. I learned to wash my baseball uniform, sew buttons, do dishes, cook, and to not flinch in public when she made sudden movements.

But with one joke, I'm forever branded a serial misogynist. The haters were actually in the minority, but boy, were they loud. After poring through a series of lengthy derogatory remarks—some entire chapters—one man noted that the content of the rebuttals sort of proved my point.

They burned his outhouse down, too.

However, I did get messages from people who assured me that the joke was indeed funny, some of them women. Because they are brainwashed, pregnant breeders with low self-esteem. The guys felt it accurately reflected their dating experiences.

One fellow wondered if chicks doth protest too much. After all, he claimed, the biggest audience for serial killer shows is women. I looked it up, and that's exactly what "Psychology Today" said. "Psychology Tomorrow" will probably revise that if they know what's good for them. They also liked "Gentle Ben."

Many guys wondered what the heck was wrong with me for stirring the keg. For one, my cajones are bigger than my cerebro. If there was one point of agreement, both sexes thought I was an idiot.

I should have just left bad enough alone. Instead, I got defensive and noted that there's been a question floating around on social media asking women if they'd rather be alone in the woods with a man or

A Dairy Queen (DQ) sign with a blue background and white snowflakes. The DQ logo is at the top. Below it, the word "Now" is written in a blue cursive font, and "HIRING!" is written in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font. Below the sign, there is a block of text in bold black font.

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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a bear. Most chose the bear. The way I see it, suggesting that all men are predators is a lot like saying all women are psychopaths.

It's since been explained to me that I've never been more wrong in my life.

It's a joke that wouldn't make you blink in a comedy club or watching late night television. Although I've been writing comedy—award-winning jokes, even—for decades, I just happened to run into the buzz saw of the newly formed Joke Police Force. Thanks, Biden. "It's not funny if it hurts people's feelings," Patrol Person Killjoy said. Another used the word "victim."


You know what they say, "The pen is mightier than the bear."

I like to think that as knuckle-draggers go, I've evolved. I'm mindful of pronouns. I slam the door in women's faces because I don't want to offend them with chivalry. I don't want to use the wrong bathroom so I just pee in the ficus.

I used to think that, broadly, conservatives lacked a sense of humor. But liberals are catching up, and actually they're more strident. With conservatives I get the bird. Libs, though, deliver sermons with altogether too many big words. And this is coming from a bleeding nose liberal. (The cops slugged me.)

I'm just spitballing here, but maybe we could lighten up a bit. You know, give folks the benefit of the doubt. After all, I own three Taylor Swift albums, have a pet bear, and some of my best friends are psychopaths.

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Dear EarthTalk: What percentage of U.S. currency today is actually in dollars and coins versus digital? Would it be good for the planet if we ditched bills and coins completely? – P.L., via email

As the digital transformation of our economy accelerates, it is vital to examine not just the economic ramifications but the environmental impacts associated with both physical and digital currencies.

The physical form of U.S. currency, specifically coins and banknotes, makes up a significant portion of the total currency in circulation today. As of the end of 2020, there was approximately \$2.04 trillion worth of U.S. currency in circulation. This amount represented about 50.3 billion individual notes, spanning various denominations from \$1 to \$100 bills, and the balance coins. In contrast, a substantial portion of the central bank's money supply is in digital form. As of late 2021, digital balances at the Federal Reserve amounted to \$4.18 trillion, compared to \$2.21 trillion in circulating cash.

The production of physical currency, including coins and bills, involves resource-intensive processes. Mining for metals like zinc and copper is necessary for coin production, while the creation of banknotes often requires paper, which is linked to deforestation and other environmental issues. For example, it now costs more to produce a penny than its face value, underscoring the inefficiency and environmental cost of producing physical currency. As highlighted by Kathiann Kowalski of Science News Explore, "the metals then go to a factory, where copper coats each side of a thicker zinc layer", illustrating the complex and energy-intensive processes involved in minting coins.

Conversely, digital currencies eliminate the need for physical materials used in coins and banknotes. However, the operation of these technologies predominantly depends on electricity generated from fossil fuels, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts. The shift toward digital currency systems like Bitcoin has highlighted concerns regarding their sustainability due to the high energy consumption of blockchain technologies and mining processes.

When comparing the environmental impacts of physical and digital currencies, it's apparent that both systems entail significant environmental costs. Physical currencies require extensive raw materials and energy for production and transportation, contributing to pollution and resource depletion. On the other hand, digital currencies, while reducing physical waste, increase the demand for energy, potentially exacerbating carbon emissions unless powered by renewable energy sources.

This all suggests a need for both policy intervention and technological innovation. Policies could encourage the adoption of more sustainable practices in currency production, such as using recycled materials for banknotes or improving the energy efficiency of minting processes. Similarly, innovations in digital currency technologies could help reduce their energy consumption, making them a more sustainable option in the long run.



Creating coins necessitates lots of mining of precious metals not to mention the emission of tons and tons of greenhouse gases. Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

As states loosen childhood vaccine requirements, health experts' worries grow

BY: SHALINA CHATLANI - MAY 20, 2024 5:30 AM

Louisiana Republican state Rep. Kathy Edmonston believes no one ought to be required to vaccinate their children. So, she wants schools to proactively tell parents that it's their right under Louisiana law to seek an exemption.

"It's not the vaccine itself, it is the mandate," Edmonston told Stateline. "The law is the law. And it already says you can opt out if you don't want it. If you do want it, you can go anywhere and get it."

Although Louisiana scores among the bottom states in most health indicators, nearly 90% of kindergarten children statewide have complete vaccination records, according to data from the Louisiana Department of Health from last school year. That's even as Louisiana maintains some of the broadest exemptions for personal, religious and moral reasons. The state only requires a written notice from parents to schools.

Edmonston has sponsored legislation that would require schools to provide parents with information about the exemptions. The bill is intended to ensure parents aren't denied medically necessary information, she said.

Vaccines protect not only the patient, but also those around them. Science has shown that a population can reach community immunity, also known as herd immunity, once a certain percentage of the group is vaccinated. That herd immunity can protect people who can't get vaccinated, such as those with weakened immune systems or serious allergies, by reducing their chances of infection. In the past few years, however, COVID-19 vaccines have terrified some people who oppose requirements to get the shot, even though research shows the vaccines are far safer than getting the disease.

Some lawmakers across the country are working to sidestep vaccine mandates, not just for COVID-19, but also for measles, polio and meningitis. Public health experts worry the renewed opposition to childhood immunizations will reverse state gains in vaccination rates. Meanwhile, cases of some diseases, including measles, have increased across the country.

Edmonston's bill is one of dozens this session that aim to relax vaccine requirements, according to a database maintained by the National Conference of State Legislatures, a nonpartisan research organization that serves lawmakers and their staffs. Most of the bills have either died in committee or failed to advance, but a few have become law.

Idaho enacted a law, effective in July, that allows students "of majority age" — 18 in Idaho — to submit their own immunization waivers to schools and universities, both public and private. And Tennessee passed a law, which took effect in April, that prohibits the state from requiring immunizations as a condition of either adoption or foster care if the family taking in a child has a religious or moral objection to vaccines.

"Conservatives have really moved towards that medical freedom position of where people need to be really educated about whatever vaccine that they are taking," said Tennessee state Sen. Bo Watson, who sponsored his state's legislation.

"I think the public health community has really lost credibility during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Watson, a Republican. "And they're going to have to work really hard to restore some of that credibility."

Other bills that would have allowed some exemptions passed legislatures but were stopped short by governors.

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In West Virginia, Republican Gov. Jim Justice vetoed legislation that would have allowed full-time virtual public school students, along with private and parochial schools, to avoid mandatory vaccine requirements. Justice said in his veto message that he “heard constant, strong opposition to this legislation from our State’s medical community.”

Similarly, Wisconsin Democratic Gov. Tony Evers vetoed legislation that would have required public colleges and universities to allow immunization waivers for health, religious or personal reasons.

Edmonston said she’s tried before with her legislation in Louisiana; it either died or got vetoed by former Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards. But now, with Republican Gov. Jeff Landry in charge, Edmonston is confident the bill will get signed into law. It’s already passed the House and is being debated in the Senate.

Both she and Watson said the push to relax requirements or create broader exemptions for immunizations is not tied to vaccines themselves. The debate tends to be centered around what many conservatives call an overreach of government.

“We’re against the government telling us what to do with our own bodies,” Edmonston said.

Greater momentum after COVID-19

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends numerous vaccinations for infants as a standard regimen. And shots protecting against measles, mumps and rubella, chickenpox and hepatitis B, among others, are typically required to attend K-12 schools. States set their own requirements and exemptions, however, and there are variations.

Pushback against vaccine mandates goes back more than a century to the early 1900s, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court in 1905 ruled that states could require parents to vaccinate their children, according to Simon Haeder, an associate professor of public health at Texas A&M University, who has been tracking vaccine hesitancy for several years.

Although the opposition tends to exist mostly along partisan lines, with Republicans more likely to support vaccine exemptions, Haeder noted that far-left groups — which may tend to be skeptical of medicines in general — also support the loosening of vaccination requirements.

“The scientific skepticism and opposition to state interference and the partisan nature of this issue has really escalated, starting during the COVID years,” Haeder told Stateline.

“It’s very hard for states right now wanting to increase vaccination requirements,” he said.

Among kindergartners, national coverage dropped from about 95% for all vaccines in the 2019-2020 school year to about 93% for all vaccines in both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, according to the CDC.

Nonmedical exemptions account for more than 90% of all approved vaccination exemptions and are allowed in all but five states. Exemptions increased from 2.2% among kindergartners in the 2019-2020 school year to 3% in 2022-2023, and 10 states reported that more than 5% of kindergartners had an exemption from at least one vaccine.

Jennifer Herricks, a microbiologist and founder of Louisiana Families for Vaccines, an advocacy organization in support of vaccines, has been tracking efforts to relax vaccine mandates since 2015.

“I became a mom. And then it became even more personal for me, especially having those little infants who are too young to get a lot of the vaccines,” Herricks said. “And then you realize that they are vulnerable to these diseases and that they are depending on the people around them to be vaccinated so that they don’t get sick.”

But Jill Hines, co-director of Health Freedom Louisiana, a group that opposes vaccine mandates, said some parents just want the chance to opt out.

“Believe it or not, my children are fully vaccinated. We were never informed of the state’s exemption law,” Hines told Stateline. She added that some in her group feel that vaccine reporting requirements are an invasion of privacy.

“We should not be denied access to society, access to a job, access to an education, simply because we’ve refused medical intervention,” she said.

Growing concern among health professionals

Mississippi, which sits near the bottom of state rankings on most health indicators such as obesity and heart disease, hasn't had a measles case since 1992.

"We have pushed back all the potentially fatal childhood infections from being commonplace in Mississippi to being extremely rare," Dr. Daniel Edney, the state health officer, said in an interview.

Immunizations against childhood diseases have been required by state law since 1979 for entry into K-12 schools and day care centers. The mandate has helped Mississippi lead the nation with some of the highest rates of childhood vaccinations, including a vaccination rate of nearly 99% among kindergarteners.

But last year, a federal judge ordered Mississippi to begin accepting religious exemptions after an interest group, Texas-based Informed Consent Action Network, sued the state in federal court. Since then, thousands of exemption requests have poured in.

Mississippi is approaching the approval of more than 2,800 religious exemptions, Edney said. He expects other states also will see more exemptions as lawmakers elsewhere find success with legislation to relax vaccine mandates or increase requirements on opt-out information.

"If you're going to be against good, sound childhood vaccine policy — the vaccinations that have been proven safe and effective for decades — you need to be against clean water and against proper sewage and food protection," Edney said.

Dr. John Gaudet, a Mississippi pediatrician for about three decades, said he worried the COVID-19 vaccine controversy would spill into the nation's ongoing childhood vaccine debate.

"I think there was a point where you would go to the doctor, and you would just kind of take it almost as, 'Well, this is what the doctor recommended,'" he said. "And so there's now more of a consumer mentality: 'Well, the doctor may say this, but maybe that doctor is not trustworthy.'"

Across the country, meanwhile, measles has surged, with at least 132 measles cases reported so far this year, according to the CDC. Two-thirds of those cases are among people under the age of 19, and over half of them have resulted in hospitalizations. The cases have spread to 20 states.

But not, so far, to Mississippi.

Shalina Chatlani covers health care and environmental justice for Stateline.

Survey says nearly two-thirds of SD educators use Indigenous standards

But some question results as number of respondents declines

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 19, 2024 12:00 PM

Survey results indicate nearly two-thirds of South Dakota public school educators are teaching the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings, but the number of respondents is lower than the last survey.

The essential understandings are a set of standards approved in 2018 for teaching students about Native American culture and history. "Oceti Sakowin" is the collective term for Lakota, Dakota and Nakota speaking Native Americans, many of whom live in South Dakota. There are nine tribal nations within the state.

About 62% of teachers are using the standards, based on a survey conducted by the state Department of Education in 2023 — a "remarkable increase" from 45% in 2021, said Fred Osborn, director of the Office of Indian Education, which is under the supervision of the state Department of Tribal Relations. He presented the survey results to the Indian Education Advisory Council earlier this month.

Use of the standards is optional. The survey is used to understand how the standards are being implemented, and to help state officials encourage statewide adoption.

"The key is there's improvement," Osborn said. "It's not perfect yet. There's still work to be done, but we've come a long way from 45% of teachers. We hope that increases every year."

Osborn added that the Office of Indian Education provided 10,000 copies of books on the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings through a Bush Foundation grant since the first survey, and sent out education packets for all grade levels last fall.

Fewer survey responses

Only about 385 educators took part in the 2023 survey, compared to 554 in 2021.

The 2023 survey also does not list how many public school districts were represented in the survey, whereas 2021's survey had responses from 125 of the state's 149 school districts. The school district identification question was changed between 2021 and 2023, said department spokesperson Nancy Van Der Weide. The department does not have any data to determine how many school districts were represented in the latest survey.

Removing the school district identification question allowed participants more anonymity, Van Der Weide told South Dakota Searchlight.

Neither Osborn nor any members of the council addressed the potential impact of fewer responses on the validity of the survey results. The survey was voluntary and available for one month, Van Der Weide said, with a notice placed in a newsletter sent to teachers throughout the state.

"Those educators who did respond provided informed recommendations," Van Der Weide said in an emailed statement. "Some of those were educators who already incorporate a lot of OSEUs in their classrooms, while others were those who wanted to make them a part of their instruction and responded with ideas for tools that would help them to incorporate the standards into their classrooms."

Advisory council member Sherry Johnson, tribal education director for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, helped shaped the standards and is participating in the standards update. She doubts the survey is an accurate representation of how the standards are being used in the state.

"We have pockets of the state that are doing well, but it's not pervasive. It's not required," Johnson said. "If nothing else, there should be direct teacher training and a mandate to have this Indian education for all."

Megan Deal, a second-grade teacher in Pierre and a member of the advisory council, said her school participated in a pilot program to help create lesson plans for standards at each grade level, but not all teachers incorporated the teachings into their classrooms.

"I don't think they're being taught at very many schools around the state at this time," Deal said.

Council member Brian Wagner, tribal education director with the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, said he is concerned about the lack of "teeth" with the standards. Lawmakers have introduced bills to require use of the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings in classrooms, but those efforts have failed in the Legislature.

"Knowledge is power," Wagner said. "If people don't learn about history, then we risk repeating it, and unfortunately the history repeating would be the racism and the discrimination that many tribal members have experienced because people don't understand tribal sovereignty or the treaties and the treaty rights."

Impact expected from social studies standards

Though the standards are optional, said Secretary of South Dakota Department of Education Joseph Graves, the new social studies standards that will be implemented by 2025 will include references to the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings. Those will encourage more teachers to use the cultural standards, he said.

"We're going to find more Native American history and culture being taught in the schools than ever before," Graves said. "This is actually a move forward, not a move back. I think the social studies standards have gotten an unfair black eye, and I think once you see these in place you'll find we're teaching more of it rather than less and, I think, from an enlightened perspective."

The social studies standards controversy started in 2021 because the department removed more than a dozen references to the Oceti Sakowin from a committee's draft revision of social studies standards. After Gov. Kristi Noem formed a new work group and ordered the process to start over, the group produced standards that drew criticism for an emphasis on rote memorization over inquiry-based learning.

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Graves added that the department plans to provide teachers with weekly materials to help them utilize the social studies standards and encourage them to use the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings.

According to the 2023 survey results, about 84% of educators said they were aware of the standards, and 77% said it is important to implement the standards in every classroom. Only 55% of teachers said they knew the concepts well enough to teach them, but that was an 18 point increase from 2021.

Nearly 40 administrators took part in their administrator survey in 2023, compared to 164 in 2021. The 2023 survey does not list how many public school districts were represented in the administrator survey.

Nearly 80% of administrators said it's important to implement the standards in every classroom, but two-thirds of administrators indicated a lack of confidence to implement the standards in their schools, while 56% reported an uncertainty about how to integrate the standards and 44% cited a concern for the appropriateness of the content — an increase of 28 points from the 2021 survey.

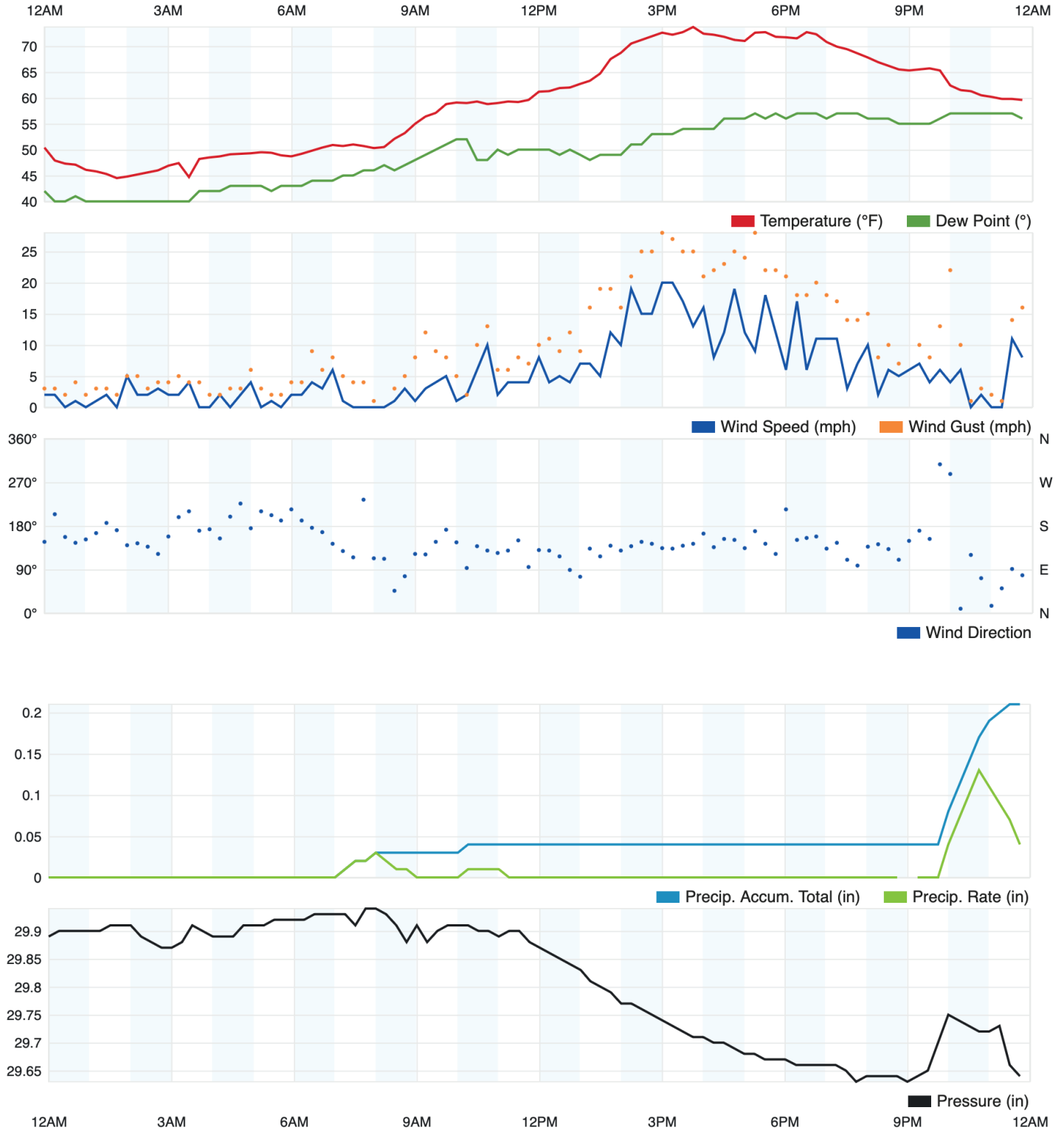
The survey does not address how using the standards affects Native American student achievement, but Osborn said it would be "interesting to cross analyze" that.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Tuesday

