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Wednesday, June 26

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas and carrots, apricots, whole wheat bread.

- U12 R/B hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- U10 B/R hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- SB at Claremont (U8 at 5 p.m. (1), U10 Gld at 6 p.m. (1), U12 at 7 p.m. (1))
- Olive Grove Men's League
- Youth Golf Lessons at Olive Grove
- Groton CM&A: Family Fun Night, 7 p.m.

Thursday, June 27

- Senior Menu: Cheeseburger quinoa casserole, cheesy breadstick, steamed Brussel sprouts, fruit.
- Junior Legion at Bryant, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- Junior Teeners hosts Aberdeen Smitty's, 5 p.m.
- U12 B/W hosts Aberdeen 12, 5:30 p.m. (2)

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

Be proud of yourself
because you've survived
the days you thought you
couldn't.



- SB at Britton (U10 Blk at 6 p.m. (2), U12 at 6 p.m. (2))
- SB U14 hosts Oakes, 6 p.m. (1)
- Wage Memorial Library Story Time, 10 a.m.

Friday June 28

- Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, vanilla pudding with mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.
- Legion hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- T-Ball B hosts Claremont, 6 p.m.

Saturday, June 29

- Junior Legion vs. Platte/Geddes at Britton, 9 a.m. (1)
- U10 All - Groton Tourney
- SB U10 Gld and Blk at Watertown Tournament
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
- Moose Golf Outing at Olive Grove 10 a.m.

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1440

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Assange Pleads Guilty

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiring to obtain and disclose US national defense information, ending over a decade of fighting extradition. Assange's plea deal includes a 62-month sentence, crediting the five years already served at a London prison, allowing him to avoid US imprisonment. The 52-year-old is expected to return to his home country of Australia.

The charges stem from hundreds of thousands of classified US military documents released by WikiLeaks in 2010 about the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As part of the plea, Assange must destroy the information he supplied to WikiLeaks. Assange was granted asylum in 2012 and spent seven years at Ecuador's London embassy before being arrested in 2019. He faced an 18-count indictment in the US and up to 175 years in prison. In April, the US provided assurance Assange could seek First Amendment protection and that no death penalty would be imposed.

The sentencing occurred in Saipan of the Northern Mariana Islands—a US territory about 135 miles northeast of Guam—chosen for its distance from the US mainland and its proximity to Australia.

Israeli Military Shake-Up

Israel's military must begin drafting ultra-Orthodox Jewish men, the country's Supreme Court unanimously ruled yesterday in a decision that has potential ramifications for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition.

Since Israel's founding in 1948, ultra-Orthodox Jewish citizens have been exempt from compulsory military service, required for the country's secular Jewish majority (both men and women). Ultra-Orthodox Jewish citizens account for roughly 13% of Israel's population, or 1 million people. The Supreme Court said the military exemption for religious scholars had no legal basis after related laws either expired or were struck down. The nine-judge panel also ordered the government to suspend millions of dollars of funding from religious schools—known as yeshivas—whose students don't comply with military draft notices.

Netanyahu's coalition includes both secular parties and two ultra-Orthodox parties. The court decision could further fracture the coalition, collapsing the government and triggering new elections, all amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

From the Moon's Far Side

A Chinese spacecraft successfully returned roughly 5 pounds of rocks mined from the far side of the moon to Earth yesterday, according to the China National Space Administration. The sample is the first far-side lunar regolith—the loose layer of dirt above bedrock—to be retrieved for scientific study. It is the latest success for China's Chang'e (pronounced "chong-uh") space program, which included the first controlled far-side lunar landing in 2019.

After launching May 3, the spacecraft spent several weeks in lunar orbit before descending to the South Pole-Aitken Basin, the solar system's oldest-known impact crater, where it harvested rocks and dust. Mission operators used two previously deployed orbiting satellites to communicate with the lander. A mechanical rover snapped a photo of the vehicle on the surface before the sample was launched back into orbit.