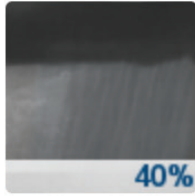
Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 69 °F

Partly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
Showers



Low: 49 °F

Chance
Showers



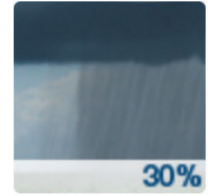
High: 58 °F

Showers and
Breezy



Low: 44 °F

Chance
Showers and
Breezy



High: 69 °F

Chance
Showers

Unsettled For The Week Ahead

Today

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



Highs:
65 to 70°

Rainfall
Chance
20-50%



Highs:
54 to 65°

Rainfall
Chance
40-100%



Highs:
66 to 71°

Rainfall
Chance
15-40%



Highs:
70 to 76°

Thunder
Chance
30-80%



Highs:
65 to 70°

Rainfall
Chance
40-70%

Near to Below-Normal Temps

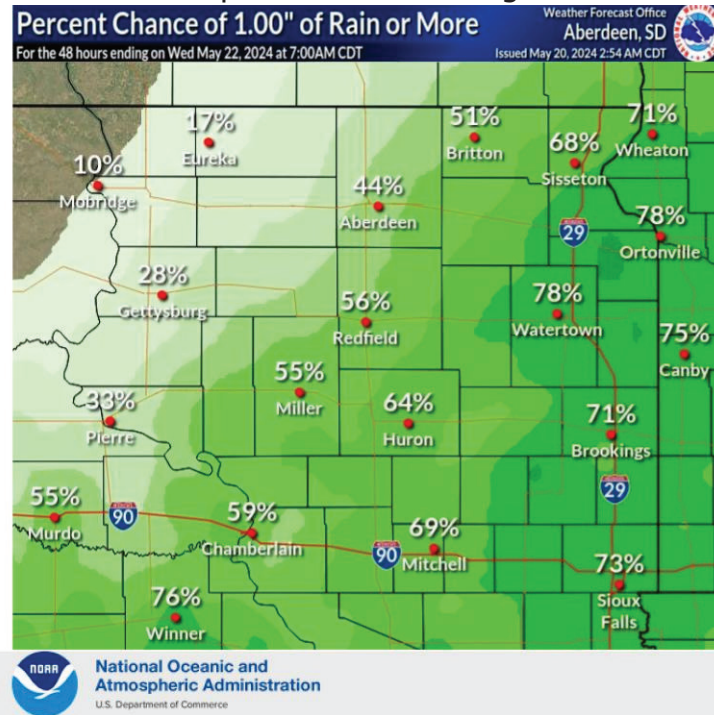
National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A series of systems is expected to cross the region over the next several days with ample opportunities for moisture. This active pattern will also result in generally below normal temperatures as well.

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Timing the next round of moisture and potential for inch or greater totals through early Wednesday.



	Mon					Tue					Wed					
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am
Aberdeen	0	5	15	25	20	15	35	55	80	80	80	80	40	20	20	10
Britton	0	10	15	15	15	20	30	60	80	80	85	85	55	30	30	10
Brookings	0	5	20	30	30	40	75	85	100	100	90	90	45	30	20	10
Chamberlain	10	20	35	20	15	50	95	75	85	85	55	55	25	15	15	15
Clark	0	35	30	15	10	25	60	85	95	95	90	90	50	20	20	10
Eagle Butte	5	10	20	40	30	25	40	40	55	55	45	45	20	20	20	20
Ellendale	0	5	15	20	20	20	30	40	65	65	75	75	45	25	25	10
Eureka	0	10	15	20	30	20	30	35	60	60	60	60	25	10	10	10
Gettysburg	5	5	30	50	25	20	60	65	70	70	60	60	20	15	15	15
Huron	5	15	35	25	15	35	85	90	95	95	75	75	35	15	10	10
Kennebec	5	20	25	15	15	55	85	70	80	80	55	55	25	20	20	20
McIntosh	0	10	15	10	15	15	15	20	40	40	40	40	15	10	10	10
Milbank	5	10	25	20	15	25	40	80	95	95	95	95	60	30	30	10
Miller	5	30	15	15	10	25	70	80	85	85	70	70	30	15	10	10
Mobridge	0	10	15	20	25	15	30	30	55	55	50	50	20	10	10	10
Murdo	10	30	50	25	25	70	85	85	80	80	55	55	30	30	30	30
Pierre	5	10	30	35	25	35	75	85	75	75	50	50	20	20	20	20
Redfield	0	30	15	20	10	20	55	80	85	85	80	80	40	15	15	10
Sisseton	5	15	25	15	15	15	35	70	90	90	95	95	60	35	35	10
Watertown	5	15	30	25	15	30	50	75	95	95	95	95	55	25	25	10
Webster	5	25	20	15	15	20	45	80	90	90	90	90	60	30	30	10
Wheaton	5	5	20	10	15	15	30	65	85	85	95	95	65	40	40	10

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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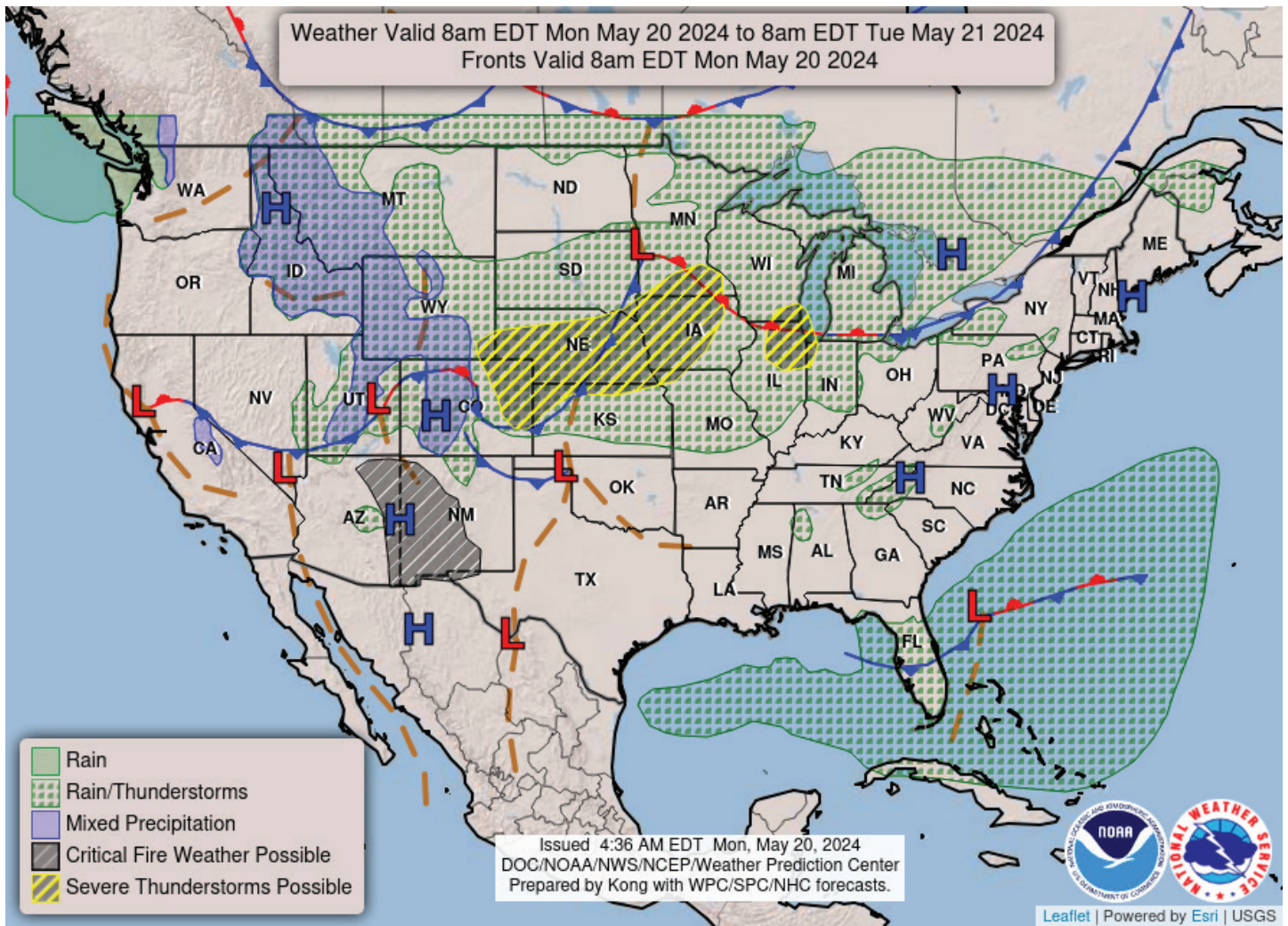
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 74 °F at 3:40 PM
Low Temp: 44 °F at 1:43 AM
Wind: 28 mph at 3:01 PM
Precip: : 0.21

Day length: 15 hours, 09 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1932
Record Low: 28 in 2002
Average High: 72
Average Low: 46
Average Precip in May.: 2.11
Precip to date in May: 1.16
Average Precip to date: 6.08
Precip Year to Date: 5.70
Sunset Tonight: 9:03:58 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:53:03 am



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Today in Weather History

May 20, 1965: A tornado hit north of Frederick. A barn and all outbuildings were destroyed on one farm. Windows exploded outward at the house. The tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles.

May 20, 1974: Softball size hail fell in Kennebec, in Lyman County, breaking many windows in the schools and other buildings.

1894: A record late snow of two to eight inches whitened parts of central and eastern Kentucky. Lexington received six inches of snow, and Springfield Kentucky received 5 inches.

1916: In three consecutive years, a tornado passed near or through the town of Codell, Kansas. The tornado on this day was an estimated F2. The estimated F3 tornado in 1917 passed two miles west of town. Finally, an estimated F4 tornado moved through Codell on May 20th, 1918. This tornado killed 9 and injured at least 65 others.

1957 - A tornado touched down to the southwest of Kansas City and traveled a distance of seventy-one miles cutting a swath of near total destruction through the southeastern suburbs of Ruskin Heights and Hickman Mills. The tornado claimed the lives of forty-five persons, and left hundreds homeless. It was the worst weather disaster of record for Kansas City. About all that remained of one house was a small table and a fish bowl atop, with the fish still swimming about inside the bowl, rather unconcerned. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1987 - Thunderstorms in southern Texas produced grapefruit size hail, near the town of Dilley ("by dilly"), and produced wind gusts to 73 mph at Lake Amistad. The large hail broke windows, killed small animals, and damaged watermelon. Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from Indiana to the Dakotas. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail at Denver IA, and wind gusts to 80 mph in southern Henry County IL. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms in the south central U.S. produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Omaha, NE, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Midland and Dallas, TX. Temperatures in California soared into the 90s and above 100 degrees. San Jose CA reported a record high of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Pre-dawn thunderstorms produced large hail in eastern Oklahoma and northwestern Arkansas. Later in the morning thunderstorms in North Carolina produced dime size hail at Hanging Dog. Thunderstorms also produced severe weather from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Central Plains Region later that day and night, with baseball size hail reported around Lawn, Novice and Eola TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across the southeastern quarter of the nation through the day and night. Severe thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes, including one which injured two persons at Algoma, MS, and another which injured nine persons at Rogersville, MO. There were 119 reports of large hail or damaging winds. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail at Houston MO and damaging winds which killed one person at Toccoa GA. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

ON YOUR KNEES, NOW!

George's lifelong dream was to climb the Alps. It took him years to realize his goal, but he was finally making his first climb. As he made his way to the top, he was accompanied by two strong guides - one in front of him and one behind him.

As they reached the top, the guide in front of him stepped aside so he would be the first one to see the majestic view. Just as the young climber stood up a strong gale threatened to dash him to destruction. The guide on his left pulled him down and shouted, "On your knees, now, sir. You are not safe here unless you are on your knees."

Wherever we are and whatever we are doing we are never safe unless we are on our knees acknowledging our need for God's protection. Even when we think that we are about to see the beauty and wonders of God's handiwork in our lives, we can be overwhelmed with the storms of life. When such moments arise, we must be quick to get "on our knees now!" God is the only one who can stop the winds of destruction and the forces of life that would sweep us away in a downward spiral. He can take every problem and turn it into a prize of His grace. He can take the worst tragedy that life has to offer us and turn it into the very best blessing we could ever imagine.

We must always remember that we are not safe anywhere unless we are on our knees, now and always.

Prayer: Father, we recognize that You are the Lord over all of life, and we are only safe when we are on our knees trusting in You to sustain and save us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. Isaiah 43:2



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: 05.17.24

8 17 40 60 70 3

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$421,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 19 Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.18.24

7 8 9 12 33 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,500,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 34 Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.19.24

6 16 32 34 41 12

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 49 Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.18.24

5 7 11 15 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$108,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 49 Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.18.24

15 17 28 36 60 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.18.24

19 36 37 42 59 19

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$88,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, supreme leader's protege, dies at 63 in helicopter crash

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, a hard-line protege of the country's supreme leader who helped oversee the mass executions of thousands in 1988 and later led the country as it enriched uranium near weapons-grade levels, launched a major attack on Israel and experienced mass protests, has died. He was 63.

Raisi's death, along with the foreign minister and other officials in a helicopter crash Sunday in northwestern Iran, came as Iran struggles with internal dissent and its relations with the wider world. A cleric first, Raisi once kissed the Quran, the Islamic holy book, before the United Nations and spoke more like a preacher than a statesman when addressing the world.

Raisi, who lost a presidential election to the relatively moderate incumbent Hassan Rouhani in 2017, came to power four years later in a vote carefully managed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to clear any major opposition candidate.

His election came at a time when relations between Tehran and Washington were particularly tense following U.S. President Donald Trump's 2018 decision to unilaterally withdraw America from a nuclear deal aimed at limiting Iran's uranium enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief.

While Raisi said he wanted to rejoin the deal with world powers, his new administration instead pushed back against international inspections of nuclear facilities, in part over an alleged sabotage campaign that Tehran blamed on Israel. Talks to restore the accord remained stalled in his government's first months.

"Sanctions are the U.S.' new way of war with the nations of the world," Raisi told the United Nations in September 2021. "The policy of 'maximum oppression' is still on. We want nothing more than what is rightfully ours."

Mass protests swept the country in 2022 after the death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been detained over her allegedly loose headscarf, or hijab. The monthslong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and more than 22,000 others were detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

Then came the current Israel-Hamas war, in which Iran-backed militants targeted Israel. Tehran launched an extraordinary attack itself on Israel in April that used hundreds of drones, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. Israel, the U.S. and its allies shot down the incoming fire, but it showed just how intense the yearslong shadow war between Iran and Israel was.

Born in Mashhad on Dec. 14, 1960, Raisi was born into a family that traces its lineage to Islam's Prophet Muhammad, as signaled by the black turban he would later wear. His father died when he was 5. He went on to the seminary in the Shiite holy city of Qom and later described himself as an ayatollah, a high-ranking Shiite cleric.

In 1988, at the end of Iran's long war with Iraq, Raisi served on what would become known as "death commissions," which handed down death sentences for political prisoners, militants and others. International rights groups estimate that as many as 5,000 people were executed.

After Iran's then-Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini accepted a U.N.-brokered cease-fire, members of the Iranian opposition group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, heavily armed by Iraq's Saddam Hussein, stormed across the Iranian border in a surprise attack. Iran ultimately blunted their assault, but the attack set the stage for the sham retrials.

Some who appeared were asked to identify themselves. Those who responded "mujahedeen" were sent to their deaths.

Raisi was defiant when asked at a news conference after his election about the executions.

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"I am proud of being a defender of human rights and of people's security and comfort as a prosecutor wherever I was," said Raisi, who also served as Iran's attorney general for a time.

In 2016, Khamenei appointed Raisi to run the Imam Reza charity foundation, which manages a conglomerate of businesses and endowments in Iran. It is one of many bonyads, or charitable foundations, fueled by donations or assets seized after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

These foundations offer no public accounting of their spending and answer only to Iran's supreme leader. The Imam Reza charity, known as "Astan-e Quds-e Razavi" in Farsi, is believed to be one of the biggest. Analysts estimate its worth at tens of billions of dollars as it owns almost half the land in Mashhad, Iran's second-largest city.

At Raisi's appointment to the foundation, Khamenei called him a "trustworthy person with high-profile experience." That led to analyst speculation that Khamenei could be grooming Raisi as a possible candidate to be Iran's third-ever supreme leader, a Shiite cleric who has final say on all state matters and serves as the country's commander-in-chief.

Though Raisi lost his 2017 campaign, he still garnered nearly 16 million votes. Khamenei installed him as the head of Iran's internationally criticized judiciary, long known for its closed-door trials of human rights activists and those with Western ties. The U.S. Treasury in 2019 sanctioned Raisi "for his administrative oversight over the executions of individuals who were juveniles at the time of their crime and the torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners in Iran, including amputations."

By 2021, Raisi became the dominant figure in the election after a panel under Khamenei disqualified candidates who posed the greatest challenge to his protege. He swept nearly 62% of the 28.9 million votes in that election. Millions stayed home and others voided ballots, resulting in the lowest turnout by percentage in the Islamic Republic's history.

Raisi is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Q&A: Kevin Costner on unveiling his Western saga 'Horizon' at Cannes

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — A month before Kevin Costner puts the first installment of his multi-chapter Western "Horizon: An American Saga" into theaters, the actor-director came to the Cannes Film Festival to unveil his self-financed passion project.

"Two of my boys are out fishing right now," Costner said with a grin in an interview at the Carlton Hotel. "And the three girls found their way onto a boat. So dad's in here, stumping for his movie."

The movie is actually two, or if Costner has his way, four. "Horizon: Chapter One," which runs three hours, will be released by Warner Bros. in theaters June 28. "Chapter Two" follows August 16. Costner has scripts ready for parts three and four.

It's only the fourth time Costner, 69, has directed, following 1990's "Dances With Wolves," 1997's "The Postman" and 2003's "Open Range." But when he has, Costner has usually done it with a clear-eyed passion for storytelling and character. That's on display in the wide-ranging epic "Horizon," with a cast including Sienna Miller, Abbey Lee, Sam Worthington and Costner.

It's also Costner's biggest gamble, ever. To raise the money for the \$100 million-plus production, he mortgaged his seaside Santa Barbara, California, estate. He's been trying to make "Horizon" for more than 30 years.

"I thank God for Cannes. I'm an independent filmmaker, essentially, and I'm here by myself," said Costner, whose film was to premiere Sunday. "So this is a high moment for me because it's helping me create awareness for a movie. I don't have all the money in the world to expose this movie. But I have my time and a platform here."

Remarks have been lightly edited for brevity.

AP: What was your calculus in deciding to put your money into "Horizon"? What made it worth it to you?

COSTNER: You can spend your life just trying to make your pile grow bigger and bigger. And I've not been really terribly great at that. I'm like anyone else, I'd like it to be big. But not at the expense of not

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doing what I feel like I've love to do. If no one will help me do it and I believe strongly in its entertainment value — there's commerce on my mind. But I don't let it overshadow the entertainment value and essence of what I'm trying to portray. I don't try to let the fear of that control my instincts on any level. I don't want to live that way. If I was watching a movie about me and I thought, "Oo, don't risk your money and make something like that," what a (expletive).

AP: Was it an easy decision? You didn't look around your seaside Santa Barbara estate and question mortgaging it?

COSTNER: No, it wasn't an easy decision, but it was the decision I needed to make. It's like, wow, why am I having to do this? I think I'm making mainstream entertainment. I don't know what you felt about the movie but I felt like it's really mainstream. I don't feel that I'm an avant-garde type of a person. But yet I think my things are a little off. I'm willing to (in a wagon trail scene in the film) see a woman bathe because her desire to be clean was so pronounced. If you're a woman, who wouldn't want to be? But then in the next moment, you realize it's against the rule, man. You could cost yourself your life. So that scene became important to make the next scene important. To me, a scene like that is just as important as a gun fight. And if that kind of scene doesn't want to exist in a mainstream movie...

AP: Could this have been a series?

COSTNER: I guess. It will be. They're going to break this up into a hundred pieces, you know what I mean? After four of these, they're going to have 13, 14 hours of film and they're going to turn into 25 hours of TV, and they're going to do whatever they're going to do. That's just the way we live in our life but they'll also exist in this form. And that was important for me, to make sure that happened. And I was the one who paid for it.

AP: It's an audacious release plan, with the second film opening two months after the first. What appealed to you about that?

COSTNER: The studio wanted to try that. I knew this was going to come out fairly quickly, like every four or five months. That may have been easier. But this is something they feel like people can remember the first one and it can tie into the second one. I built into all of them a montage of what's coming.

AP: Since directing "Dances With Wolves," you've directed "Open Range" and starred in "Wyatt Earp" and "Yellowstone." What keeps bringing you back to the West?

COSTNER: I like seeing behavior in men that makes sense. I make movies for men. I just make sure there's great women characters because that's really important to me. The backbone of our movie is actually women. I don't like boys behaving stupid. I like the little boy who (fleeing an attack) takes the two horses and effectively saves his life. I like seeing people behave honestly in desperate situations. The heroism of a little boy saying "I'll stay with you, Dad" is a really powerful moment. That's my son (Hayes Costner) and it was very hard to watch.

AP: In dramatizing the drive West of settlers, what was the Native American perspective you wanted to consider?

COSTNER: Confusion about it. The colonel says, "If we salt the earth with enough of their dead, the wagons won't come anymore." When you're that far out there, you can't go. When people said goodbye in the East Coast, they didn't come back. So the confusion for the Native American was they couldn't make sense of that. Normally if you kill enough people they won't bother you. But these Americans, these people were getting flyers saying you could have this land. There are salesmen in every century, every decade selling something they don't really know what it is. It's just America. It's just this giant experiment of hope.

AP: But America means different things to different people, right? You have Chinese immigrants in the film as well.

COSTNER: When they weren't useful, they were just cast away. And they had to create a sense of community and they came en masse. They came together and they were very industrious. They'll be the wealthiest people in that town until there's a tipping point and racism kicks in and suddenly they're gone, too. You watch. That's what would happen in real life.

AP: What I'm getting at is there's tragedy in this. Do you see westward expansion and your film as a

tragedy?

COSTNER: There's inevitable tragedy to it. And there's divisions. You see a whole tribe break in half. You see a father break from a son.

AP: Have you already started shooting the third installment?

COSTNER: I've shot three days and I continue to have to press for money to finish this. I have to figure out what else I can do to make this. But I'm not waiting to see how people feel. I know what this is, and I think if people love the movie experience, they have a really good chance of wanting to see the next one. That's all I can believe. The prudent thing would be to wait, but I guess I'm not built for that wait.

AP: Some of the issues on "Yellowstone" seemed to have to do with time and scheduling. What's your feeling about your future with that series at this point?

COSTNER: "Yellowstone" was really important in my life. I really loved that world and what we were able to do in five seasons. I only thought it would be one, but did five. I was willing to do three more – five, six and seven – but it just didn't happen. Certain things were going on and it just didn't happen. So the idea of going back, I'm open to that idea. But it's based on everything that first three or four were based on, which is the scripts.

Iran's president, foreign minister and others found dead at helicopter crash site

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and several other officials were found dead on Monday, hours after their helicopter crashed in a foggy, mountainous region of the country's northwest, state media reported.

The crash comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by the Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi, who was 63, under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month.

Khamenei announced Monday that Iran's first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, would serve as the country's acting president until elections are held.

During Raisi's term in office, Iran enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels, further escalating tensions with the West as Tehran also supplied bomb-carrying drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine and armed militia groups across the region.

Meanwhile, Iran has faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over the ailing economy and women's rights — making the moment that much more sensitive for Tehran and the future of the country.

Among the dead was Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, 60. The helicopter also carried the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, a senior cleric from Tabriz, three crew members and a Revolutionary Guard official, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. IRNA said the crash killed eight people in all, including three crew members, aboard the Bell helicopter, which Iran purchased in the early 2000s.

Aircraft in Iran face a shortage of parts, often flying without safety checks against the backdrop of Western sanctions. Because of that, former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif sought to blame the United States for the crash in an interview Monday..

"One of the main culprits of yesterday's tragedy is the United States, which ... embargoed the sale of aircraft and aviation parts to Iran and does not allow the people of Iran to enjoy good aviation facilities," Zarif said. "These will be recorded in the list of US crimes against the Iranian people."

State TV gave no immediate cause for the crash that occurred in Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

The U.S. has yet to comment publicly on Raisi's death. Ali Bagheri Kani, a nuclear negotiator for Iran, will serve as the country's acting foreign minister, state TV said.

Early Monday morning, Turkish authorities released what they described as drone footage showing what appeared to be a fire in the wilderness that they "suspected to be wreckage of helicopter." The coordinates listed in the footage put the fire some 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of the Azerbaijan-Iranian border on

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the side of a steep mountain.

Footage released by IRNA early Monday showed what the agency described as the crash site, across a steep valley in a green mountain range. Soldiers speaking in the local Azeri language said: "There it is, we found it."

Condolences started pouring in from neighbors and allies after Iran confirmed there were no survivors from the crash. Pakistan announced a day of mourning and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X that his country "stands with Iran in this time of sorrow." Leaders of Egypt and Jordan also offered condolences, as did Syrian President Bashar Assad. Lebanon and Syria both declared three days of mourning.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said he and his government were "deeply shocked" — Raisi was returning on Sunday after traveling to Iran's border with Azerbaijan to inaugurate a dam with Aliyev when the crash happened.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and China's Xi Jinping conveyed their condolences. Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a statement released by the Kremlin, described Raisi "as a true friend of Russia."

Khamenei, who had himself urged the public to pray Sunday night, stressed the business of Iran's government would continue no matter what.

Under the Iranian constitution, Iran's vice first president takes over if the president dies, with Khamenei's assent, and a new presidential election would be called within 50 days. Khamenei's condolence message Monday over Raisi's death, declared five days of public mourning and acknowledged Mokhber had taken the role of acting president.

Mokhber had already begun receiving calls from officials and foreign governments in Raisi's absence, state media reported.

An emergency meeting of Iran's Cabinet was held as state media made the announcement Monday morning. The Cabinet issued a statement afterward pledging it would follow Raisi's path and that "with the help of God and the people, there will be no problem with management of the country."

A hard-liner who formerly led the country's judiciary, Raisi was viewed as a protégé of Khamenei and some analysts had suggested he could replace the 85-year-old leader after Khamenei's death or resignation.

With Raisi's death, the only other person so far suggested has been Mojtaba Khameini, the 55-year-old son to the supreme leader. However, some have raised concerns over the position being taken only for the third time since 1979 to a family member, particularly after the Islamic Revolution overthrew the hereditary Pahlavi monarchy of the shah.

Raisi won Iran's 2021 presidential election, a vote that saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history. Raisi is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 at the end of the bloody Iran-Iraq war.

Under Raisi, Iran now enriches uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels and hampers international inspections. Iran has armed Russia in its war on Ukraine, as well as launched a massive drone-and-missile attack on Israel amid its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It also has continued arming proxy groups in the Mideast, like Yemen's Houthi rebels and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, mass protests in the country have raged for years. The most recent involved the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been earlier detained over allegedly not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. The monthslong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

Raisi is the second Iranian president to die in office. In 1981, a bomb blast killed President Mohammad Ali Rajai in the chaotic days after the country's Islamic Revolution.

Ship that caused deadly Baltimore bridge collapse to be refloated and moved

BALTIMORE (AP) — The container ship that caused the deadly collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge is scheduled to be refloated on Monday and moved to a nearby marine terminal.

The Dali has remained at the collapse site since it lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns on March 26, killing six construction workers and snarling traffic into Baltimore Harbor.

High tide Monday morning is expected to bring the best conditions for crews to start refloating and transit work on the ship, according to a statement from the Key Bridge Response Unified Command.

Up to five tugboats will escort the Dali on its 2.5-mile (4-kilometer) path to the marine terminal. The work is expected to last at least 21 hours.

Crews conducted a controlled demolition on May 13 to break down the largest remaining span of the collapsed bridge.

The Dali experienced four electrical blackouts within about 10 hours before leaving the Port of Baltimore for Sri Lanka and hitting the bridge, according to a preliminary report issued by the National Transportation Safety Board.

Who is Iran's first vice president, Mohammad Mokhber, appointed acting president after crash?

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's first Vice President Mohammad Mokhber was appointed as acting president of the Islamic Republic on Monday after the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in the country's northwest.

Mokhber, 68, largely has been in the shadows compared to other politicians in Iran's Shiite theocracy. Raisi's death under the constitution thrust Mokhber into public view. He is expected to serve as caretaker president for some 50 days before mandatory presidential elections in Iran.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made the announcement of Mokhber's appointment in a condolence message he shared for Raisi's death in the crash Sunday. The helicopter was found Monday in northwestern Iran.

Despite his low-key public profile, Mokhber has held prominent positions within the country's power structure, particularly in its bonyads, or charitable foundations. Those groups were fueled by donations or assets seized after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, particularly those previously associated with Iran's shah or those in his government.

Mokhber oversaw a bonyad known in English as the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order, or EIKO, referring to the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The U.S. Treasury said the organization oversaw billions of dollars in assets as "a business juggernaut under the direct supervision of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei that has a stake in nearly every sector of the Iranian economy, including energy, telecommunications, and financial services."

"EIKO has systematically violated the rights of dissidents by confiscating land and property from opponents of the regime, including political opponents, religious minorities, and exiled Iranians," the Treasury said in 2021 in sanctioning Mokhber. The European Union also had sanctioned Mokhber for a time with others over concerns then about Iran's nuclear program.

As the head of EIKO, Mokhber oversaw an effort to make a COVID-19 vaccine during the height of the pandemic, pledging to make tens of millions of doses. Only a fraction of that ever made it to the public, without explanation.

Mokhber previously worked in banking and telecommunications. He also worked at the Mostazafan Foundation, another bonyad that's a major conglomerate that manages the country's mega-projects and businesses. While there, he found himself entangled in a bitter legal dispute between mobile phone service providers Turkcell and South Africa's MTN over potentially entering the Iranian market.

MTN ended up entering Iran. A Turkcell filing alleged Mokhber sought MTN's help in securing "certain defense equipment" in exchange for potentially working with it as opposed to Turkcell.

Mokhber used "improper influence up to and including negotiating with and on behalf of the Supreme Leader in MTN's favor," Turkcell later alleged in a legal filing. An MTN report later said there were no arms transfers, though it acknowledge Mokhber was a player in Iran's decision to go with MTN.

Iranian media reports suggest Mokhber, who holds a doctorate in international law, was crucial in Iranian efforts to bypass Western sanctions on its oil industry.

Mokhber has been a member of Iran's Expediency Council since 2022, which advises the supreme leader, as well as settles disputes between parliament and the Guardian Council, Iran's constitutional watchdog that also oversees the country's elections.

Mokhber was born Sept. 1, 1955, in Dezful in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan province to a clerical family. He served as an officer in the Revolutionary Guard's medical corps during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, according to the pressure group United Against Nuclear Iran.

"Mokhber used the vast wealth accumulated by EIKO — at the expense of the Iranian people—to reward regime insiders like himself," UANI said. "Managing the patronage network endeared him to the supreme leader, but at a cost."

Taiwan's new President Lai in his inauguration speech urges China to stop its military intimidation

By SIMINA MISTREANU and CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan's new president, Lai Ching-te, said in his inauguration speech Monday that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own territory.

"I hope that China will face the reality of (Taiwan)'s existence, respect the choices of the people of Taiwan, and in good faith, choose dialogue over confrontation," Lai said after being sworn into office.

Lai pledged to "neither yield nor provoke" Beijing and said he sought peace in relations with China. But he emphasized the island democracy is determined to defend itself "in the face of the many threats and attempts at infiltration from China."

Lai's party, the Democratic Progressive Party, doesn't seek independence from China but maintains that Taiwan is already a sovereign nation.

The Chinese office in charge of Taiwan affairs criticized Lai's inauguration speech as promoting "the fallacy of separatism," inciting confrontation and relying on foreign forces to seek independence.

"We will never tolerate or condone any form of 'Taiwan independence' separatist activities," said Chen Binhua, spokesperson of the Taiwan Affairs Office of China's State Council.

"No matter how the situation on the island changes, no matter who is in power, it cannot change the fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China ... and cannot stop the historical trend of the motherland's eventual reunification," Chen said.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce on Monday also announced sanctions against Boeing and two other defense companies for arms sales to Taiwan.

Lai, 64, takes over from Tsai Ing-wen, who led Taiwan through eight years of economic and social development despite the COVID-19 pandemic and China's escalating military threats. Beijing views Taiwan as a renegade province and has been upping its threats to annex it by force if necessary.

Lai is seen as inheriting Tsai's progressive policies, including universal health care, backing for higher education and support for minority groups, including making Taiwan the first place in Asia to recognize same-sex marriages.

In his inauguration speech, Lai pledged to bolster Taiwan's social safety net and help the island advance in fields such as artificial intelligence and green energy.

Lai, who was vice president during Tsai's second term, came across as more of a firebrand earlier in his career. In 2017, he described himself as a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan's independence," drawing Beijing's

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rebuke. He has since softened his stance and now supports maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait and the possibility of talks with Beijing.

Thousands of people gathered in front of the Presidential Office Building in Taipei for the inauguration ceremony. Donning white celebratory hats, they watched the swearing-in on large screens, followed by a military march and colorful performances featuring folk dancers, opera performers and rappers. Military helicopters flew in formation, carrying Taiwan's flag.

Lai accepted congratulations from fellow politicians and delegations from the 12 nations that maintain official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, as well as politicians from the U.S., Japan and various European states.

Lai, also known by his English name William, has vowed to continue his predecessor's push to maintain stability with China while beefing up Taiwan's security through imports of military equipment from close partner the U.S., the expansion of the defense industry with the manufacture of submarines and aircraft, and the reinforcing of regional partnerships with unofficial allies such as the U.S., Japan, South Korea and the Philippines.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken congratulated Lai on his inauguration. "We look forward to working with President Lai and across Taiwan's political spectrum to advance our shared interests and values, deepen our longstanding unofficial relationship, and maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," Blinken said in a statement from his office.

The U.S. doesn't formally recognize Taiwan as a country but is bound by its own laws to provide the island with the means to defend itself.

Lai's relatively conciliatory tone will come across as reassuring to foreign governments that may have been concerned about his past reputation as a firebrand, said Danny Russell, vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute.

"There is virtually nothing that Lai could have said, short of 'unconditional surrender,' that would satisfy Beijing," he said.

Although Lai signaled he would maintain the overall direction of Tsai's policy regarding Beijing, he struck a more sovereignty-affirming tone in his speech, said Amanda Hsiao, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group.

"This likely fits within Beijing's low expectations of Lai, so it won't necessarily change their response," Hsiao said. "China was always going to respond negatively to Lai."

During her tenure, Tsai oversaw a controversial pension and labor reform and extended the military conscription length to one year. She also kickstarted a military modernization drive.

Tsai's leadership during the pandemic split public opinion, with most admiring Taiwan's initial ability to keep the virus largely outside its borders but criticizing the lack of investment in rapid testing as the pandemic progressed.

London court to decide whether WikiLeaks founder Assange is extradited to the US

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Julian Assange faced a key hearing Monday in the High Court in London that could end with him being sent to the U.S. to face espionage charges, or could provide him another chance to appeal his extradition.

The WikiLeaks founder, who has spent the past five years in a British prison, was not in court to hear his fate being debated. He did not attend for health reasons, his lawyer Edward Fitzgerald said.

The outcome of the hearing will depend on how much weight judges give to assurances U.S. officials have provided that Assange's rights won't be trampled if he goes on trial.

In March, two judges rejected the bulk of Assange's arguments but said he could take his case to the Court of Appeal unless the U.S. guaranteed he would not face the death penalty if extradited and would have the same free speech protections as a U.S. citizen.

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The court said that if Assange, who is an Australian citizen, couldn't rely on the First Amendment then it was arguable his extradition would be incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, which also provides free speech and media protections.

The U.S. has provided those reassurances, though Assange's legal team and supporters argue they are not good enough to rely on to send him to the U.S. federal court system.

The U.S. said Assange could seek to rely on the rights and protections of the First Amendment but that a decision on that would ultimately be up to a judge. In the past, the U.S. said it would argue at trial that Assange is not entitled to the constitutional protection because he is not a U.S. citizen.

"The U.S. has limited itself to blatant weasel words claiming that Julian can 'seek to raise' the First Amendment if extradited," his wife, Stella Assange, said. "The diplomatic note does nothing to relieve our family's extreme distress about his future — his grim expectation of spending the rest of his life in isolation in U.S. prison for publishing award-winning journalism."

Assange, 52, has been indicted on 17 espionage charges and one charge of computer misuse over his website's publication of a trove of classified U.S. documents almost 15 years ago. American prosecutors allege that Assange encouraged and helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to steal diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks published.

Commuters emerging from a Tube stop near the courthouse couldn't miss a large sign bearing Assange's photo and the words, "Publishing is not a crime. War crimes are." Scores of supporters gathered outside the neo-Gothic Royal Courts of Justice chanting "Free Julian Assange" and "Press freedom, Assange freedom."

Some held a large white banner aimed at President Joe Biden, exhorting: "Let him go Joe."

Assange's lawyers say he could face up to 175 years in prison if convicted, though American authorities have said any sentence would likely be much shorter.

Assange's family and supporters say his physical and mental health have suffered during more than a decade of legal battles, which includes seven years spent inside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London from 2012 until 2019. He has spent the past five years in a British high-security prison.

Assange's lawyers argued in February that he was a journalist who exposed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sending him to the U.S., they said, would expose him to a politically motivated prosecution and risk a "flagrant denial of justice."

The U.S. government says Assange's actions went way beyond those of a journalist gathering information, amounting to an attempt to solicit, steal and indiscriminately publish classified government documents.

If Assange prevails Monday, it would set the stage for an appeal process likely to extend what has already been a long legal saga.

If the court accepts the word of the U.S., it would mark the end of Assange's legal challenges in the U.K., though it's unclear what would immediately follow.

His legal team is prepared to ask the European Court of Human Rights to intervene. But his supporters fear Assange could be transferred before the court in Strasbourg, France, could halt his removal.

Judges Victoria Sharp and Jeremy Johnson may also postpone issuing a decision.

If Assange loses in court, he still may have another shot at freedom.

Biden said last month that he was considering a request from Australia to drop the case and let Assange return to his home country.

Officials provided no other details but Stella Assange said it was "a good sign" and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the comment was encouraging.

Michael Cohen to face more grilling as Trump's hush money trial enters its final stretch

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, JENNIFER PELTZ, JAKE OFFENHARTZ and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's hush money trial is heading into the final stretch, with prosecutors' last and star witness back on the stand Monday for more grilling before the former president's lawyers get their chance to put on a case.

The landmark trial will kick back off in Manhattan with more defense cross-examination of former Trump attorney Michael Cohen, whose pivotal testimony last week directly tied Trump to the alleged hush money scheme. He's the last prosecution witness and it's not yet clear whether Trump's attorneys will call any witnesses, let alone the presumptive Republican presidential nominee himself.

Defense lawyers already have questioned Cohen for hours about his criminal history and past lies to paint him as a serial fabulist who is on a revenge campaign aimed at taking down Trump.