Chinese and international scholars expect the sample to shed light on the distinct geochemical makeup of the moon's cratered far side, which lacks the vast volcanic deposits covering the near side.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2024 NBA Draft kicks off tonight (8 pm ET, ABC/ESPN) with Round 1 from Brooklyn, New York; see full preview and mock draft.

Shifty Shellshock, frontman for rock band Crazy Town, dies at 49.

Gena Rowlands, "The Notebook" star and two-time Oscar nominee, has Alzheimer's disease.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, organizers of the Oscars, invites nearly 500 new members, including Jessica Alba, Catherine O'Hara, and Lily Gladstone.

Science & Technology

Waymo fully opens its self-driving robotaxis in San Francisco to the general public; service has been offered in Phoenix—a flatter and more grid-like environment—since October 2020.

Researchers pinpoint cellular mutation responsible for a rare condition known as Ondine's curse, where patients lack the ability to regulate breathing while unconscious.

Scientists discover bacteria that produce antifreeze-like proteins; species of marine worms use the bacteria to survive in polar waters.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq +1.3%) as Nvidia shares rebound following Monday sell-off.

European Union regulators charge Microsoft with violating antitrust regulations by bundling Teams with Office 365 and Microsoft 365 subscriptions; Microsoft could face a fine of up to 10% of its annual global revenue.

Rivian shares rise over 50% in after-hours trading after Volkswagen announces up to \$5B investment in the electric vehicle maker by 2026 as part of new joint venture.

Tesla recalls most of its Cybertrucks over issues with the windshield wipers and loose trim, impacting an estimated 11,000 vehicles.

Politics & World Affairs

Oklahoma Supreme Court blocks what would have been the first religious charter school in the US; Catholic school likely to appeal.

US surgeon general issues advisory declaring gun violence a public health crisis; US gun-linked deaths surpassed 48,000 people in 2022, over half by suicide.

Kenyan police open fire on protesters storming and setting fire to the country's parliament, killing at least five people while lawmakers flee in underground tunnels; group had been protesting a proposed bill to raise taxes.

Kenyan police officers arrive in Haiti as part of international mission to quell violence.

Ukraine and Moldova begin membership talks with the European Union in process expected to take years.

International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for Russia's former defense minister and another senior leader over alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

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Butte County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: SD Highway 34, mile marker 13, three miles west of Belle Fourche, SD
When: 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Driver 1: Male, 69, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2017 Toyota Sienna
Seatbelt Use: Yes

Butte County, S.D.- A 69-year-old man died this afternoon in a single-vehicle crash near Belle Fourche, SD.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2017 Toyota Sienna was traveling eastbound on SD Highway 34 near mile marker 13. For an unknown reason, the vehicle left the roadway and entered the ditch, struck a driveway approach and came to rest in an irrigation ditch. The driver died from his injuries.

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

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

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Groton Area varsity takes third in the Rumble in the Jungle

The second day of the Rumble in the Jungle was held Tuesday in the air conditioned Groton Area Arena. The event is scheduled to be an annual event and according to Coach Brian Dolan, all of the teams that participated have committed to next year's events. He said that his goal is get to 12 teams and he said that he already had 11 that are interested in attending.

In the first round brackets games, Dawson-Boyd defeated Viborg-Hurley, 55-46. Groton varsity had a first round bye as Lennox was not able to participate on Tuesday. In the lower bracket, Aberdeen Christian defeated Mobridge-Pollock, 51-43, and Rapid City Christian defeated Groton Area JV, 55-39. In the Groton game, Easton Weber made four three-pointers and finished with 12 points, Ryder Schelle made one three-pointer and finished with seven points, Karson Zak and Jayden Schwan each had five points, Jace Johnson and Wyatt Wambach each made a three-pointer, Logan Warrington had two points and Asher Johnson added a free throw.