After more than four weeks of testimony about sex, money, tabloid machinations and the details of Trump's company recordkeeping, jurors could begin deliberating as soon as this week to decide whether Trump is guilty of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in the first criminal trial of a former U.S. president.

The charges stem from internal Trump Organization records where payments to Cohen were marked as legal expenses, when prosecutors say they were really reimbursements for a \$130,000 hush money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels.

Trump has pleaded not guilty. His lawyers say there was nothing criminal about the Daniels deal or the way Cohen was paid.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office is expected to rest its case once Cohen is off the stand, but prosecutors would have an opportunity to call rebuttal witnesses if Trump's lawyers put on witnesses of their own.

The judge has told lawyers to be prepared for closing arguments as early as Tuesday, though the timing will depend on whether the defense calls any witnesses, which it is not obligated to do. Defense lawyers said they have not decided whether Trump will testify.

Defense attorneys generally are reluctant to put their clients on the witness stand and open them up to intense questioning by prosecutors, as it often does more harm than good.

Cohen is prosecutors' most important witness, but he is also vulnerable to attack.

The now-disbarred attorney has admitted on the witness stand to previously lying under oath and other falsehoods, many of which he claims were meant to protect Trump. Cohen served prison time after pleading guilty to various federal charges, including lying to Congress and a bank and engaging in campaign finance violations related to the hush money scheme.

And he has made millions of dollars off critical books about the former president, whom he regularly slams on social media in often profane terms.

Cohen told jurors that Trump was intimately involved in the scheme to pay off Daniels to prevent her from going public late in his 2016 presidential campaign with claims of a 2006 sexual encounter with Trump. Trump says nothing sexual happened between them.

Cohen told jurors about meetings and conversations with Trump, including one in 2017 in which Cohen says he, Trump and then-Trump Organization finance chief Allen Weisselberg discussed how Cohen would recoup his outlay for the Daniels payment and how the reimbursement would be billed as "legal services."

Known for his hot temper, Cohen has remained mostly calm on the witness stand despite sometimes heated interrogation by the defense about his own misdeeds and the allegations in the case.

A key moment came Thursday, when defense attorney Todd Blanche accused Cohen of lying about the purpose of a phone call to Trump's bodyguard days before Cohen wired Daniels' lawyer \$130,000.

Cohen told jurors he talked to Trump on that call about the hush money payment. Blanche confronted Cohen with text messages to argue that Cohen had actually been talking to Trump's bodyguard about

harassing calls from a teenage prankster.

"That was a lie. You did not talk to President Trump on that night... You can admit it?" Blanche asked.

"No, sir, I can't," Cohen replied, saying he believed he also spoke to Trump about the Daniels deal.

Trump's lawyers have said they may call Bradley A. Smith, a Republican law professor who was appointed by former President Bill Clinton to the Federal Election Commission, to refute the prosecution's contention that the hush money payments amounted to campaign-finance violations.

Judge Juan M. Merchan has limited what Smith can address, however, and the defense could decide not to call him, after all.

There are often guardrails around expert testimony on legal matters, on the basis that it's up to a judge — not an expert hired by one side or the other — to instruct jurors on applicable laws in a case.

Merchan has ruled that Smith can give general background on the FEC, the laws it enforces and the definitions of such terms as "campaign contribution." But he can't interpret how federal campaign finance laws apply to the facts of Trump's case or opine on whether the former president's alleged actions violate those laws.

US pediatricians group reverses decades-old ban on breastfeeding for those with HIV

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

People with HIV can breastfeed their babies, as long as they are taking medications that effectively suppress the virus that causes AIDS, a top U.S. pediatricians' group said Monday in a sharp policy change.

The new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics reverses recommendations it had in place since the start of the HIV epidemic in the 1980s.

It recognizes that routinely prescribed drugs can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV via breast milk to less than 1%, said Dr. Lisa Abuogi, a pediatric HIV expert at the University of Colorado and lead author of the report.

"The medications are so good now and the benefits for mom and baby are so important that we are at a point where it is important to engage in shared decision-making," Abuogi said.

The drugs, known as antiretroviral therapy, don't eliminate all risk of transmitting HIV through breast milk. Avoiding breastfeeding is the only certain way to prevent spreading the virus, Abuogi said.

In addition, parents must breastfeed exclusively for the babies' first six months because research shows that switching between breast milk and formula can disrupt an infant's gut in ways that increase the risk of HIV infection.

About 5,000 people who have HIV give birth in the U.S. each year. Nearly all take drugs to suppress the virus to very low levels, Abuogi said, though viral levels can rebound if they don't stay on them.

Before the medications became widely available starting a decade ago, about 30% of HIV infections transmitted from moms to babies occurred during breastfeeding, said Dr. Lynne Mofenson, an adviser to the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. In the early 1990s, about 2,000 infections occurred in U.S. infants each year. Today, it's fewer than 30.

The AAP policy comes more than a year after the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reversed longstanding recommendations against breastfeeding by people with HIV. That guidance said people who have consistent viral suppression should be counseled on their options. It also emphasizes that health care providers shouldn't alert child protective services agencies if a parent with HIV seeks to breastfeed.

The goal is listening to patients "and not blaming or shaming them," said Dr. Lynn Yee, a Northwestern University professor of obstetrics and gynecology who helped draft the NIH guidance.

Breastfeeding provides ideal nutrition for babies and protects them against illnesses and conditions such as obesity and Type 2 diabetes, research shows. Nursing also reduces the mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure.

The World Health Organization has recommended since 2010 that women with HIV in developing countries breastfeed their infants and have access to antiretroviral therapy. The guidance weighed the risk of infants acquiring HIV through breastfeeding and the risk of babies dying from malnutrition, diarrhea and pneumonia in places where safe replacements for breast milk aren't available.

In developed nations, however, experts had recommended against breastfeeding because the wide availability of safe water, formula and human donor milk could eliminate the risk of HIV transmission, Yee said. That frustrated people with HIV who were flatly refused the option of nursing.

Ci Ci Covin, 36, of Philadelphia, said she was diagnosed with HIV at age 20 and not permitted to breastfeed her first child, Zion, now 13.

"I couldn't understand how come my sister that lives in a place like Kenya, who looks just like me with the same color brown skin, was given the option to breastfeed and how my option was starkly no," she said.

Not being able to nurse her son sent Covin into a spiral of postpartum depression, she said. When she became pregnant with her now 2-year-old daughter, Zuri, her health care team helped her successfully breastfeed for seven months. Covin took her prescriptions as directed and also gave the baby drugs to prevent infection.

"Breast milk has everything in it that my baby would need," Covin said. "That's a beautiful thing."

Abuogi said the AAP report provides crucial guidance for pediatricians, nurses and lactation specialists who work directly with children and families.

Some providers were already helping people treated for HIV to nurse their babies, despite the earlier recommendations. The new guidance should expand the practice, hopefully quickly, Abuogi said.

"This is a unique situation because it's not just doctors and providers who are changing," Abuogi said. "Our patients are pushing this as well."

Ed Dwight, America's first Black astronaut candidate, finally goes to space 60 years later

VAN HORN, Texas (AP) — Ed Dwight, America's first Black astronaut candidate, finally rocketed into space 60 years later, flying with Jeff Bezos' rocket company on Sunday.

Dwight was an Air Force pilot when President John F. Kennedy championed him as a candidate for NASA's early astronaut corps. But he wasn't picked for the 1963 class.

Dwight, now 90, went through a few minutes of weightlessness with five other passengers aboard the Blue Origin capsule as it skimmed space on a roughly 10-minute flight. He called it "a life changing experience."

"I thought I really didn't need this in my life," Dwight said shortly after exiting the capsule. "But, now, I need it in my life I am ecstatic."

The brief flight from West Texas made Dwight the new record-holder for oldest person in space — nearly two months older than "Star Trek" actor William Shatner was when he went up in 2021.

It was Blue Origin's first crew launch in nearly two years. The company was grounded following a 2022 accident in which the booster came crashing down but the capsule full of experiments safely parachuted to the ground. Flights resumed last December, but with no one aboard. This was Blue Origin's seventh time flying space tourists.

Dwight, a sculptor from Denver, was joined by four business entrepreneurs from the U.S. and France and a retired accountant. Their ticket prices were not disclosed; Dwight's seat was sponsored in part by the nonprofit Space for Humanity.

Dwight was among the potential astronauts the Air Force recommended to NASA. But he wasn't chosen for the 1963 class, which included eventual Gemini and Apollo astronauts, including Apollo 11's Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins. NASA didn't select Black astronauts until 1978, and Guion Bluford became the first African American in space in 1983. Three years earlier, the Soviets launched the first Black astronaut, Arnaldo Tamayo Mendez, a Cuban of African descent.

After leaving the military in 1966, Dwight joined IBM and started a construction company before earning a master's degree in sculpture in the late 1970s. He's since dedicated himself to art. His sculptures focus

on Black history and include memorials and monuments across the country. Several of his sculptures have flown into space.

Helicopter crash that killed Iran's president and others could reverberate across the Middle East

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The helicopter crash in which Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and other officials were killed is likely to reverberate across the Middle East, where Iran's influence runs wide and deep.

That's because Iran has spent decades supporting armed groups and militants in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the Palestinian territories, allowing it to project power and potentially deter attacks from the United States or Israel, the sworn enemies of its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Tensions have never been higher than they were last month, when Iran under Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles at Israel in response to an air-strike on an Iranian Consulate in Syria that killed two Iranian generals and five officers.

Israel, with the help of the United States, Britain, Jordan and others, intercepted nearly all the projectiles. In response, Israel apparently launched its own strike against an air defense radar system in the Iranian city of Isfahan, causing no casualties but sending an unmistakable message.

The sides have waged a shadow war of covert operations and cyberattacks for years, but the exchange of fire in April was their first direct military confrontation.

The ongoing war between Israel and Hamas has drawn in other Iranian allies, with each attack and counterattack threatening to set off a wider war.

It's a combustible mix that could be ignited by unexpected events, such as Sunday's deadly crash.

A BITTER RIVALRY WITH ISRAEL

Israel has long viewed Iran as its greatest threat because of Tehran's controversial nuclear program, its ballistic missiles and its support for armed groups sworn to Israel's destruction.

Iran views itself as the chief patron of Palestinian resistance to Israeli rule, and top officials for years have called for Israel to be wiped off the map.

Raisi, who was a hard-liner viewed as a protégé and possible successor of Khamenei, chastised Israel last month, saying "the Zionist Israeli regime has been committing oppression against the people of Palestine for 75 years."

"First of all we have to expel the usurpers, secondly we should make them pay the cost for all the damages they have created, and thirdly, we have to bring to justice the oppressor and usurper," he said.

Israel is believed to have carried out numerous attacks over the years targeting senior Iranian military officials and nuclear scientists.

There is no evidence Israel was involved in Sunday's helicopter crash, and Israeli officials have not commented on the incident.

Arab countries on the Persian Gulf have also long viewed Iran with suspicion, a key factor in the decision of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain to normalize relations with Israel in 2020, and of Saudi Arabia to consider such a move.

A PROXY WAR STRETCHING FROM LEBANON TO YEMEN

Iran has provided financial and other support over the years to the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which led the Oct. 7 attack into Israel that triggered the Gaza war, and the smaller but more radical Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which took part in it. But there is no evidence that Iran was directly involved in the attack.

Since the start of the war, Iran's leaders have expressed solidarity with the Palestinians. Their allies in the region have gone much further.

Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, Iran's most militarily advanced proxy, has waged a low-intensity conflict with Israel since the start of the Gaza war. The two sides have traded strikes on a near-daily basis

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along the Israel-Lebanon border, forcing tens of thousands of people on both sides to flee.

So far, however, the conflict has not boiled over into a full-blown war that would be disastrous for both countries.

Iran-backed militias in Syria and Iraq launched repeated attacks on U.S. bases in the opening months of the war but pulled back after U.S. retaliatory strikes for a drone attack that killed three American soldiers in January.

Yemen's Houthi rebels, another ally of Iran, have repeatedly targeted international shipping in what they portray as a blockade of Israel. Those strikes, which often target ships with no apparent links to Israel, have also drawn U.S.-led retaliation.

BEYOND THE MIDDLE EAST

Iran's influence extends beyond the Middle East and its rivalry with Israel.

Israel and Western countries have long suspected Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons in the guise of a peaceful atomic program in what they see as a threat to non-proliferation everywhere.

Then-President Donald Trump's withdrawal from a landmark nuclear pact between Iran and world powers in 2018, and his imposition of crushing sanctions, led Iran to gradually abandon all the limits placed on its program by the deal.

These days, Iran is enriching uranium to up to 60% purity — near weapons-grade levels of 90%. Surveillance cameras installed by the U.N. nuclear agency have been disrupted, and Iran has barred some of the agency's most experienced inspectors. Iran has always insisted its nuclear program is for purely peaceful purposes, but the United States and others believe it had an active nuclear weapons program until 2003.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear-armed power in the Middle East but has never acknowledged having such weapons.

Iran has also emerged as a key ally of Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, and is widely accused of supplying exploding drones that have wreaked havoc on Ukraine's cities. Raisi himself denied the allegations last fall in an interview with The Associated Press, saying Iran had not supplied such weapons since the outbreak of hostilities in February 2022.

Iranian officials have made contradictory comments about the drones, while U.S. and European officials say the sheer number being used in the war in Ukraine shows that the flow of such weapons has intensified since the war began.

Biden tells Morehouse graduates that scenes in Gaza from the Israel-Hamas war break his heart, too

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, MATT BROWN and BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — President Joe Biden on Sunday offered his most direct recognition of U.S. students' anguish over the Israel-Hamas war, telling graduates of historically Black Morehouse College that he heard their voices of protest and that scenes from the conflict in Gaza break his heart, too.

"I support peaceful nonviolent protest," he told students at the all-male college, some of whom wore Palestinian scarves known as keffiyehs around their shoulders on top of their black graduation gowns. "Your voices should be heard, and I promise you I hear them."

Biden said there's a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, "that's why I've called for an immediate cease-fire to stop the fighting" and bring home hostages still being held by Hamas after its militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7. The president's comments came near the end of a commencement address in which he also reflected on American democracy and his role in safeguarding it.

"It's one of the hardest, most complicated problems in the world," Biden said. "There's nothing easy about it. I know it angers and frustrates many of you, including my family. But most of all I know it breaks your heart. It breaks mine as well."

To date, Biden had limited his public comments around the protests on U.S. college campuses to upholding the right to peaceful protest.

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The speech — and a separate one he gave later Sunday in Detroit — are part of a burst of outreach to Black constituents by the Democratic president, whose support among these voters has softened since their strong backing helped put him in the Oval Office.

Biden spent much of the approximately 30-minute speech focused on the problems at home. He condemned Donald Trump's rhetoric on immigrants and noted that the class of 2024 entered college during the COVID-19 pandemic and following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man killed by a Minneapolis police officer. Biden said it was natural for them, and others, to wonder whether the democracy "you hear about actually works for you."

"If Black men are being killed in the street. What is democracy?" he asked. "The trail of broken promises that still leave Black communities behind. What is democracy? If you have to be 10 times better than anyone else to get a fair shot."

Anti-war protests have roiled America's college campuses. Columbia University canceled its main commencement ceremony. At Morehouse, the announcement that Biden would be the commencement speaker drew some backlash among the faculty and those who oppose the president's handling of the war. Some Morehouse alumni circulated an online letter condemning administrators for inviting Biden and solicited signatures to pressure Morehouse President David Thomas to rescind it.

The letter claimed that Biden's approach to Israel amounted to support of genocide in Gaza and was out of step with the pacifism expressed by Martin Luther King Jr., Morehouse's most famous graduate.

The Hamas attack on southern Israel killed 1,200 people. Israel's offensive has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to health officials in the territory.

In the end, there were no disruptions of Morehouse's commencement while applause for Biden mostly was subdued. At least seven graduates and one faculty member sat with their backs turned during Biden's address, and another student draped himself in a Palestinian flag. Protesters near the ceremony carried signs that said "Free Palestine," "Save the Children" and "Ceasefire Now" as police on bikes kept watch.

On stage behind the president as he spoke, academics unfurled a Congolese flag. The African country has been mired in a civil war, and many racial justice advocates have called for greater attention to the conflict as well as American help in ending the violence.

During his speech, valedictorian DeAngelo Jeremiah Fletcher, of Chicago, said it was his duty to speak on the war in Gaza and recognize that both Palestinians and Israelis have suffered. He called for an "immediate and permanent cease-fire in the Gaza Strip."

Graduate Kingsley John said, "the temperature on campus was expected given we had the president of the United States come and speak." John said he stood "in solidarity" with his classmates and that Biden "seemed to be reflective and open to hear the feedback."

Morehouse awarded Biden an honorary doctor of laws degree. After accepting the honor, he joked that, "I'm not going home" as chants of "four more years" broke out in the audience. Biden then flew to Detroit to address thousands attending the local NAACP chapter's annual Freedom Fund dinner.

Georgia and Michigan are among a handful of states that will help decide November's expected rematch between Biden and Trump. Biden narrowly won Georgia and Michigan in 2020 and he needs strong Black voter turnout in Atlanta and Detroit if he hopes to repeat in November.

Biden spent part of the past week reaching out to Black constituents. He highlighted key moments in the Civil Rights Movement, from the 70th anniversary of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* that outlawed racial segregation in public schools to the Little Rock Nine, who helped integrate a public school in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. He also met with members of the "Divine Nine" Black fraternities and sororities.

At the NAACP dinner, Biden told a largely Black crowd that numbered into the thousands that Trump wants to pardon those who were convicted of crimes during the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and calls them "patriots." He suggested that Trump would not have been so kind had they been people of color.

"Let me ask you, what do you think he would've done on Jan. 6 if Black Americans had stormed the Capitol?" Biden asked. "What do you think? I can only imagine."

Asked for a response, Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt blasted Biden's remarks as "preposterous," describing them as a "desperate" attempt to divert attention from Biden's own record of weak poll numbers, high inflation and "violent protests and migrant crimes" across the country.

The speech gave Biden a chance to reach thousands of people in Wayne County, which historically has voted overwhelmingly Democratic but has shown signs of resistance to his reelection bid.

The county also holds one of the largest Arab American populations in the nation, predominantly in the city of Dearborn. Leaders there were at the forefront of an "uncommitted" effort that received over 100,000 votes in the state's Democratic primary and spread across the country.

A protest rally and march against Biden's visit took place in Dearborn in the afternoon.

In Detroit, guests at the NAACP dinner were met by over 200 pro-Palestinian protesters outside the entrance to the convention center. They waved Palestinian flags, held signs calling for a cease-fire and chanted "free, free Palestine."

"Until Joe Biden listens to his key constituents, he's risking handing the presidency to Donald Trump," said Lexi Zeidan, a protest leader who help spearhead a protest effort that resulted in over 100,000 people voting "uncommitted" in February's Democratic primary.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, a hard-line diplomat, dies in helicopter crash

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, a hard-liner close to the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard who confronted the West while also overseeing indirect talks with the U.S. over the country's nuclear program, died in the helicopter crash that also killed the country's president, state media reported Monday. He was 60.

Amirabdollahian represented the hard-line shift in Iran after the collapse of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers after then-U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord. He served under President Ebrahim Raisi, a protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and followed their policies.

However, Amirabdollahian also was involved in efforts to reach a détente with regional rival Saudi Arabia in 2023, a move eclipsed months later by tensions that arose over the Israel-Hamas war. But he remained close to the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, once praising the late Gen. Qassem Soleimani, slain in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad in 2020.

"You should thank the Islamic Republic and Qassem Soleimani because Soleimani has contributed to world peace and security," Amirabdollahian once said. "If there was no Islamic Republic, your metro stations and gathering centers in Brussels, London and Paris would not be safe."

Amirabdollahian served in the Foreign Ministry under Ali Akbar Salehi in 2011 through 2013. He then returned for several years under Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who was a key player in the nuclear deal reached under the administration of the relative moderate President Hassan Rouhani.

But Zarif and Amirabdollahian had a falling out, likely over internal differences in Iran's foreign policy. Zarif offered him the ambassadorship to Oman, still a strategically important post given the sultanate long serving as an interlocutor between Iran and the West. But Amirabdollahian refused.