In the loser's bracket, Viborg-Hurley defeated Mobridge-Pollock, 44-42, and the fifth place game, Groton Area JV defeated Mobridge-Pollock, 49-27. In the Groton game, Jayden Schwan led Groton Area with 10 points which included one three-pointer, Easton Weber made two three-pointers and finished with nine points, Ryder Schelle had eight points, Jace Johnson six, Asher Johnson and Ethan Kroll each had four points, Karson Zak had three, Wyatt Wambach made a three-pointer for three points and Logan Warrington finished with a free throw.

In the championship bracket, Rapid City Christian defeated Aberdeen Christian, 60-38, and Dawson-Boyd defeated Groton Area, 51-43. In the Groton game, the Tigers had an eight point run in the first half to take a 22-10 and led at halftime, 31-24. Dawson-Boyd had a 12-point run early in the second half to take a 42-33 lead and went on to win by eight. Keegen Tracy led Groton Area with one three-pointer and finished with 15 points, Ryder Johnson made one three-pointer and finished with 14 points, Gage Sippel had six points while Kassen Keough and Becker Bosma each had two points.

In the third place game, Groton Area defeated Aberdeen Christian, 62-35. Keegen Tracy led Groton Area, making two three-pointers and finished with 14 points. Kassen Keough made three three-pointers and finished with 13 points. After that Becker Bosma had seven points, Teylor Diegel made one three-pointer and finished with seven points, Ryder Johnson made two three-pointers and had six points, Jayden Schwan had four points, Easton Weber made one three-pointer and had four points, Karson Zak made one three-pointer for three points and Blake Pauli had two points.

In the championship game, Dawson-Boyd defeated Rapid City Christian, 62-58.

The Groton Area games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Brad and Pam Hanson.

- Paul Kosel

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June 17-23, 2024

We had a short week out in Washington due to the Juneteenth holiday, but we still packed it full of meetings and votes. I was happy to see so many South Dakota students from all across the state with the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. I also was able to speak with a group

of Capitol Hill interns. In addition, as promised, you can find more about the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in this week's edition as well. It includes several wins for South Dakota and Ellsworth Air Force Base, as well as our men and women in uniform and our national defense. Here's my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakotans I met with: South Dakota students in town as part of the South Dakota Rural Electric Association's Youth Tour; and students from Highmore and Miller.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Alexandria, Bison, Brookings, Buffalo, Centerville, Clear Lake, Custer, Elk Point, Ethan, Faulkton, Garretson, Highmore, Hill City, Kadoka, Kimball, Martin, Miller, Murdo, Oldham, Philip, Pierre, Platte, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Spearfish, Tabor, Tyndall, Wall and Woonsocket.

Other meetings: Tobias Lindner, Germany's Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office; Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and Christy Goldsmith Romero, nominee to be chair of the FDIC. I attended our Senate Bible Study where our verse of the week was Ephesians 5:33. I also spoke with interns from across Capitol Hill as part of the 2024 Intern Lecture Series. They had lots of great questions about everything from public service to free speech to tribal relations.

Votes taken: 5 – most of these were on nominations to positions in the Department of State and judge positions in Illinois and the District of Columbia. We also voted on the Fire Grants and Safety Act, a bill to authorize appropriations for the U.S. Fire Administration. This legislation extends funding for local fire departments that they use for staffing and equipment. I voted yes on this bill.

NDAA: In the last week's Round[s] Up, I mentioned the Fiscal Year 2025 NDAA that passed through the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). This is the tenth NDAA that I've helped to author as a member of SASC. This past week, I released a list of some of the biggest wins for South Dakota that made it into the committee version of the bill. This includes \$282 million in military construction projects to support the B-21 Raider housed at Ellsworth, as well as over \$2.6 billion for B-21 Raider procurement. I had a number of other provisions that made it into the bill as well, including my Military Personnel Confirmation Restoration Act, legislation to provide backpay for military officers whose promotions were delayed because of Senate holds. You can read more about the NDAA and view a full list of wins here.