He became foreign minister under Raisi with his election in 2021. He backed the Iranian government position, even as mass protests swept the country in 2022 after the death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been earlier detained over allegedly not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. The monthlong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

During the Israel-Hamas war, he met with foreign officials and the leader of Hamas. He also threatened retaliation against Israel and praised an April attack on Israel. He also oversaw Iran's response to a brief

exchange of airstrikes with Iran's nuclear-armed neighbor Pakistan and worked on diplomacy with the Taliban in Afghanistan, with whom Iran had tense relations.

Amirabdollahian is survived by his wife and two children.

Edwards leads Wolves back from 20-point deficit for 98-90 win over defending NBA champion Nuggets

By ARNIE STAPLETON AP Sports Writer

DENVER (AP) — Anthony Edwards overcame a slow start and the Timberwolves roared back from a 20-point second-half deficit to eliminate the reigning NBA champion Denver Nuggets 98-90 in a Game 7 Minnesota masterpiece on Sunday night.

The Timberwolves overcame a 15-point halftime deficit — the largest comeback in a Game 7 in NBA playoff history — behind Edwards, who had just four points, no rebounds and three assists at halftime but finished with 16 points, eight boards and seven assists.

His impact belied his 6-of-24 shooting that included a 2-for-10 3-point performance.

"It was tough, man, because I couldn't find myself, my rhythm tonight," Edwards said. "So I just had to trust my teammates. ... I just had to make the right plays throughout the rest of the game. I did that and my teammates made shots. Big shout-out to those guys."

As Minnesota took control late, over and over Edwards denied Jamal Murray, who had 24 points by halftime and finished with 35.

"There's more ways to win the basketball game when you're just not an offensive player," Edwards said. "I'm not one-dimensional. I'm not just a guy who can score. I'm a guy who — whoever their best guard is, I can go lock him down. I feel like I did that on Jamal in the fourth quarter — in the third quarter and fourth quarter — and that's what turned the game around."

As the seconds ticked away, Edwards dribbled the ball upcourt and took time to wave good-bye to the stunned crowd at Ball Arena, where the Nuggets' 33-8 record this season was second-best in the league but where the Wolves won three times this series.

The Wolves, who got 23 points each from Karl-Anthony Towns and Jaden McDaniels, advanced to the Western Conference finals for the first time in exactly 20 years. They'll face the Dallas Mavericks beginning Wednesday night at Target Center.

"It feels great," Wolves center Rudy Gobert said. "Beating a team like they are, an incredible team, a championship team, with the best player in the world, it feels good."

Behind Murray's fantastic start, the Nuggets raced to a 53-38 halftime lead and Murray's 3-pointer with 10:50 left in the third pushed Denver's lead to 58-38.

The Wolves turned to their defense, the NBA's stingiest, to get back into the game, and they closed the quarter on a 28-9 run to pull to 67-66 heading into the fourth.

Gobert gave the Wolves their first lead since the first quarter with a bucket to start the fourth and when Towns picked up his fifth foul, Naz Reid, the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year, was spectacular at both ends of the floor to keep Minnesota ahead.

In one crucial stretch that started with Minnesota ahead 85-82, Reid had two free throws and a dunk before feeding Edwards for a back-breaking 3-pointer that put the Wolves ahead 92-82 with three minutes left.

Murray, coming off a 4-for-18 shooting performance in the Nuggets' 115-70 loss in Game 6 — the largest ever in the playoffs by a reigning champion — made 13 of 27 shots for 35 points. Jokic added 34 points to go with 19 rebounds but the duo got little help as no other Denver players reached double figures in points.

"So much was being placed on their shoulders," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "We're expecting Jokic and Jamal to continue pulling rabbits out of their hat, man, and somebody else has got to give some help."

This marked the Timberwolves' first Game 7 since beating Sacramento in the second round exactly 20 years earlier. That's the only other time they reached the conference finals. The Nuggets were playing in

their fifth Game 7 in the last six seasons and were seeking their third trip to the conference finals in that span.

"That was a hell of a series," Malone said. "They gave us all we could handle and they ended up winning Game 7 on our home court, which is a tough one to swallow. But we'll be back."

The Nuggets became the fifth consecutive defending champion to fail to reach the conference finals. The last one to do it was Golden State in 2019 when the Warriors reached the NBA Finals only to lose to Toronto.

"The one thing I keep on going back to right now is I consider the San Antonio Spurs a dynasty and they never won back-to-back," Malone said. "So losing, the hurt of it, the pain of it, it helped us win our first championship. Can we use this year?"

Murray thinks so.

"For sure," he said. "It's back to being the hunter."

Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader heads to reelection as competitors concede early

By MARTÍN ADAMES ALCÁNTARA & MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader is headed to a second term following Sunday's general elections, declaring victory after his top competitors conceded early in the night as he held a strong lead in early vote tallies.

The outcome reinforced both Abinader's anti-corruption agenda, the government's crackdown along its shared border with Haiti and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of migrants fleeing the Dominican Republic's violence-stricken neighbor. Such policies are only likely to continue in his next term.

Abinader, one of the most popular leaders in the Americas, and the early results showed him with nearly 60% of the votes. His competitors, former President Leonel Fernández and Mayor Abel Martínez, conceded early in the night.

Abinader supporters in his campaign headquarters started celebrating early on, blowing horns and cheering. In his victory speech, Abinader delivered a nationalistic message promising change and anti-corruption measures. He notably spoke little about the government's harsh measures on Haitian migrants and the crisis in its island neighbor.

"The message from the results is clear, the changes that we've made are going to be irreversible," Abinader said. "In the Dominican Republic, the best is yet to come."

While opposition parties reported a number of small irregularities, voting largely ran smoothly. Many of the 8 million eligible voters are still traumatized by an electoral authority decision to suspend the 2020 municipal elections due to a technical glitch, prompting what appears to be high voter turnout.

The president's Modern Revolutionary Movement was also expected to win a majority in the Dominican Republic's congress, which would allow him to push through changes to the constitution. It also would allow him to further his anti-corruption and economic agendas, which have earned him the approval of many in the Caribbean nation.

Willy Soto, a 21-year old economics student, was among those in the crowd. He said Abinader's anti-corruption measures and economic and educational reforms gave him hope for the future of the country long plagued by political corruption.

"We young people, we see a different kind of government," Soto said.

Much of the president's popularity, however, has been fueled by the crackdown on Haitian migrants.

The Dominican Republic has long taken a hard line with Haitian migrants, but such policies have ramped up since Haiti entered a free fall following the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. As gangs have terrorized Haitians, the Dominican government has built a Trump-like border wall along the 250-mile (400-kilometer) border. He has also repeatedly urged the United Nations to send an international force to Haiti, saying such action "cannot wait any longer."

Soto also voiced approval for the migrant crackdown. While saying he knows "the policies against (Hai-

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tians) are very strict" and many migrants worried Abinader would win, he said the steps the president has taken are important in guaranteeing the security of Dominicans like him.

"This isn't a problem that gets resolved one day to the next," Soto said. "The policies he's implemented, how he's cracked down, closed the border and built a wall, I feel like it's a good initiative to control the problem of Haitian migration."

While the policy is popular among Dominicans, it has drawn sharp criticisms from human rights groups that call it racist and a violation of international law. The government has rejected calls to build refugee camps for those fleeing Haiti's violence, and it conducted mass deportations of 175,000 Haitians last year, according to government figures.

"These collective expulsions are a clear violation of the Dominican Republic's international obligations and put the lives and rights of these people at risk. Forced returns to Haiti must end," Ana Piquer, Americas director at Amnesty International, wrote in an April report.

Now, as Abinader enters his second term, the president has promised to finish the wall dividing the two countries. He is also likely to continue deporting people back into Haiti at a time that violence has spiked.

The thought of continued crackdowns has stirred fear in many Haitians, both those who have recently fled the crisis and those who have long called the Dominican Republic home.

Dominicans like Juan Rene said they, too, have been left suffering the consequences.

Rene and his cousin sat at the gates of a detention center on the outskirts of the country's capital this past week, pleading for authorities to help his partner, Deborah Dimanche.

Dimanche, a Haitian who has been living in the Dominican Republic for two years, was detained by immigration officers while on her way to work. She was taken to the detention center and has not been allowed to communicate with her loved ones as she faces deportation.

Trying unsuccessfully to talk with camp officials, Rene spoke with an increasing sense of helplessness.

"They said they won't hand her over, that they're going to get rid of her and send her to Haiti," Rene said. "There's no one to even talk to."

Power restored to most hit by deadly Houston storm with full service expected by Wednesday

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston area residents affected by deadly storms last week received some good news as officials said power was restored Sunday to a majority of the hundreds of thousands who had been left in the dark and without air conditioning during hot and humid weather.

The widespread destruction of Thursday's storms left at least seven dead and brought much of Houston to a standstill. Thunderstorms and hurricane-force winds tore through the city, reducing businesses and other structures to piles of debris, uprooting trees and shattering glass from downtown skyscrapers.

A tornado also touched down near the northwest Houston suburb of Cypress.

By Sunday evening, 88% of customers in the Houston area had their power restored, said Paul Lock, a spokesperson for CenterPoint Energy.

"We expect everyone to be back on by end of business Wednesday," Lock said.

More than 240,000 homes and businesses in Texas remained without electricity Sunday evening, mostly in the Houston area. More than 1,780 customers remained without power in Louisiana, which also was hit by strong winds and a suspected tornado.

CenterPoint Energy said 2,000 employees and more than 5,000 contractors were working in the Houston area to restore power.

"We understand the higher temperatures we are experiencing across Houston and surrounding communities make getting the lights and air conditioning back on even more important," Lynnae Wilson, CenterPoint's senior vice president of electric business, said in a statement.

At one of five cooling centers for people still without power in their homes, residents took shelter from the heat at a community center in the Cloverleaf neighborhood and wondered when their power would

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come back. At least 15 community centers were set to serve as cooling centers in the Houston area on Monday.

Carolina Sierra and her 6-year-old son, Derek, enjoyed the air conditioning for a couple of hours Sunday. She said they have been without electricity since the storm hit Thursday, and their home has been stifling.

Derek passed the time coloring a picture of a dragon while his mother charged her cellphone and a portable lamp they planned to use Sunday night if the power was still not restored. Sierra said she gives her son multiple baths to try to keep him cool but he tosses and turns at night and struggles to sleep.

"We are desperate," Sierra said. "We hardly sleep at night because of the heat."

Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia stood outside the center Sunday, helping load water and ice onto vehicles while offering words of encouragement to residents still waiting for power to be restored. Nearly 500 vehicles stood in line at the center on Sunday to get water and ice.

"We are seeing a bit of the recovery come through," Garcia said. "But we can't see enough of it fast enough."

Disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and loans from the Small Business Administration were on the way, said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, the top elected official in the county where Houston is located. The federal assistance, which can help pay for temporary housing and repairs, will help residents affected by last week's storms as well as by flooding from heavy rainfall in late April and early May in parts of Houston, Harris County and several counties north of Houston.

Mayor John Whitmire said a six-block area in downtown Houston would be closed Monday to allow crews to continue repairs after various high-rise buildings had their windows blown out.

Residents broke into cheers as lights and air conditioning kicked on at the eight-story Houston Heights Tower, a senior housing facility, Sunday morning. The nearly 200 residents had been living on emergency power since Thursday evening, with generators providing enough electricity to run just one of the building's elevators and a handful of fans in the community room, leaving apartments in darkness.

Volunteers and city workers had been ensuring residents received a steady supply of water, food and essentials like toilet paper.

"It just goes to show you how people come together," resident Joseph Torregrossa said, choking back tears.

The National Weather Service said in a post on the social platform X that residents should expect "sunny, hot and increasingly humid days" in the Houston area. Highs of about 90 degrees (32 Celsius) were expected this week, with heat indexes likely approaching 102 degrees (39 Celsius) by midweek.

With the temperature reaching 91 degrees (33 Celsius) Sunday afternoon, Lisa Reed sat in a folding chair outside her home in the Cloverleaf neighborhood because she was still without electricity. A volunteer crew of AFL-CIO apprentices who had reached out to Garcia's precinct office had just cut up a large tree in her front yard that had come crashing down on two vehicles in her driveway and stacked the wood neatly in two large piles.

Reed said no home on her street, where branches and other debris were piled along the sidewalk, escaped damage from last week's storms.

"It's nothing I can do," said Reed, a fifth grade teacher. "Take it all in stride. I'm a firm believer that God will work it all out."

Houston area school districts canceled classes for more than 400,000 students Friday. The Houston Independent School District, the state's largest, said 215 of its 274 campuses would be open Monday. Two other large school districts in the the Houston area, Cypress-Fairbanks and Spring Branch, planned to be closed.

Climate change impacts millions in India. But as the country votes, some politicians skirt the issue

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

BEED, India (AP) — Almost 970 million Indians are voting in general elections amid sweltering heat and unpredictable weather extremes exacerbated by human-caused climate change, leading to loss of livelihood, forced migration and increasingly difficult living conditions for millions across the country.

Voters are looking for politicians who promise relief, stability and resilience to the wide-ranging and damaging effects of a warming climate. In their election manifestos, India's top political parties, including the governing Bharatiya Janata Party and the main opposition, the Congress party, have made multiple promises to act on climate damage and reduce emissions of planet-heating gases.

But there has been little talk about climate change on the campaign trail.

"Climate change is still not among the headlines during these elections despite its obvious impact on millions of Indian lives," said Anjal Prakash, author of multiple United Nations climate reports.

The Indian subcontinent — surrounded by ocean on three sides and the Himalayan ranges to its north — is vulnerable to sea level rise, severe storms, heavy floods and melting glaciers. It's also experienced extreme heat spells and severe drought as global average temperatures climb. A report by the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment said India experienced extreme weather on nearly 90% of the days last year.

Here's a look at how the effects of climate change are influencing voters.

EXTREME HEAT AND LONGER DROUGHTS IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL INDIA

Vaibhav Maske's millet farm was dry to the bone in early May, even though he dug three borewells 600 feet deep looking for water.

The 25-year-old lives in Marathwada, one of the most acutely affected heat and drought-prone regions in western Maharashtra state, and farmers there say the current summer is the worst major drought in almost a decade. But politicians haven't been paying attention.

"Politicians are only talking about religion and caste. No one is talking about the environment or farmers issues," said Maske. "They are saying Prime Minister Modi is giving money to farmers, that's good. But at the same time, the taxes are so high on everything including our farm equipment, so how can we make ends meet this way?"

Since February 2019, a federal government scheme transfers \$70 to around 100 million farmers a year to supplement their income. But Maske said it's of little use as farm expenses like water, fertilizers and farm gear now cost him up to \$180 a month.

Instead, Maske said local and federal governments need to prioritize providing a water source for farming. "They need to dig canals or divert some water from rivers in nearby areas, so we have some steady supply of water. No one has done anything about this," he said.

STRONGER AND MORE FREQUENT CYCLONES FOR COASTAL REGIONS

India's eastern coasts have long been prone to cyclones, but the number of intense storms is increasing along the country's coast. Last year was India's deadliest cyclone season in recent times, killing 523 people and costing an estimated \$2.5 billion in damage.

Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, said their studies found that "floods have increased threefold since the 1950s and cyclones have increased by 50% since the 1980s."

It's making disasters a political focal point for the regions worst affected by them.

Around 25,000 people in the Ennore neighborhood in Chennai planned to boycott the Indian general elections in part due to lack of government support post Cyclone Michaung, which devastated the eastern coasts of southern India in December 2023.

"Politicians just come asking for votes making promises," said Subhashini Ravi, a 37-year-old resident of Ennore. "Once elections are over, they just disappear."

Still, the boycott was called off at the last minute after the regional government said it would address

the issues post-election.

Issues related to religion, caste and employment still determine most Indians' political preferences, but Koll said that at local levels, climate is playing a role when "the entire community is affected."

Local and federal authorities have managed to adapt partially to increasingly frequent cyclones by evacuating coastal residents in time and drastically reducing loss of life. But as cyclones get more intense, many residents like Ravi are still worried for the future.

UNPREDICTABLE AND INCREASED FLOODING IN ASSAM

Thousands in Assam state are dependent on fishing and selling produce like rice, jute and vegetables from their small farms on floating river islands in the Brahmaputra River, known locally as Chars.

When it floods, residents of Char islands often row in makeshift rafts to dry land, and return once it subsides. But floods are now more devastating and unpredictable because of climate change, locals say, making it harder to stay on the islands.

Residents are wary nothing will change no matter who they vote for.

"All the politicians promise to solve problems related to flooding but after elections are over, no one cares about it," said Yaad Ali, a 55-year-old farmer in Sandahkhaiti, a village located on a small river island in north eastern India's Assam state.

Badruddin Ajmal, the leader of the All India United Democratic Front, a regional party in Assam and the main opposition in the state, has repeatedly talked about providing for long term relief from flooding during his campaigns this election.

Leaders of national parties such as the BJP — also in power in Assam state — and the Congress Party have largely ignored the issue during their election campaigning in Assam this year.

Considered one of the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change according to a 2021 report, Ali said the lack of political will is only making life harder.

MELTING GLACIERS AND INTENSE RAIN IN THE HIMALAYAS

In Shimla city in India's mountainous Himachal Pradesh state, apple farmer Sanjay Chauhan recalls the deadly rainfall in the region last year that killed 428 people and broke local rainfall records.

"I had not seen anything like this," Chauhan said. He incurred \$5,000 worth of damage to his orchards in the heavy rain, and property damage across the state was estimated at \$1.42 billion. "Many issues were raised after the devastation last year but the government and political leaders are only providing temporary relief," he said.

Rising global temperatures means more water evaporates in the heat which is then dumped as heavy rain. Fast melting glaciers in the region that scientists say could lose 80% of their volume by the end of the century means the Himalayan region and its people are at further risk.

But climate-related concerns like heavy flooding and melting glaciers have not featured in the election campaigns in the state. Most political speeches in Himachal Pradesh have focused on issues related to corruption, price rise and unemployment, regardless of party allegiance.

Meanwhile, Chauhan said, locals are "worried about what the monsoons will bring this year."

Other regions also suffered heavy losses in terms of lives, property and farmland due to heavy rain — including the neighboring state of Uttarakhand, Delhi and most northern and western Indian states.

"What we need are long term strategies" to combat extreme weather events, Chauhan said.

Airstrike kills 27 in central Gaza and fighting rages as Israel's leaders are increasingly divided

By WAFSA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli airstrike killed 27 people in central Gaza, mostly women and children, and fighting with Hamas raged across the north on Sunday as Israel's leaders aired divisions over who should govern Gaza after the war, now in its eighth month.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces criticism from the other members of his War Cabinet, with main political rival Benny Gantz threatening to leave the government if a plan is not created by June 8 that

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includes an international administration for postwar Gaza. His departure would leave Netanyahu more reliant on far-right allies who support full military occupation of Gaza and rebuilding of Jewish settlements there.

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met with Netanyahu to discuss an ambitious U.S. plan for Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel and help the Palestinian Authority govern Gaza in exchange for a path to eventual statehood. Netanyahu's office in a statement said they focused on Israel's military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, humanitarian aid and hostages held in Gaza.

Netanyahu opposes Palestinian statehood, saying Israel will maintain open-ended security control over Gaza and partner with local Palestinians unaffiliated with Hamas or the Western-backed Palestinian Authority.

The U.S. said Sullivan said Israel should "connect its military operations to a political strategy" and proposed measures to ensure more aid "surges" into Gaza.

In recent weeks, Hamas militants have regrouped in parts of northern Gaza that were heavily bombed in the war's early days.

The airstrike in Nuseirat, a built-up Palestinian refugee camp in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, killed 27 people, including 10 women and seven children, according to records at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in nearby Deir al-Balah, which received the bodies.

A separate strike on a Nuseirat street killed five people, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent emergency service. In Deir al-Balah, a strike killed Zahed al-Houli, a senior officer in the Hamas-run police, and another man, according to the hospital.

Palestinians reported more airstrikes and heavy fighting in northern Gaza, which has been largely isolated by Israeli troops for months and where the World Food Program says a famine is underway.

The Civil Defense said strikes hit several homes near Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, killing at least 10 people. And in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp nearby, residents reported a heavy wave of artillery and airstrikes.