Legislation introduced: I introduced a bill with my colleague Senator Angus King (I-Maine) to establish an Office of Falls Prevention at the VA. This program would follow the best practices that have already been successful at other non-VA hospitals. America's veterans deserve access to the preventative care solutions that evidence-based slip and fall prevention programs offer. It's our responsibility to make certain veterans have access to these programs so they can live safely and comfortably after their service and sacrifice to our great nation. You can read more about the SAFE STEPS for Veterans Act here.

Letter to CBP and ICE: I joined my colleague Senator Jim Risch (R-Idaho) in sending a letter to the Biden administration demanding answers for Custom and Border Protection's (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) failure to share information about the apprehension and subsequent release of suspects on the terror watchlist into the U.S. The letter outlines a case in which CBP apprehended an illegal immigrant at the southwestern border, received an inconclusive match to the terror watchlist and released the illegal immigrant into the U.S. You can read more about this letter here.

Classified briefings: I had our bi-weekly cybersecurity education seminar. I also received current situational updates through the Select Committee on Intelligence.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Agency Village, Deadwood, Madison, Milbank, Parker, Sioux Falls and Sisseton.

Steps taken this past week: 44,982 steps or 22.25 miles

WIC Program Announces New Income Guidelines

PIERRE, SD – The Department of Health has released new income guidelines for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program effective July 1, 2024.

WIC is a special supplemental nutrition program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provided at no cost to eligible moms, infants, and children. It aims to empower families through support with healthy eating, nutrition, and breastfeeding, as well as offering referrals to other essential services. WIC strives to help improve the overall health and well-being of families.

“WIC makes a profound difference in the lives of families, offering essential nutrition, heartfelt discussions, and unwavering support,” said Department of Health Secretary, Melissa Magstadt. “The mission is to empower moms, infants, and children with the knowledge and resources they need to thrive and live healthier, happier lives.”

If your family’s annual income does not exceed the following amounts for the size of your family, you could qualify for WIC:

| Family Size | 185% of Federal Poverty Level | Family Size | 185% of Federal Poverty Level |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | \$27,861 | 6 | \$77,626 |
| 2 | \$37,814 | 7 | \$87,579 |
| 3 | \$47,767 | 8 | \$97,532 |
| 4 | \$57,720 | 9 | \$107,485 |
| 5 | \$67,673 | 10 | \$117,438 |

To find out if you or children in your household are eligible for the WIC Program and to apply online go to <https://www.sd.gov/wic>. Or you can call for an appointment at your local WIC office. Offices can be found under the county listings in your phone book or on the web at <https://www.sd.gov/wic>.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider. More information about the program is available at <https://www.sd.gov/wic>.

At the heart of the Department of Health’s mission is a simple goal: to protect and improve the health of all South Dakotans. The department is entrusted with the vital task of promoting wellness, preventing disease, and ensuring access to quality healthcare for all South Dakotans.

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Milling and Paving Scheduled to Begin on U.S. Highway 212 Between Clark and Watertown

WATERTOWN, S.D. – On Monday, July 1, 2024, cold milling and asphalt operations are scheduled to begin on 21 miles of U.S. Highway 212 from Clark to west of Watertown. The project also includes two miles of Highway 212 shoulders and service roads within Watertown.

Traffic will be controlled by flaggers and pilot car. Motorists can expect delays up to 15 minutes through the work zone.

Border States Paving, Inc., of Fargo, ND is the primary contractor for this \$11 million project. Paving operations are expected to be complete on this section of Highway 212 by Monday, Sept. 9, 2024.

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Petitions filed to refer carbon pipeline law to ballot; Summit plans to reapply for SD permit

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 25, 2024 2:07 PM

South Dakota voters might decide on Nov. 5 whether to reject a new state law regulating carbon dioxide pipelines.

The ballot measure committee known as the South Dakota Property Rights and Local Control Alliance submitted an estimated 28,000 petition signatures to the Secretary of State's Office on Monday, said Jim Eschenbaum, chairman of the organization. The group needed signatures from 17,508 registered South Dakota voters by today's deadline. The Secretary of State's Office will now sample the signatures to determine if enough of them are valid.

The group aims to refer Senate Bill 201, which the Legislature and Gov. Kristi Noem approved last winter. Supporters said the legislation will implement new protections for local governments and landowners while providing a path forward for pipeline projects. Opponents view it as a capitulation to pipeline companies.

The bill came in response to an \$8.5 billion pipeline proposed by Summit Carbon Solutions, which is headquartered in Iowa. The pipeline would collect carbon dioxide from 57 ethanol plants in South Dakota and neighboring states and pipe it to North Dakota for underground storage. The project could benefit from federal tax credits that incentivize carbon sequestration to fight climate change.

The Iowa Utilities Board approved Summit's project Tuesday. The company announced shortly afterward that it plans to apply again for a permit in South Dakota next month, after its initial application was denied last year by the Public Utilities Commission. The company's pipeline application in North Dakota is under consideration, and it still needs an underground storage permit in North Dakota.

The South Dakota denial was partly due to conflicts with county ordinances that require minimum distances known as "setbacks" between pipelines and other features. The project has also faced opposition from some landowners concerned about property rights and safety, including health risks associated with potential leaks.

Property rights were a factor in several Republican primary races in eastern South Dakota earlier this summer. Out of 14 incumbents who lost their seat, 11 of them voted for SB 201.

"I think people realize now that people are paying attention and maybe want representation in Pierre that won't be sellouts to corporate America," Eschenbaum said.

What the law says

Among the protections in the new bill is authority for counties to collect a pipeline surcharge of up to \$1 per linear foot, with at least half of the surcharge allocated for property tax relief for affected landowners. The remaining funds could be used at the county's discretion. Companies also must submit an agricultural impact mitigation plan and bury pipelines at least 4 feet deep.

The bill mandates public disclosure of modeling to gauge the impact of a pipeline rupture and ensures that pipeline companies, rather than landowners, are liable for damages caused by the projects.

In response to controversy about out-of-state contractors working for pipeline companies, the law says a land agent must be a pipeline facility employee, a resident of the state, or a real estate agent licensed in the state.

House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Fort Pierre, was the prime sponsor of the bill in the House. The

legislation provides additional property rights and money for farmers and counties, Mortenson said. He encouraged voters to support the law if it's certified for the ballot.

"If you don't think the pipeline should be held accountable, you should vote no. If you don't think farmers deserve additional compensation, you should vote no. If you don't think counties deserve additional compensation from these pipelines, you should vote no," Mortenson said. "But if you want farmers protected and counties benefited if these pipelines are built, you should vote yes like the Legislature did and the governor approved."

Setback language

The most controversial part of the new law is its language about the Public Utilities Commission and local setback laws. Prior state law allowed the commission to overrule counties' pipeline setbacks, although the commission has so far declined to do that.

The new law says a permit from the commission automatically overrules local setback laws, unless the commission specifically chooses to uphold them.

"It took the voice away from county commissioners and gave it to three people in Pierre," said Eschenbaum, who is a Hand County commissioner. "They basically say we're not smart enough, that we don't understand. I think it's an awful precedent to set."

Finally, the legislation codifies a "Landowner Bill of Rights" that includes references to rights in other South Dakota laws, including two other pipeline-related bills passed during the most recent legislative session.

If the law is referred to voters, it would join six other measures already approved to be on the ballot.

Ballot question status update

Measures placed on the Nov. 5 ballot by the Legislature:

An amendment to the state constitution updating references to certain officeholders and people (replacing male-specific pronouns with neutral language).

An amendment to the state constitution authorizing the state to impose work requirements on certain people who are eligible for expanded Medicaid.

Citizen-proposed measures validated for the ballot:

An initiated measure prohibiting state sales taxes on items sold for human consumption, specifically targeting state sales taxes on groceries.