Abdel-Kareem Radwan, 48, said the whole eastern side has become a battle zone where the Israeli fighter jets "strike anything that moves."

Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesman for the Civil Defense, said rescuers had recovered at least 150 bodies, more than half of them women and children, since Israel launched the operation in Jabaliya last week.

Israel launched its offensive after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting about 250. Mourners gathered Sunday for the funeral of one of four hostages killed in the attack whose bodies were recently found by Israeli troops in Gaza.

The war has killed at least 35,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between combatants and civilians. Around 80% of the population of 2.3 million Palestinians have been displaced within the territory, often multiple times.

"We need a decent life to live," said Reem Al-Bayed, who left Gaza City and shelters with thousands in the gritty coastal Muwasi camp in the south without basic facilities like wells. "All countries live a decent life except us."

She took a quick mouthful of bread before tearing the rest into pieces for half a dozen children, then poured them a can of beans.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames the high death toll on Hamas, which it says operates in dense residential areas.

Netanyahu's critics, including thousands of Israeli protesters, accuse him of prolonging the war and rejecting a cease-fire deal so he can avoid a reckoning over security failures. They also seek early elections in which polls show that Gantz, a political centrist, would likely succeed Netanyahu. That would expose Netanyahu to prosecution on longstanding corruption allegations.

Netanyahu denies any political motives and says the offensive must continue until Hamas is dismantled and the estimated 100 hostages still held with the remains of more than 30 others are returned.

Netanyahu also faces pressure from Israel's closest ally, the United States, which has provided military aid and diplomatic cover for the offensive while expressing growing frustration with Israel's conduct of the war and the humanitarian crisis.

President Joe Biden's administration recently held up a shipment of 3,500 bombs and said the U.S. would not provide offensive weapons for a full-scale invasion of Rafah, citing fears of a humanitarian catastrophe.

But last week, after Israel launched what it called a limited operation in Rafah, the Biden administration told legislators it would move forward with the sale of \$1 billion worth of arms, according to congressional aides.

The Palestinian Crossings Authority in a statement said humanitarian aid has not entered through the vital Rafah border crossing with Egypt since the military operation began almost two weeks ago.

Xander Schauffele wins first major at PGA Championship in a thriller at Valhalla

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Every step Xander Schauffele took Sunday toward becoming a major champion brought small reminders that it was never going to be easy.

It wasn't just Bryson DeChambeau pushing in the PGA Championship until he finally caught Schauffele with a birdie on the last hole at Valhalla.

It was the mud on Schauffele's golf ball after a good drive on the 16th. It was the tee shot on the 17th that kicked back into a bunker instead of forward into the fairway. Needing birdie on the par-5 18th for the win, he hit what he thought was a good drive until Schauffele walked up and saw it had rolled close enough to a bunker that he couldn't get a clean shot at the green.

"I just kept telling myself, 'Man, someone out there is making me earn this right now,'" Schauffele said. "I get up there and just kind of chuckled. I was like, 'If you want to be a major champion, this is the kind of stuff you have to deal with.'"

There was one other message he preached along the back nine.

"I told myself this is my opportunity — capture it," Schauffele said.

A gutsy shot from the fairway — standing in the bunker with the ball above his feet, he worried about a shank — came up some 35 yards short with a perfect angle, and his pitch up the slope to 6 feet gave him the moment he always wanted.

And then the 30-year-old Californian, a hard-luck runner-up to Scottie Scheffler and Rory McIlroy the last two months, delivered some magic of his own.

He swirled in a 6-foot birdie putt on the final hole to win a thriller at Valhalla. The putt denied DeChambeau — and LIV Golf — a chance at another major title and put Schauffele in the record book with the lowest 72-hole score in major championship history.

"I just kept telling myself, 'I need to earn this — earn this and be in the moment.' And I was able to do that," Schauffele said. "I don't really remember it lipping in. I just heard everyone roaring and I just looked up to the sky in relief."

And with that, the Olympic gold medalist got something even more valuable in silver — that enormous Wanamaker Trophy after a wild week at Valhalla.

He closed with a 6-under 65 to beat DeChambeau, who was entertaining to the very end by turning a huge break into an unlikely birdie on the 16th hole and a 10-foot birdie on the par-5 18th for a 64.

"Shot 20-under par in a major championship," DeChambeau said. "Definitely disappointing, but one that gives me a lot of momentum for the rest of the majors."

Schauffele became the first player since Phil Mickelson in 2005 at Baltusrol to win the PGA Championship with a birdie on the last hole to win by one.

Even the last shot had drama. Schauffele crouched to study the putt and couldn't figure out which way it was going to break. He played it straight, with just enough speed that when it caught the edge of the cup gravity was starting to take over.

Schauffele, who exudes California chill, raised both arms above his head with the biggest smile before a hard hug with Austin Kaiser, his caddie and former teammate at San Diego State.

DeChambeau was on the range, staying loose for a potential playoff, watching Schauffele from a large

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video board. He saw the winning putt fall, and walked all the way back to the 18th to join in with so many other players wanting to congratulate the 30-year-old.

Brooks Koepka won the PGA Championship last year and remains the only LIV Golf player to win a major. DeChambeau was close to matching him.

"I gave it my all. I put as much effort as I possibly could into it and I knew that my B game would be enough," DeChambeau said. "It's just clearly somebody played incredibly well. Xander's well deserving of a major championship."

Viktor Hovland, the FedEx Cup champion who wasn't sure he even belonged at Valhalla while trying to work his way out of a slump, also had a 10-foot putt to tie DeChambeau. He missed the birdie, then missed a meaningless par putt and shot 66 to finish third.

Schauffele, who began this championship with a 62 to tie the major championship record, finished at 21-under 263 with that winning birdie. That beats by one shot the major record previously shared by Koepka in the 2018 PGA Championship at Bellerive and Henrik Stenson in the 2016 British Open at Royal Troon.

And so ended another memorable week at Valhalla.

Scheffler, who arrived five days after the birth of his first child, was arrested and briefly jailed on Friday morning for not following directions of police investigating a fatal car crash involving a pedestrian an hour earlier.

He got out of jail and to the course in time to play the second round and shot 66. But it caught up with him on the weekend. Scheffler fell out of contention with a 73 on Saturday — his first round over par since last August. He closed with a 65 to tie for eighth.

Two players — Schauffele on Thursday and Shane Lowry on Saturday — tied the major record with a 62. Scoring records seemed to fall just about every day on a rain-softened course.

All that, and it came down to one putt that Schauffele will never forget.

But then, he was great from the start when he holed a 30-foot birdie putt at No. 1 to break out of a tie with Collin Morikawa. Schauffele went out in 31 and figured he had a comfortable lead, only to see a board that showed DeChambeau and Hovland in close pursuit.

And then Schauffele made a soft bogey on the par-5 10th, the easiest hold at Valhalla, and he suddenly was tied. It was easy to wonder what would go wrong next, if he would fall victim to another great round like Scheffler's 64 at The Players Championship or McIlroy's 65 last week at the Wells Fargo Championship.

Kaiser recalls Schauffele telling him, "We've got to go get it."

He hit 7-iron to 8 feet for birdie on the 11th, another 7-iron to 6 feet for birdie on the 12th and the lead was restored. He held on with pars from mud balls, and with a clutch save on the 17th, setting up a moment that was all his.

In so many ways, this time was overdue. He had gone nearly two years since last winning at the Scottish Open. Schauffele had eight consecutive finishes in the top 20 at majors coming into Valhalla. He already had a pair of runner-up finishes and six top 5s.

The victory was his eighth on the PGA Tour — that doesn't include his Olympic gold from the Tokyo Games in 2021. This one moves him to a career-best No. 2 in the world, still a long way from Scheffler but assuring Schauffele of qualifying for the U.S. team in the Olympics.

Iran's hard-line president still missing after likely helicopter crash in foggy, mountainous region

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and other officials apparently crashed in the mountainous northwest reaches of Iran on Sunday, sparking a massive rescue operation in a fog-shrouded forest as the public was urged to pray.

As the sun rose Monday, Raisi and the others on board remained missing more than 12 hours after the likely crash, with Turkish drone footage suggesting the helicopter went down in the mountains. Rescuers rushed to the site.

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The incident comes as Iran under Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel last month and has enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Iran has also faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over an ailing economy and women's rights — making the moment that much more sensitive for Tehran and the future of the country as the Israel-Hamas war inflames the wider Middle East.

Raisi was traveling in Iran's East Azerbaijan province. State TV said what it called a "hard landing" happened near Jolfa, a city on the border with the nation of Azerbaijan, some 600 kilometers (375 miles) northwest of the Iranian capital, Tehran. Later, state TV put it farther east near the village of Uzi, but details remained contradictory.

Traveling with Raisi were Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province and other officials and bodyguards, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. One local government official used the word "crash," but others referred to either a "hard landing" or an "incident."

Neither IRNA nor state TV offered any information on Raisi's condition in the hours afterward.

Early Monday morning, Turkish authorities released what they described as drone footage showing what appeared to be a fire in the wilderness that they "suspected to be wreckage of helicopter." The coordinates listed in the footage put the fire some 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of the Azerbaijan-Iranian border on the side of a steep mountain.

Hard-liners urged the public to pray for him. State TV aired images of hundreds of the faithful, some with their hands outstretched in supplication, praying at Imam Reza Shrine in the city of Mashhad, one of Shiite Islam's holiest sites, as well as in Qom and other locations across the country. State television's main channel aired the prayers nonstop.

In Tehran, a group of men kneeling on the side of the street clasped strands of prayer beads and watched a video of Raisi praying, some of them visibly weeping.

"If anything happens to him we'll be heartbroken," said one of the men, Mehdi Seyedi. "May the prayers work and may he return to the arms of the nation safe and sound."

In comments aired on state TV, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said: "The esteemed president and company were on their way back aboard some helicopters and one of the helicopters was forced to make a hard landing due to the bad weather and fog."

"Various rescue teams are on their way to the region but because of the poor weather and foginess it might take time for them to reach the helicopter."

IRNA called the area a "forest" and the region is known to be mountainous as well. State TV aired images of SUVs racing through a wooded area and said they were being hampered by poor weather conditions, including heavy rain and wind. Rescuers could be seen walking in the fog and mist.

A rescue helicopter tried to reach the area where authorities believe Raisi's helicopter was, but it couldn't land due to heavy mist, emergency services spokesman Babak Yektaparast told IRNA. Late in the evening, Turkey's defense ministry announced that it had sent an unmanned aerial vehicle and was preparing to send a helicopter with night vision capabilities to join the search-and-rescue efforts.

Long after the sun set, Iranian government spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi acknowledged that "we are experiencing difficult and complicated conditions" in the search.

"It is the right of the people and the media to be aware of the latest news about the president's helicopter accident, but considering the coordinates of the incident site and the weather conditions, there is 'no' new news whatsoever until now," he wrote on the social platform X. "In these moments, patience, prayer and trust in relief groups are the way forward."

Khamenei himself also urged the public to pray.

"We hope that God the Almighty returns the dear president and his colleagues in full health to the arms of the nation," Khamenei said, drawing an "amen" from the worshipers he was addressing.

However, the supreme leader also stressed the business of Iran's government would continue no matter what. Under the Iranian constitution, Iran's vice first president takes over if the president dies with Khamenei's assent, and a new presidential election would be called within 50 days. First Vice President

Mohammad Mokhber already had begun receiving calls from officials and foreign governments in Raisi's absence, state media reported.

Raisi, 63, a hard-liner who formerly led the country's judiciary, is viewed as a protégé of Khamenei and some analysts have suggested he could replace the 85-year-old leader after Khamenei's death or resignation.

Raisi had been on the border with Azerbaijan early Sunday to inaugurate a dam with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev. The dam is the third one that the two nations built on the Aras River. The visit came despite chilly relations between the two nations, including over a gun attack on Azerbaijan's Embassy in Tehran in 2023, and Azerbaijan's diplomatic relations with Israel, which Iran's Shiite theocracy views as its main enemy in the region.

Iran flies a variety of helicopters in the country, but international sanctions make it difficult to obtain parts for them. Its military air fleet also largely dates back to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. IRNA published images it described as Raisi taking off in what resembled a Bell helicopter, with a blue-and-white paint scheme previously seen in published photographs.

Raisi won Iran's 2021 presidential election, a vote that saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history. Raisi is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 at the end of the bloody Iran-Iraq war.

Under Raisi, Iran now enriches uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels and hampers international inspections. Iran has armed Russia in its war on Ukraine, as well as launched a massive drone-and-missile attack on Israel amid its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It also has continued arming proxy groups in the Mideast, like Yemen's Houthi rebels and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, mass protests in the country have raged for years. The most recent involved the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been earlier detained over allegedly not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. The monthslong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

President Joe Biden was briefed by aides on the Iran crash, but administration officials have not learned much more than what is being reported publicly by Iran state media, said a senior administration official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Senior Republican close to Trump criticizes Biden's arms holdup in speech to Israeli parliament

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Elise Stefanik, a House Republican leader seen as a candidate to be Donald Trump's running mate, delivered a speech before Israel's parliament on Sunday in which she criticized President Joe Biden's approach to the war in Gaza.

Stefanik, the fourth highest-ranked Republican in the House of Representatives, is the latest of several U.S. politicians from both sides of the aisle to visit Israel since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack ignited the war in Gaza. But it's rare for such visitors to address Israel's parliament, known as the Knesset.

Speaking at a session dedicated to combatting antisemitism worldwide, Stefanik vowed to help with "crushing antisemitism at home and providing Israel what it needs when it needs it, without conditions."

She was referring to Biden's decision to hold up the delivery of some 3,500 bombs of up to 2,000 pounds each, and his refusal to provide offensive weapons for a long-promised Israeli invasion of the southern city of Rafah. The administration fears such an operation would plunge Gaza into an even more severe humanitarian catastrophe.

"There is no excuse for an American president to block aid to Israel that was duly passed by the Congress, and there was no excuse to ease sanctions on Iran," she said.

Stefanik, a representative from upstate New York and a strong supporter of Trump, is believed to be on the short list of his possible running mates.

In December, she grilled university presidents at a five-hour congressional hearing about antisemitism

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on campus. Two of the university presidents, from Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania, resigned soon after.

"Total victory is not just physical self-defense, but ideological self-defense," Stefanik said during the session, referring to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's frequent claim that Israel must achieve "total victory" in the war against Hamas.

Pro-Palestinian protesters set up a new encampment at Drexel University

By RON TODT Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Pro-Palestinian protesters set up a new encampment at Drexel University in Philadelphia over the weekend, prompting a lockdown of school buildings, a day after authorities thwarted an attempted occupation of a school building at the neighboring University of Pennsylvania campus.

Up to 60 protesters were at the encampment on the campus' Korman Quad Sunday, Drexel President John Fry said in a statement, adding that the university was speaking with demonstrators — most of whom he said were not affiliated with the school — in an effort to end the protest.

"This demonstration already has proved intolerably disruptive to normal University operations and has raised serious concerns about the conduct of some participants, including distressing reports and images of protesters subjecting passersby to antisemitic speech, signs and chants," Fry said, declaring that "this encampment must end." He said the school was communicating with local officials and Philadelphia police to ensure campus safety "and the continued operations of our academic and research endeavors."

The encampment at Drexel, which has about 22,000 students, was set up after several hundred demonstrators marched from Philadelphia's City Hall to west Philadelphia on Saturday. About a dozen tents remained Sunday, blocked off by barricades and monitored by police officers. No arrests were reported. University buildings were open only to those with clearance from security officers.

On Friday night, members of Penn Students Against the Occupation of Palestine had announced an action at the University of Pennsylvania's Fisher-Bennett Hall, urging supporters to bring "flags, pots, pans, noise-makers, megaphones" and other items.

The university said campus police, supported by city police, removed the demonstrators Friday night, arresting 19 people, including six University of Pennsylvania students. The university's division of public safety said officials found "lock-picking tools and homemade metal shields," and exit doors secured with zip ties and barbed wire, windows covered with newspaper and cardboard and entrances blocked.

Authorities said seven people arrested would face felony charges, including one accused of having assaulted an officer, while a dozen were issued citations for failing to disperse and follow police commands.

The attempted occupation of the building came a week after city and campus police broke up a two-week encampment on the campus, arresting 33 people, nine of whom were students and two dozen of whom had "no Penn affiliation," according to university officials.

On Sunday, dozens of George Washington University graduates walked out of commencement ceremonies, disrupting university President Ellen Granberg's speech, in protest over the ongoing siege of Gaza and last week's clearing of an on-campus protest encampment that involved police use of pepper spray and dozens of arrests.

The ceremony, at the base of the Washington Monument, started peacefully with fewer than 100 protesters demonstrating across the street in front of the Museum of African American History and Culture. But as Granberg began speaking, at least 70 students among the graduates started chanting and raising signs and Palestinian flags. The students then noisily walked out as Granberg spoke, crossing the street to a rapturous response from the protesters.

Students and others have set up tent encampments on campuses around the country to protest the Israel-Hamas war, pressing colleges to cut financial ties with Israel. Tensions over the war have been high on campuses since the fall but demonstrations spread quickly following an April 18 police crackdown on an encampment at Columbia University.

Nearly 3,000 people have been arrested on U.S. campuses over the past month. As summer break ap-

proaches, there have been fewer new arrests and campuses have been calmer. Still, colleges have been vigilant for disruptions to commencement ceremonies.

President Joe Biden told the graduating class at Morehouse College on Sunday, which included some students wearing keffiyeh scarves around their shoulders on top of their black graduation robes, that he heard their voices of protest and that scenes from the conflict in Gaza have been heartbreaking. He said given what he called a "humanitarian crisis" there, he had called for "an immediate cease-fire" and return of hostages taken by Hamas.

The latest Israel-Hamas war began when Hamas and other militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and taking an additional 250 hostage. Palestinian militants still hold about 100 captives, while Israel's military has killed more than 35,000 people in Gaza, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants.

Diddy admits beating ex-girlfriend Cassie, says he's sorry, calls his actions 'inexcusable'

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs admitted that he beat his ex-girlfriend Cassie in a hotel hallway in 2016 after CNN released video of the attack, saying in a video apology he was "truly sorry" and his actions were "inexcusable."

"I take full responsibility for my actions in that video. I was disgusted then when I did it. I'm disgusted now," the music mogul said in a video statement posted Sunday to Instagram and Facebook.

The security video aired Friday shows Combs, wearing only a white towel, punching and kicking Cassie, an R&B singer who was his protege and longtime girlfriend at the time. The footage also shows Combs shoving and dragging Cassie, and throwing a vase in her direction.

Cassie, whose legal name is Cassandra Ventura, sued Combs in November over what she said was years of sexual, physical and emotional abuse. The suit was settled the next day, but spurred intense scrutiny of Combs, with several more lawsuits filed in the following months, along with a federal criminal sex-trafficking investigation that led authorities to raid Combs' mansions in Los Angeles and Miami.

He had denied the allegations in the lawsuits, but neither he nor his representatives had responded to the newly emerged video until Sunday.

"It's so difficult to reflect on the darkest times in your life, but sometimes you got to do that," Diddy says on the video. He adds, "I went and I sought out professional help. I got into going to therapy, going to rehab. I had to ask God for his mercy and grace. I'm so sorry. But I'm committed to be a better man each and every day. I'm not asking for forgiveness. I'm truly sorry."

Combs is looking somber and wearing a T-shirt in the selfie-style apology video, and appears to be on a patio. It is the hip-hop mogul's most direct response and first apology after six months of allegations that have threatened his reputation and career.

Meredith Firetog, who represents Ventura and other women who have sued Combs, said the apology was "more about himself than the many people he has hurt.

"When Cassie and multiple other women came forward, he denied everything and suggested that his victims were looking for a payday," the lawyer said in a statement. "That he was only compelled to 'apologize' once his repeated denials were proven false shows his pathetic desperation, and no one will be swayed by his disingenuous words."

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly as Ventura has done.

In December, after Ventura and at least three other women had filed lawsuits against him, Combs posted a statement on Instagram broadly denying the truth of all of them.

"Let me absolutely clear. I did not do any of the awful things being alleged," that post said.