An initiated amendment to the state constitution re-establishing abortion rights.

An initiated amendment to the state constitution establishing open primary elections.

An initiated measure legalizing adult recreational use, possession and distribution of marijuana.

Referendum petition, pending signature validation:

A proposed referendum of a new law regulating carbon dioxide pipelines.

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.

Iowa Utilities Board approves permit for controversial Summit pipeline

Eminent domain can be used in Iowa, but project still needs approval in the Dakotas

BY: CLARK KAUFFMAN, IOWA CAPITAL DISPATCH - JUNE 25, 2024 2:06 PM

The Iowa Utilities Board gave its approval Tuesday for the controversial Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline and for the company to use eminent domain to acquire landowners' property.

The company hopes to begin construction next year with the goal of making the pipeline operational in 2026. The pipeline, which would be the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, would carry liquified carbon dioxide from ethanol plants in Iowa and surrounding states to a site in North Dakota, where the

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company hopes for reconsideration and approval of a previously denied permit.

The pipeline would cross more than 2,000 miles across five states, including nearly 700 miles in Iowa. In planning the pipeline, Summit has partnered with 57 ethanol plants and the company says it has signed voluntary easement agreements with 75% of the Iowa route's landowners.

In giving its approval to the project, the Iowa Utilities Board ruled that Summit cannot begin construction in Iowa until the necessary permits are secured in South Dakota and North Dakota. The board also stated Summit will be able to use eminent domain in Iowa to force the sale of land from property owners who are opposed to the use of the property for the project.

In the wake of that decision, Iowa House Speaker Pat Grassley, a Republican from New Hartford, said the rights of Iowa landowners are the one of the "highest priorities" of House Republicans.

"This just further confirms what we already knew — that the Iowa Legislature must conduct a comprehensive review and update the state's eminent domain laws," Grassley said. "We will seek feedback from Iowans on the best way forward and in the meantime, I stand ready to assist my constituents however I can."

The proposed pipeline has been the focus of intense public debate over the past 30 months, with farmers, environmentalists and pipeline safety advocates voicing their opposition. In August 2023, Summit was denied permits in North Dakota, and one month later it was denied permits in South Dakota.

In response to the board's action, Food & Water Watch Policy Director Jim Walsh blamed Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds for a decision that he said will benefit corporations at the expense of Iowa's rural communities.

"Summit's carbon pipeline scam is nothing but a gift to Big Ag and the polluting ethanol industry," Walsh said. "The pipeline poses substantial risks to public safety and will do little to nothing to reduce climate pollution. Gov. Reynolds's administration is at the center of this decision, and the whole project is made possible by massive federal tax credits and subsidies for the dangerous and unnecessary carbon capture industry. While Summit stands to make billions, it is our climate and communities that lose out."

Summit: Approval a 'significant milestone'

In a written statement, Summit called the Iowa Utilities Board's approval "a significant milestone not for just Summit Carbon Solutions, but for the entire agriculture industry as it seeks access to new and emerging markets, like sustainable aviation fuel, by lowering ethanol's carbon intensity score."

Lee Blank, CEO of Summit Carbon Solutions, predicted the project's "momentum" will continue as the company pursues permit reconsideration in North Dakota and prepares to file a new South Dakota permit application in early July.

"We look forward to engaging with the state throughout this process and are confident in a successful outcome," Blank said of the South Dakota effort.

In the two and half years since the Iowa Utilities Board first began weighing Summit's permit application, the board has filed tens of thousands of pages of testimony and exhibits, heard testimony from more than 200 witnesses, and considered 4,180 comments, objections, and letters of support for the project.

Utilities board members issue dissents

As part of the board's approval on Tuesday, Iowa Utilities Board Chairman Erik Helland issued a partial dissent in which he agreed with all of the findings and conclusions except for the condition that prohibits construction in Iowa until North Dakota and South Dakota have given their approval. Helland said such a condition essentially gives away the board's authority to another jurisdiction.

Board member Joshua Byrnes also issued a partial dissent, taking issue with the approval of a lateral route between the Quad County Corn Processors facility in Ida County and the Green Plains Shenandoah facility in Fremont County. Byrnes argued that portion of the route was not justified or proper.

Before the board gives its separate approval for construction permits, Summit will have to submit what the board called "numerous revised exhibits." The company will also have to secure and maintain a \$100 million insurance policy, and it will be required to compensate landowners for any damages that result

from the pipeline's construction.

Walsh said that while Summit "has won this round in Iowa, this is not the end of the line. There are still decisions at the federal and state levels that will determine whether this dangerous pipeline is ever built. The IUB's approval of this dangerous project underscores the urgent need for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to update the outdated regulations for carbon dioxide pipelines before any other authorizations are issued."

Deputy Editor Clark Kauffman of the Iowa Capital Dispatch has worked during the past 30 years as both an investigative reporter and editorial writer at two of Iowa's largest newspapers, the Des Moines Register and the Quad-City Times. He has won numerous state and national awards for reporting and editorial writing. His 2004 series on prosecutorial misconduct in Iowa was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. From October 2018 through November 2019, Kauffman was an assistant ombudsman for the Iowa Office of Ombudsman, an agency that investigates citizens' complaints of wrongdoing within state and local government agencies.

COMMENTARY

Primary upsets could cause a hard right turn in the Legislature

by DANA HESS

JUNE 25, 2024 6:00 AM

It has been known for some time that there are two Republican parties in the South Dakota Legislature. Now one of them is getting bigger.

The Republican primary earlier this month saw 14 legislators defeated. Add to that 21 Republican legislators who chose not to seek reelection or were term-limited in their chamber and did not try to switch chambers, and that's quite a bit of institutional memory that has been shown the door.

The two Republican parties consist of one group of traditional conservatives and another group that's even more conservative and not at all traditional. One group is interested in steering the ship of state while the other would rather run it aground.

The primary election losses by traditional Republicans were due partially to a backlash against carbon pipeline legislation that many of them supported. The legislation calls for counties to be paid for allowing the pipelines access, and includes other new protections for local governments and landowners.

There is an effort now to get that law referred to a vote of the people in November. Detractors fault the bill for the power it gives to the state's Public Utilities Commission. The PUC already had the power to overrule restrictive local pipeline siting laws, but had declined to use it; the legislation makes that power automatic when the PUC issues a pipeline permit, unless the PUC decides to require compliance with local laws. Crucially for pipeline opponents, the legislation does not ban carbon pipeline companies from using the legal process of eminent domain to obtain access to privately owned land.

Just as pipeline opponents crowded the primary ballot, leading to 44 GOP contests, many of the people who went to the polls in the lightly attended primary were pipeline opponents, too.

There's no telling yet what, exactly, the next Legislature will look like. While the primary set the Republican field, Democrats will get their turn in November. Democrats have done a better than usual job this year of attracting candidates. However, they are still leaving plenty of legislative openings uncontested. Republicans will get 18 of 35 Senate seats without a fight as well as 36 of 70 House seats.

Perhaps this new batch of Republicans will have more on their minds than pipeline legislation. There is a chance that they care about more of the issues facing South Dakota. Maybe, even now, they're busy studying education standards, familiarizing themselves with tax policy and looking for inventive ways for the state to take care of the people who can't take care of themselves. Here's hoping they approach their work in Pierre in a statesmanlike, workmanlike manner.

If, however, as Shakespeare said, the past is prologue, there's a chance their approach to governance will reflect the work for the ultra-conservatives who have gone before them. This could include an emphasis on personal freedom and social hot-button issues. If they behave as their predecessors have, we

can expect symbolic commemorations designed to split the party and votes on bills with topics that don't solve problems but are designed to make incumbents vulnerable in the next primary.