The security camera video, dated March 5, 2016, closely resembles the description of an incident at an InterContinental Hotel in the Century City area of Los Angeles described in Ventura's lawsuit.

The suit alleges that Combs paid the hotel \$50,000 for the security video immediately after the incident. Neither he or his representatives have addressed that specific allegation. CNN did not say how it obtained the footage.

The suit said Ventura had been trying to get away from a sleeping Combs, who had already punched her in the face before the video began.

Combs is not in danger of being criminally prosecuted for the beating. The statutes of limitations for the assault and battery charges he would be likely to face expired years ago.

The same is true of many of the allegations in the lawsuits, but the federal investigators following Combs are likely looking for potential crimes they can bring under the law.

Ventura signed to Diddy's label in 2005. The two had an on-again-off-again romantic relationship for more than a decade starting in 2007.

Elon Musk launches Starlink satellite internet service in Indonesia, world's largest archipelago

By FIRDIA LISNAWATI and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP) — Elon Musk traveled to Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Sunday to launch Starlink satellite internet service in the world's largest archipelago nation.

Wearing a green Batik shirt, Musk was greeted with a garland of flower petals at a community health clinic in Denpasar, the provincial capital of Bali, where he launched the Starlink service alongside Indonesian ministers.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of 17,000 islands sprawled across three time zones with a population of more than 270 million, has been trying for years to secure deals with Musk's Tesla on battery investment and for Musk's SpaceX to provide fast internet for the country's remote regions.

During the ceremony, Musk took a speed test of the Starlink internet service with several health workers in Indonesia's remote regions, including in Aru, one of Indonesia's unserved and outermost islands in Maluku province.

"This can make it really a lifesaver for remote medical clinics, and I think it could be a possibility for education as well," Musk told reporters.

"If you can access the internet and then you can learn anything and you can also sell your business services worldwide. So, I think it's going to be incredibly beneficial," he said.

He also signed an agreement on enhancing connectivity in the country's health and education sectors. Details about the agreement between the Indonesian government and Musk's SpaceX, the aerospace company that operates Starlink services, were not provided.

Launching the service at a health clinic aligns with Starlink's broader mission of providing affordable access to high-speed internet services, particularly in underserved and remote regions, said Coordinating Minister of Maritime and Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan.

"Our remote regions need Starlink to expand high-speed internet services, especially to help with problems in the health, education and maritime sectors," Pandjaitan, a close ally of Indonesia's President Joko Widodo, told reporters. He held separate talks with Musk on Sunday.

Communication and Informatics Minister Budi Arie Setiadi said earlier that local internet providers, which rely on base transceiver stations to transmit signals, are unable to reach outer islands because they have limited coverage. Starlink's satellites, which remain in low orbit, will help them deliver faster internet with nationwide coverage.

Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said of the more than 10,000 clinics across the country, there are still around 2,700 without internet access.

"The internet can open up better access to health services as communication between regions is said to be easier, so that reporting from health service facilities can be done in real time or up to date," he said.

During his first in-person visit to Bali, Musk is also scheduled to participate in the 10th World Water Forum, which seeks to address global water and sanitation challenges.

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Musk spoke in 2022 at the B-20 business forum ahead of a summit of the Group of 20 leading economies that took place in Bali. He joined the conference by video link weeks after completing his heavily scrutinized takeover of Twitter.

Musk's visit comes just weeks after Apple CEO Tim Cook met Widodo on April 17 and said the company would "look at" manufacturing in Indonesia. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella visited on April 30 and said the company would invest \$1.7 billion over the next four years in new cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure in Indonesia.

Indonesia under Widodo has promoted development of the digital technology and information sectors, aiming to achieve the government's Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision. The country hopes to become one of the world's top five economies with a GDP of up to \$9 trillion, exactly a century after it won independence from Dutch colonizers.

The Israel-Hamas war is testing whether campuses are sacrosanct places for speech and protest

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Stephen Hawking on the Big Bang. Millions of students for civil rights and against the Vietnam War.

They were provocative in their times, products of an ideal that holds universities as sacrosanct spaces for debate, innovation — and even revolution. But Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 attack on Israel and the resulting war in Gaza are testing that perception, as anger over the brutal military campaign collides with election-year politics and concerns about antisemitism in places where freedom of expression is supposed to rule.

"Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making," wrote poet John Milton, an alumnus of Cambridge University, in his 1644 treatise against censorship in publishing. "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

That lofty principle has clashed with the stark reality of the Israel-Hamas war. Hamas militants who crossed the border killed about 1,200 people and took about 250 hostage. Israel's drive to root out Hamas has killed more than 35,000 people in Gaza, according to the local health ministry, and left millions on the edge of famine.

Administrators on some campuses have called in local police to break up pro-Palestinian protesters demanding that their schools divest from Israel in demonstrations that Israel's allies say are antisemitic and make campuses unsafe. From Columbia University in New York to the University of California, Los Angeles, thousands of students and faculty have been arrested in the past month.

"Columbia," read one sign held aloft there after arrests on April 30, "Protect your students (Cops don't protect us)."

Historically, universities are supposed to govern — and police — themselves in exchange for their status as "something of a secular sacred ground," said John Thelin, University of Kentucky College of Education professor emeritus and a historian of higher education.

"One has to think of an American college or university as a 'city-state' in which its legal protections and walls include the campus — grounds, buildings, structures facilities — as legally protected, along with a university's rights to confer degrees," he added in an email. Calling in the police, as administrators did at Columbia, Dartmouth, UCLA and other schools, represents the "break down of both rights and responsibilities within the campus as a chartered academic institution and community," he said.

The crackdowns are reviving memories of student-led protests during the American civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and the pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Student activism in the 1960s led campus officials to call law enforcement. And on May 4, 1970, the National Guard opened fire on unarmed students, killing four at Kent State University. Four million students went on strike, temporarily closing 900 colleges and universities. It was a defining moment for a nation sharply divided over the Vietnam War, in which more than 58,000 Americans were killed.

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A half-century later, the Israel-Hamas conflict has lit another fuse, with claims that “outside agitators” have infiltrated the protests to inflame tensions.

“The scale, fierceness, the short time frame since the Hamas attacks, the irreconcilable demands of current competing protestors, and their occasional violence, has tested university leaders on how to respond,” said John A. Douglass, a senior research fellow and professor of public policy and higher education at the University of California, Berkeley.

Most major colleges and universities have their own police departments, “but inviting and soliciting help from local community police departments in riot gear, and not only called on to disperse encampments but protect rival protestors from each other, is a relatively new phenomenon,” he said.

What’s lost when the police are called in?

“Trust between the university and significant parts of its most important constituency: its students,” said Anna von der Goltz, a history professor at Georgetown University. The cost, she said, also potentially includes the university’s credibility “as a community that is capable of setting its own rules and dealing effectively with violations of those rules.”

The wave of pro-Palestinian protests on U.S. campuses took inspiration from demonstrations at Columbia that began on April 17.

As protesters set up their encampment that day, the university’s president, Minouche Shafik, was called for questioning before Congress, where Republicans accused her of not doing enough to fight antisemitism on the school’s Manhattan campus. The next day, university officials called in the New York City police, who arrested more than 100 protesters — among them, the daughter of Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, who had questioned Shafik in Washington.

Similar scenes played out across the country: The University of Southern California canceled its main graduation ceremony after disallowing its student valedictorian, who is Muslim, from giving her keynote speech. Police arrested hundreds of protesters at New York University and Yale. At Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, President Sian Leah Beilock called in police to dismantle a pro-Palestinian encampment just a few hours after it went up.

Inspired by the protests in the United States, pro-Palestinian encampments popped up in the U.K. and Europe earlier this month as administrators there confronted the same question: Allow or intervene?

At Cambridge University, idyll of Darwin and Hawking, an encampment of about 40 tents in front of the Gothic spires of King’s College appeared disciplined and orderly after three nights, with a posted schedule that included meals, training, traditional Palestinian kite-making — and strict message discipline as passersby stopped to talk under rare sunshine.

Cambridge protester Jana Aljamal, 22, a Palestinian student from Jerusalem, said she doesn’t think the U.S. protesters want the focus on themselves: “What’s happening in Gaza is more important.”

“We have our own guidelines,” she added of the Cambridge protest. “To protect the freedom of protest, the freedom of expression and the ability to have these conversations, the ability to have a community behind us, the ability to raise action.”

The scene was more tense last week at several European universities, with the University of Amsterdam canceling classes after pro-Palestinian demonstrations turned destructive. But the protests haven’t yet approached the intensity of demonstrations in the United States.

Will there be a reckoning of how administrators handle protests over a conflict with no end in sight? Von der Goltz said the strategies employed at schools like Rutgers and Brown, where administrators negotiated an end to the protests, will get scrutiny.

“What did they perhaps do that other administrators didn’t?” she wrote. “I expect there to be some kind of reckoning at Columbia, UCLA, etc., because things have clearly gone very wrong there on multiple levels.”

Slovak prime minister's condition remains serious but prognosis positive after assassination bid

By LEFTERIS PITARAKIS Associated Press

BANSKA BYSTRICA, Slovakia (AP) — Slovakia's populist prime minister, Robert Fico, remained in serious condition on Sunday but has been given a positive prognosis four days after he was shot multiple times in an assassination attempt that has sent shockwaves across the deeply polarized European Union nation, the defense minister said.

"The worst of what we feared has passed, at least for the moment. But his condition remains serious," Robert Kalinak told reporters outside the hospital where Fico is being treated. "His condition is stable with a positive prognosis."

Kalinak added that the hospital treating the Slovak leader in Banská Bystrica, a former coal mining town of 16,000 situated 29 kilometers (17 miles) from where Fico was attacked, will continue to issue updates on his health status.

On Sunday afternoon, Kalinak revealed new details about the ongoing investigation saying there may have been a "third party" involved in "acting for the benefit of the perpetrator", in what was previously described by the authorities as a "lone wolf" attack. The official did not provide additional details.

"The situation is turning out to be even worse than we expected," Kalinak said. "Plus other indications that these facts of Wednesday's attack have been discussed in a wider circle. All of this is shocking information, and for many of us, it would be much easier if we could talk about just one person."

Milan Urbáni, deputy director of the hospital, told reporters that "Based on the doctors' morning consultation, we can conclude that the patient is currently out of a life-threatening condition. His condition remains very serious, and he needs a long time to rest to recover. We firmly believe that everything will go in a good direction."

Fico, 59, was shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters on Wednesday outside a cultural center in the town of Handlova, nearly 140 kilometers (85 miles) northeast of the capital, Bratislava. Video showed the Slovak premier approach people gathered at barricades and reach out to shake hands as a man stepped forward, extended his arm and fired five rounds before being tackled and arrested.

On Friday, Fico underwent two hours of surgery to remove dead tissue from his gunshot wounds, but he was not healthy enough to be transferred to the capital, officials said Saturday.

The country's Specialized Criminal Court in the town of Pezinok on Saturday ordered the suspected assailant, who is charged with attempted murder, to remain behind bars. Prosecutors said they feared he could flee or commit other crimes if freed, a court spokesperson said. The suspect can appeal the order.

Little information about the would-be assassin has been disclosed after prosecutors told police not to publicly identify him or release details about the case. Unconfirmed media reports have named him and said he was a 71-year-old retiree known as an amateur poet who may have once worked as a mall security guard. Government authorities have given details that matched that description. They said the suspect didn't belong to any political groups, though the attack itself was politically motivated.

Slovakia's interior minister, Matus Sutaj Estok, said Sunday that the attack on Fico is an "attack on democracy in any normal country". "At a time when democracy is being attacked, it must be the security forces that have to give a clear signal that they are prepared to protect the population of the Slovak Republic," he said.

Fico said last month on Facebook that he believed rising tensions in the country could lead to the killing of politicians, and he blamed the media for fueling tensions in the country of 5.4 million.

Slovakia's three-party coalition government has also partly accused the media of fueling the vitriolic discourse that has beleaguered the EU country in recent years and led to deep social divisions.

Andrej Danko, chairman of the government's smallest coalition partner, the Slovak National Party, said Sunday he is expecting a government meeting early next week to discuss media laws and journalistic ethics, including how journalists report on domestic politics.

In his address on Sunday, Kalinak also stressed that lessons must be learned from the violent attack on

Fico, who has long been a divisive figure in Slovakia and beyond. "This must be a memento. If we don't learn, we're heading for hell," he said. "We need to bring this situation back to what we can consider standard."

Fico's government has made efforts to overhaul public broadcasting — a move critics said would give the government full control of public television and radio. That, along with his plans to amend the penal code to eliminate a special anti-graft prosecutor, have led opponents to worry that Fico will lead Slovakia down a more autocratic path.

Before Fico returned to power last year, many of his political and business associates were the focus of police investigations, and dozens have been charged. His plan to overhaul the penal system would eliminate the office of the special prosecutor that deals with organized crime, corruption and extremism.

At the St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Banská Bystrica on Sunday, churchgoer and lawyer Pavel Bachleda called the assassination attempt "a great tragedy" but also expressed concerns about how Fico and his Smer, or Direction, party has conducted itself in recent years.

"I would say partly also his actions, his actions in the previous months and years, have brought about the situation in our country," he told The Associated Press. "You get the impression that they concentrate more on revenge, political revenge than on real things that our country needs."

Who is Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's president whose helicopter suffered a 'hard landing' in foggy weather?

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi has long been seen as a protégé to Iran's supreme leader and a potential successor for his position within the country's Shiite theocracy.

News of his helicopter making what state media described as a "hard landing" on Sunday immediately brought new attention to the leader, who already faces sanctions from the U.S. and other nations over his involvement in the mass execution of prisoners in 1988.

Raisi, 63, previously ran Iran's judiciary. He ran unsuccessfully for president in 2017 against Hassan Rouhani, the relatively moderate cleric who as president reached Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

In 2021, Raisi ran again in an election that saw all of his potentially prominent opponents barred for running under Iran's vetting system. He swept nearly 62% of the 28.9 million votes, the lowest turnout by percentage in the Islamic Republic's history. Millions stayed home and others voided ballots.

Raisi was defiant when asked at a news conference after his election about the 1988 executions, which saw sham retrials of political prisoners, militants and others that would become known as "death commissions" at the end of the bloody Iran-Iraq war.

After Iran's then-Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini accepted a U.N.-brokered cease-fire, members of the Iranian opposition group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, heavily armed by Saddam Hussein, stormed across the Iranian border from Iraq in a surprise attack. Iran blunted their assault.

The trials began around that time, with defendants asked to identify themselves. Those who responded "mujahedeen" were sent to their deaths, while others were questioned about their willingness to "clear minefields for the army of the Islamic Republic," according to a 1990 Amnesty International report. International rights groups estimate that as many as 5,000 people were executed. Raisi served on the commissions.

The U.S. Treasury in 2019 sanctioned Raisi "for his administrative oversight over the executions of individuals who were juveniles at the time of their crime and the torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners in Iran, including amputations." It also mentioned his involvement in the 1988 executions.

Iran ultimately is run by its 85-year-old supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. But as president, Raisi supported the country's enrichment of uranium up to near-weapons-grade levels, as well as it hampering international inspectors as part of its confrontation with the West.

Raisi also supported attacking Israel in a massive assault in April that saw over 300 drones and missiles

fired at the country in response for a suspected Israeli attack that killed Iranian generals at the country's embassy compound in Damascus, Syria — itself a widening of a yearslong shadow war between the two countries.

He also supported the country's security services as they cracked down on all dissent, including in the aftermath of the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini and the nationwide protests that followed.

The monthslong security crackdown killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained. In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death after her arrest for not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities.

At least 11 killed as Russia presses forward with its offensive in northeastern Ukraine

By SAMYA KULLAB and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — At least 11 people were reported killed in attacks in Ukraine's war-ravaged north-east on Sunday as Russia pushed ahead with its renewed offensive.

In the Kharkiv region, the focus of the offensive, the Kharkiv Regional Prosecutor's Office said six people were killed and 27 wounded in a Russian strike on the outskirts of the regional capital, also called Kharkiv.

Regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said that five more people were killed and nine wounded in an attack on the region's Kupiansk district, southeast of the regional capital.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that its forces in the area were "continuing to advance into the depths of the enemy's defense." Ukraine's General Staff said Russia had stepped up its attacks around Kharkiv and that the situation was "dynamic."

Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv region late last week, significantly adding to the pressure on Ukraine's outnumbered and outgunned forces which are waiting for delayed deliveries of crucial weapons and ammunition from Western partners. Ukraine's overstretched forces are trying to slow Russia on the new front by using bomb-laden drones to destroy military vehicles.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday during a visit to China that Moscow's offensive in the Kharkiv region aims to create a buffer zone but that there are no plans to capture the city.

Meanwhile, Ukraine and Russia continued to exchange drone attacks.

Ukrainian air force officials said Sunday morning that air defenses shot down all 37 Russian drones launched against the country overnight.

In Russia, Russian air defenses shot down 57 Ukrainian drones over the southern Krasnodar region overnight, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Local military officials said drone debris hit an oil refinery in the town of Slavyansk-on-Kuban, but there was no fire or damage. News outlet Astra published videos appearing to show an explosion at the refinery as it was hit by a drone. The videos could not be independently verified.

Nine long-range ballistic missiles and a drone were destroyed over the Russia-occupied Crimean Peninsula, following Friday morning's massive Ukrainian drone attack that cut off power in the city of Sevastopol.

A further three drones were shot down over the Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine. According to regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov, a church roof was set on fire by falling drone debris, but there were no casualties.

The Russian-installed governor of Ukraine's partially occupied Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo, said that one person died and 16 were wounded when a Ukrainian drone hit a minibus on Sunday morning.

Why US Catholics are planning pilgrimages in communities across the nation

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

A long-planned series of Catholic pilgrimages has begun across the United States this weekend, with pilgrims embarking on four routes before converging on Indianapolis in two months for a major gathering focusing on Eucharistic rites and devotions.

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage is beginning with Masses and other events in California, Connecticut, Minnesota and Texas. A small group of pilgrims plan to walk entire routes, but most participants are expected to take part for smaller segments. Each route goes along country roads and through city centers, with multiple stops at parishes, shrines and other sites.

Although it was forged amid a recent debate among bishops over whether to refuse Communion to U.S. politicians who don't oppose abortion, the pilgrimage is a revival of a historic Catholic tradition that faded by the mid-20th century.

Each procession is being led by a priest holding a monstrance — typically a sunburst-patterned vessel that displays the host, or bread wafer consecrated by a priest at Mass.

The Catholic Church teaches the "whole Christ is truly present — body, blood, soul, and divinity — under the appearances of bread and wine," according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. As a result, the consecrated host becomes an object of devotion.

"The Eucharist is actually Jesus, so for us to walk with Jesus is actually a witness to our faith in a prayerful action for unity, for peace," said Tim Glemkowski, CEO of the National Eucharistic Congress, the umbrella organization for the events.

The four lengthy pilgrimages appear to be unprecedented, Glemkowski said.

"It's hard in a 2,000-year-old church to do something for the first time, but a procession this long, with this many people in it, may be the first time this has been attempted in the history of the Catholic Church," Glemkowski said.

Some pilgrims were embarking Sunday from the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Minnesota. Others planned to embark from a cathedral in Brownsville, Texas, or cross San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge.

In New Haven, Connecticut, commemorations began with a Saturday night Mass and a mini-procession around St. Mary's Church, which is the burial site of the 19th century founder of the Knights of Columbus fraternal organization, the Rev. Michael McGivney. After an all-night vigil of prayer and adoration, pilgrims were bringing the host to another New Haven church and later to a boat to carry it to the city of Bridgeport and the next leg of the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage amounts to an effort to revive a type of mass devotion that was once more common in past generations of Catholicism in the U.S. and beyond.

The pilgrimages — and the concluding National Eucharistic Congress, expected to draw tens of thousands to Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis in July — is being funded by private donors, sponsors and ticket sales, Glemkowski said. The budget for the National Eucharistic Revival — which is actually a three-year process that has included parish activities as well as the pilgrimages and congress — is about \$23 million, with \$14 million of that for the congress, he said.

There have been nine previous U.S. gatherings under the name of the National Eucharistic Congress — but none since 1941.

"We just kind of lost track of this tradition," Glemkowski said. "We're bringing it back in a way that fits this time."

Glemkowski said the pilgrimage is not a march and would avoid politics. "That message of unity and peace and just focus on Christ is paramount," he said.

The idea for these pilgrimages sprang from deliberations among U.S. bishops.

Their 2021 document, "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church," arose amid debate over whether bishops should withhold Communion from Catholic politicians who supported abortion rights. The document ultimately did not directly address that, though it called on Catholics to examine whether they

align with church teachings and said bishops have a "special responsibility" to respond to "public actions at variance with the visible Communion of the church and the moral law."

At the same time, the document reflected bishops' worries that many Catholics don't know or accept the church's teachings about the significance of the sacrament, though surveys have given mixed results on that question.

Timothy Kelly, professor of history at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, said it's an open question how many participants the pilgrimage will draw. His 2009 book, "The Transformation of American Catholicism," documents the rise and decline of stadium-sized devotional activities such as Eucharistic adoration in 20th century Pittsburgh.

Many early 20th century Catholics were from immigrant communities, and they often gathered at times of flood, war or other crises. "A lot of times in the older demonstrations, the message seemed to be outward toward the broader community — the Catholics bearing witness to their presence and their faith, but also saying, 'We're here and we matter.'"

But participation began dropping sharply by the 1950s. "What happened was the laity stopped being interested in it," Kelly said.

The Eucharistic pilgrimage, he said, appears to be attracting the most interest in Catholic media sympathetic with other efforts to revive older traditions, such as the Latin Mass.

"Which makes me curious, how well does this resonate within the broader Catholic community?" he said.

Simone Biles shines in return while Gabby Douglas scratches after a shaky start at the U.S. Classic

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Simone Biles certainly looks ready for Paris with more than two months to go before the Olympic games begin.

The gymnastics superstar began her bid for a third Olympic team looking as dominant as ever at the U.S. Classic on Saturday, posting an all-around score of 59.500, nearly two points clear of runner-up Shilese Jones.

The 27-year-old Biles, the 2016 Olympic champion, recorded the highest score on vault and floor exercise and came in second on uneven bars and balance beam in her 2024 debut.

"I was just happy to be back out there, get through those nerves again, feel that adrenaline," Biles said. "I can't really complain how the first meet back was."

She did a handful of her signature skills, including hitting the Yurchenko double pike on vault and a tumbling pass that ends with a triple-twisting double-flip.

Biles completed the vault — which requires her to clasp her hands to her knees while she flips backward twice — with coach Laurent Landi watching from the side. Landi had been standing on the podium to spot Biles during previous attempts, a decision that cost her a half-point neutral deduction.

While Biles wasn't perfect — she took a couple of big steps back on her vault dismount and got so much air on the triple-double that she landed out of bounds — her mixture of difficulty and precision remains the standard in the sport.

Biles is a virtual lock to make the five-woman U.S. Olympic team should she stay healthy. The big question that needs to be answered over the next six weeks is who will join her in France.

Jones was brilliant on bars and steady everywhere else and should head to the U.S. Championships later this month and the Olympic Trials in late June with confidence.

After that, things get murky.

Gabby Douglas, the 2012 Olympic champion, was hoping to use the U.S. Classic as a springboard. Instead, she will leave with questions about the road ahead.

The 28-year-old, making a comeback after an extended break following the 2016 Olympics, fell twice on uneven bars and pulled out of the four remaining events.

Sunisa Lee, who won the Olympic title at the 2020 games in Tokyo, has been battling kidney issues for the last 18 months that have made training difficult. She competed in three events and her elegant beam

routine earned her a 14.600, a touch ahead of the 14.550 put up by Biles.

Jordan Chiles, a 2020 Olympic silver medalist, came in third in the all-around at 55.450. Jade Carey, who captured gold on floor in Tokyo, was fourth.

Konnor McClain, the 2022 U.S. champion, exited the competition with an Achilles injury suffered while warming up on floor exercise.

The Senate filibuster is a hurdle to any national abortion bill. Democrats are campaigning on it

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Sen. Tammy Baldwin, facing a tough reelection fight in one of the races that will determine control of Congress, has made protecting reproductive rights a cornerstone of her campaign, and she's willing to back that up by pledging to change the Senate filibuster rules if Democrats retain control of the chamber.

The Wisconsin Democrat said taking that step is necessary to ensure that women in every state — not the government — can decide for themselves whether to have an abortion. As part of her campaign, she warns that Republicans might also target the filibuster to impose a national abortion ban if they prevail in November.

"Republicans have shown time and again that they will stop at nothing in their pursuit of controlling women's bodies — and I believe them," she said.

Democratic incumbents and challengers running for the Senate this year say they want to restore a national right to abortion, and many, like Baldwin, openly say they would support suspending the filibuster to do so. It's become a key talking point as they try to capitalize on the nationwide battle over abortion rights that has generally helped Democratic candidates since the Supreme Court overturned constitutional protections two years ago.

Republicans have criticized Democrats for wanting to change the rules and are emphatic they would not do so if they win the presidency and Senate.

Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, two prominent Republican supporters of abortion rights, have introduced legislation meant to codify the protections that had been established by *Roe v. Wade*. In a statement, Collins said she "will oppose any effort to weaken the legislative filibuster" by either party.

Senate rules require 60 votes to end debate over a bill, effectively making it the minimum number of votes needed to pass legislation, as a means to provide a check on the majority. In an era of polarization and political gridlock, this number, as opposed to a simple majority in the 100-member Senate, has been a roadblock for the party in power to promote its agenda on issues such as voting rights and immigration.

But whichever party has control of the Senate can change the rules and carve out exceptions to the filibuster with only a simple majority vote. That step has been referred to as the "nuclear option" in the few times it has been employed.

Democrats, under then-Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, did this for all judicial nominations but the Supreme Court in 2013, when Democrat Barack Obama was president and Republicans had repeatedly blocked Democratic nominees. GOP leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said Reid would regret that decision — and Republicans later changed the filibuster rule for Supreme Court nominees when they took back control.

That allowed Republican Donald Trump, while in the White House, to put three conservative justices on the court, including Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who was confirmed about a week before the 2020 election. She helped form the court majority that overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

While neither party has gone so far as to change the rules for legislation, many Democrats in Senate races this year have enthusiastically supported doing so, especially to protect abortion rights.

"If NASA had the rules of the United States Senate, the rocket ship would never leave the launchpad," Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly said in an interview this month with NBC News. "So at times, at the appropriate

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time — I think this is one of them — I would consider changing those rules to make sure that women can get the health care they need.”

Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey said “he has been on the record for years” that the rules should be changed and still supports that position. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar has repeatedly called for eliminating the filibuster to protect abortion and voting rights since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned.

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, who previously served one term in the House and is the leading Democratic Senate candidate in Florida, said in an NBC News interview this month that she is “very much in favor of pausing the filibuster and voting for a woman’s right to choose to codify *Roe v. Wade*.”

Her opponent, Republican Sen. Rick Scott, railed against Mucarsel-Powell’s support for pausing the filibuster. He did not comment on whether he would support pausing the filibuster to restrict abortion nationally but has staunchly defended it in the past, calling it “a vital and necessary rule to protect minority party rights.”

“Should it be ‘paused’ to pass the Green New Deal? What about to stack the Supreme Court or eliminate the Electoral College?” Scott said in a statement to The Associated Press that referenced his opponent. “Should we get rid of it permanently or only pause it when (Senate Majority Leader) Chuck Schumer tells her to? Be honest with the people of Florida about where you draw the line on ‘pausing’ democracy, Congresswoman.”

It’s not just Democratic lawmakers and candidates. In 2022, President Joe Biden said he supported a carve-out to the filibuster to codify abortion rights, an idea thwarted by two moderates who decided against running for reelection this year, Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, a Democrat turned independent.

Political experts say there might be heavy pressure from anti-abortion groups to lift the Senate filibuster if the GOP gains full control in Washington, but national organizations have de-emphasized the issue, at least publicly.

When asked last month in a Time magazine interview if he would veto a bill that would impose a federal ban, Trump did not answer directly. Instead, he said “there will never be that chance” because Republicans, even if they take back the Senate in November, would not have the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster and bring the bill to a vote.

Kristi Hamrick, spokesperson for Students for Life, said maneuvering around the filibuster is not a “realistic scenario” because the group has not seen coordinated efforts underway to do so. Instead, she said if Trump is elected, the group would push him to consider taking administrative steps to restrict abortion, including banning the mailing and online sale of abortion pills.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said the organization has never taken a position on the question and instead accused Biden of being “intent on circumventing the filibuster.”

Democrats and abortion rights groups say they are skeptical Republicans would not attempt to lift the filibuster rule for a federal ban.

Mini Timmaraju, president of the national abortion rights organization Reproductive Freedom for All, said the GOP and anti-abortion forces “are ready to use every tool in their toolbox to ban abortion nationwide, and that includes circumventing the filibuster.”

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, D-Mich., also warned of a national ban if Republicans win the presidency and Congress.

“We cannot trust anything that Donald Trump says when it comes to abortion,” Whitmer said recently. “So no one should take any comfort in the fact that yes, he wants an abortion ban but he won’t get it because he doesn’t think we’ll have 60 votes in the Senate. Baloney.”

Trump has voiced conflicting views on the rule, depending on whether his party controlled the Senate. In 2017, his first year as president, he called for an end to the filibuster to move his agenda forward, including repealing the health care law enacted under Obama and building a border wall. But in 2021, a year after he lost his reelection bid and with Democrats controlling Congress, he said removing the filibuster would be “catastrophic for the Republican Party.”

Several high-ranking members of the Senate GOP — including Sens. John Thune of South Dakota, John

Cornyn of Texas and John Barrasso of Wyoming — have said they are firmly against lifting the filibuster. Thune and Cornyn are running to replace McConnell when he steps down from leadership after the November election.

Sen. Jim Lankford, R-Okla., said this past week that GOP senators have discussed the issue during private meetings, and that he and others have said they want promises from those running for leader that they will not change the rules.

"It is something uniquely American to be able to have a place in government that both sides have to be a part of," Lankford said.

What we've learned so far in the Trump hush money trial and what to watch for as it wraps up

By ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Testimony in the hush money trial of Donald Trump is set to conclude in the coming days, putting the landmark case on track for jury deliberations that will determine whether it ends in a mistrial, an acquittal — or the first-ever felony conviction of a former American president.

Jurors over the course of a month have heard testimony about sex and bookkeeping, tabloid journalism and presidential politics. Their task ahead will be to decide whether prosecutors who have charged Trump with 34 counts of falsifying business records have proved their case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Here's a look at what the two sides have argued, who has been missing from the case, what to listen for in the final days and what prosecutors will have to prove to secure a conviction.

THE PROSECUTION'S CASE

Through witnesses including a porn actor, a veteran tabloid publisher and longtime Trump aides, the prosecution aimed to link the presumptive Republican nominee for the White House this year to a hush money scheme during the 2016 presidential campaign that resulted in the filing of phony business records to mask the alleged conspiracy.

Jurors heard testimony that two women and a doorman were paid tens of thousands of dollars to keep quiet during that campaign about stories that, had they emerged, could have embarrassed Trump. Jurors heard claims of sex, saw copies of texts, emails and checks and listened to a secret recording in which Trump and his then-lawyer can be heard discussing a plan to buy the silence of a Playboy model.

One witness, David Pecker, the former publisher of the National Enquirer and a longtime Trump friend, testified that he had agreed to be the "eyes and ears" of the Trump campaign by alerting it to any negative stories about him.

Actor Stormy Daniels told jurors, in occasionally graphic terms, about a sexual encounter she says she had with Trump in 2006; he denies the whole thing. She described being offered \$130,000 by Trump's then-lawyer and personal fixer, Michael Cohen, to remain silent after she said she was looking for ways to sell the story and get it out there.

Cohen, the prosecution's star witness, spent days on the stand recounting what he said was Trump's role in authorizing the hush money payments. Cohen described Trump as anxious that stories alleging extramarital sex could harm his campaign standing with female voters and said the then-candidate had directed him to suppress the stories, quoting him as saying exhortations including, "Just do it" and "We need to stop this from getting out."

THE DEFENSE POSITION

Trump's legal team has not yet called witnesses, and it remains unclear what exactly his lawyers will do when it is their turn to present evidence.

But they have signaled through their questioning of the prosecution's witnesses specific areas where they think they can sow doubt for the jury, contesting along the way the foundational premises of the case.

They have disputed Daniels' account of a hotel suite sexual encounter, with the actor facing an aggressive cross-examination from a defense lawyer who said at one point, "You have made all of this up, right?" Daniels said no.

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And they have suggested that Trump's celebrity status made him an easy extortion target. They grilled the Los Angeles lawyer who negotiated Daniels' deal about other celebrities from whom he had previously "extracted" money in exchange for a client's silence.

But the most consequential cross-examination, by far, has been that of Cohen. The defense has tried to depict him as a fame-seeking fabulist desperate to contribute to a Trump conviction.

The cross-examination began in splashy fashion, with Trump attorney Todd Blanche asking the former fixer if he recalled referring to the lawyer by an expletive on TikTok last month. Prosecutors objected, the judge summoned the parties to the bench and the question was stricken. But the point was clear.

Over the course of hours, Blanche refreshed Cohen's recollection about a litany of colorful but often profane monikers he had assigned Trump — "Cheeto-dusted cartoon villain" was one — as a way to paint Cohen as egregiously biased, blinded by hatred and therefore not credible.

There was also an avalanche of questions about Cohen's past crimes and lies. Blanche forced Cohen to acknowledge that he fibbed under oath during his own 2018 plea hearing about not feeling pressure to plead guilty. In a dramatic moment, Blanche suggested that Cohen had not told the truth when he said he spoke to Trump about the Daniels payment before wiring her lawyer \$130,000.

Blanche confronted Cohen with texts indicating that what was on his mind, at least initially, during the phone call were harassing calls he was getting from an apparent 14-year-old prankster.

The strategy was predictable given Cohen's significance to the case but it is too soon to tell how it landed with the jury.

THE MISSING LINKS?

Multiple characters pivotal to the saga have been name-dropped in court but have been notably absent from the witness stand.

One is Karen McDougal, a Playboy model who has said she had an affair with Trump and received \$150,000 from the National Enquirer in a hush money deal that Cohen helped broker. Keith Schiller, Trump's bodyguard, was described in court as the person who asked Daniels for her phone number on Trump's behalf and was an important conduit for Cohen when he needed to reach Trump.

And then there's Allen Weisselberg, the former Trump Organization chief financial officer now serving a five-month jail sentence for lying under oath in the New York attorney general's civil fraud case against Trump.

Weisselberg did not testify in the hush money trial but he matters because, according to Cohen, he was present for a Trump Tower discussion that arguably most directly links Trump and the reimbursements at the center of the case that prosecutors say are fraudulent.

Cohen says the 2017 Trump Tower meeting occurred on the cusp of Inauguration Day and was where he, Trump and Weisselberg hammered out the mechanics of reimbursing him for the Daniels hush money payment. There, Cohen said, they agreed that the lawyer would receive a total of \$420,000 in monthly installments for what would be billed — deceptively, prosecutors say — as legal services.

"He approved it," Cohen testified. "And he also said: 'This is going to be one heck of a ride in D.C.'"

Whether jurors will have wanted to have heard from Weisselberg is uncertain, but in a case that centers more on paperwork than sex, the account of that meeting is likely to be held up by prosecutors as a vital piece of evidence and it will be important to see how they return to it as they wrap up their case with closing statements.

WHAT MUST BE PROVED FOR A CONVICTION?

To convict Trump of felony falsifying business records, prosecutors must convince jurors beyond a reasonable doubt that he not only falsified or caused business records to be entered falsely, but that he did so with intent to commit or conceal another crime. Any verdict must be unanimous.

Prosecutors allege that Trump logged Cohen's repayment as legal expenses to conceal multiple other crimes, including breaches of campaign finance law and a violation of a state election law alleging a conspiracy to promote or prevent an election.

In his opening statement, Assistant District Attorney Matthew Colangelo told jurors the case "is about a criminal conspiracy and a cover-up — an illegal conspiracy to undermine the integrity of a presidential

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election, and then the steps that Donald Trump took to conceal that illegal election fraud.”

Specifically, prosecutors contend, the payments to McDougal, Daniels and the doorman violated federal restrictions on corporate and individual campaign contributions and were meant to conceal damaging information from the voting public.

Among other evidence, jurors heard testimony about Cohen’s 2018 guilty to a campaign finance crime and the National Enquirer’s nonprosecution agreement and \$187,500 fine for the McDougal payment, which the Federal Election Commission considered an illegal corporate contribution to Trump’s campaign.

New York also has a misdemeanor falsifying business records charge, which requires proving only that a defendant made or caused the false entries, but it is not part of Trump’s case and will not be considered by jurors.

Today in History: May 20

Charles Lindbergh takes off on solo flight to France

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, May 20, the 141st day of 2024. There are 225 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, New York, aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo flight to France.

On this date:

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which was intended to encourage settlements west of the Mississippi River by making federal land available for farming.

In 1916, the Saturday Evening Post published its first Norman Rockwell cover; the illustration shows a scowling boy dressed in his Sunday best, dutifully pushing a baby carriage past a couple of boys wearing baseball uniforms.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. (Because of weather and equipment problems, Earhart set down in Northern Ireland instead of her intended destination, France.)

In 1948, Chiang Kai-shek (chang ky-shehk) was inaugurated as the first president of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In 1956, the United States exploded the first airborne hydrogen bomb over Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.

In 1959, nearly 5,000 Japanese-Americans had their U.S. citizenship restored after choosing to renounce it during World War II.

In 1961, a white mob attacked a busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama, prompting the federal government to send in U.S. marshals to restore order.

In 1969, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces captured Ap Bia Mountain, referred to as “Hamburger Hill” by the Americans, following one of the bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War.

In 1985, Radio Marti, operated by the U.S. government, began broadcasting; Cuba responded by attempting to jam its signal.

In 2009, in a rare, bipartisan defeat for President Barack Obama, the Senate voted overwhelmingly, 90-6, to keep the prison at Guantanamo Bay open for the foreseeable future and forbid the transfer of any detainees to facilities in the United States.

In 2012, Robin Gibb, who along with his brothers Maurice and Barry, defined the disco era as part of the Bee Gees, died in London at 62.

In 2013, Ray Manzarek, a founding member of the 1960s rock group the Doors, died in Germany at age 74.

In 2015, four of the world’s biggest banks — JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup’s banking unit Citicorp, Barclays and the Royal Bank of Scotland — agreed to pay more than \$5 billion in penalties and plead guilty to rigging the currency markets.

In 2018, the Vegas Golden Knights reached the Stanley Cup Finals, becoming the first NHL expansion

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team to achieve the feat since 1968.

In 2020, President Donald Trump threatened to hold up federal funds for two election battleground states (Michigan and Nevada) that were making it easier to vote by mail during the pandemic.

In 2022, longtime New Yorker writer and editor Roger Angell, who contributed hundreds of essays and stories to the magazine over a 70-year career, died at age 101.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-author James McEachin is 94. Actor Anthony Zerbe is 88. Actor David Proval is 82. Singer-actor Cher is 78. Actor-comedian Dave Thomas is 76. Rock musician Warren Cann is 74. Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, is 73. Former New York Gov. David Paterson is 70. Delaware Gov. John Carney is 68. Actor Dean Butler is 68. TV-radio personality Ron Reagan is 66. Rock musician Jane Wiedlin (The Go-Go's) is 66. Actor Bronson Pinchot is 65. Singer Susan Cowsill is 65. Actor John Billingsley is 64. Actor Tony Goldwyn is 64. Singer Nick Heyward is 63. TV personality Ted Allen is 59. Actor Mindy Cohn is 58. Rock musician Tom Gorman (Belly) is 58. Actor Gina Ravera is 58. Actor Timothy Olyphant is 56. Former race car driver Tony Stewart is 53. Rapper Busta Rhymes is 52. Actor Daya Vaidya is 51. Actor Matt Czuchry (zoo-KREE') is 47. Actor Angela Goethals is 47. Actor-singer Naturi Naughton is 40. Country singer Jon Pardi is 39.