If this year's primary marked a trend, and more candidates like these ultra-conservatives keep getting elected, we may not recognize our state when they're done with it:

Eminent domain will not be nearly so eminent.

Vaccinations will go from mandatory to voluntary before they are banned outright.

Guns will be free.

LGBTQ laws will be so strict that grocery stores will no longer be allowed to sell rainbow sherbet.

Once they figure out a Landowners' Bill of Rights that's more to their liking, these one-issue wonders will discover that they have two-year terms that come with the expectation that they do the hard work of governing the state.

They may think they have a mandate to fix the pipeline laws when they ride into Pierre, but the expectations for all lawmakers are greater than that. Legislators are supposed to serve the people on all the issues, not just the one that helped get them elected.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Four states to begin voluntary testing for bird flu in dairy farm milk tanks

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JUNE 25, 2024 2:36 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Tuesday that four states will launch voluntary pilot programs in the days ahead to test bulk milk tanks on dairy farms for bird flu — a move that's aimed at making it easier for farmers to ship herds across state lines and for public health officials to track spread of the virus.

Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico and Texas will be in the first round of voluntary participation, with other states likely to follow, officials said on a call with reporters.

"This list of participating states is just the beginning," said Eric Deeble, the acting senior advisor for H5N1 response at USDA.

"We are in close conversation with about a dozen other states who are very interested in participating as well," Deeble said. "But it was important for us to get these four states going so that other states could watch how the program works and gain additional confidence."

The launch of the pilot program, he said, is "an important step forward" for efforts to reduce the spread of bird flu, also known as H5N1, as well as for expanding understanding of the virus.

Farmers who voluntarily enter the program will be able to move their herds across state lines without additional testing after bulk milk tanks or similar representative samples test negative for H5N1 for three consecutive weeks.

"Producers must also comply with continued regular weekly monitoring and testing of their herd for H5N1, but that process can happen with very little effort on the part of the producer, using routine bulk milk samples," Deeble said.

126 cases of bird flu confirmed

The announcement is part of the federal government's ongoing response to the months-long outbreak within dairy cattle and years-long challenges faced by the country's poultry industry.

The USDA has confirmed 126 cases of bird flu in dairy cattle herds in a dozen states as of June 21, including Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming.

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Idaho has the most dairy herds affected, with a total of 27. That's followed by Michigan with 25 herds and Texas with 21 herds. Colorado has reported 18 affected herds, while each of the other states has fewer than 10 herds testing positive for bird flu, according to the USDA data.

Three dairy farmworkers have contracted avian flu this year, though all cases were mild.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reinforced during the call Tuesday that the risk to the general public remains low, though there is an increased risk of contracting the virus for workers, both on dairy farms and poultry farms.

FDA to do more testing

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also announced Tuesday it's broadening its testing for H5N1 to include about 155 additional samples of dairy products, including aged raw milk cheese, cream cheese, butter and ice cream.

The FDA has repeatedly tested pasteurized milk from store shelves in the months since the first dairy cattle herd tested positive for H5N1 and has continuously emphasized the nation's milk supply remains safe.

"This retail sampling effort is intended to address remaining geographic and product gaps from the initial sampling of the commercial milk supply that FDA conducted between April and May of this year," said Don Prater, acting director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the FDA.

It will likely take several weeks before those results are completed and made public, he said.

That second round of expanded food safety testing will not include raw milk, since it is not approved for interstate commerce, he said.

But the FDA has sent a letter to its local, state and tribal partners, cautioning those that do allow the sale of raw milk to talk with consumers about the additional risks, given that H5N1 is spreading through dairy herds in several parts of the country.

Prater, speaking on the call Tuesday, noted the FDA continues to strongly advise against drinking raw milk.

"We also recommend that the industry does not manufacture or sell raw milk or raw milk products, including raw milk cheese made with milk from cows showing symptoms of illness, including those infected with the avian influenza viruses or exposed to those infected with avian influenza viruses."

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

65th Anniversary

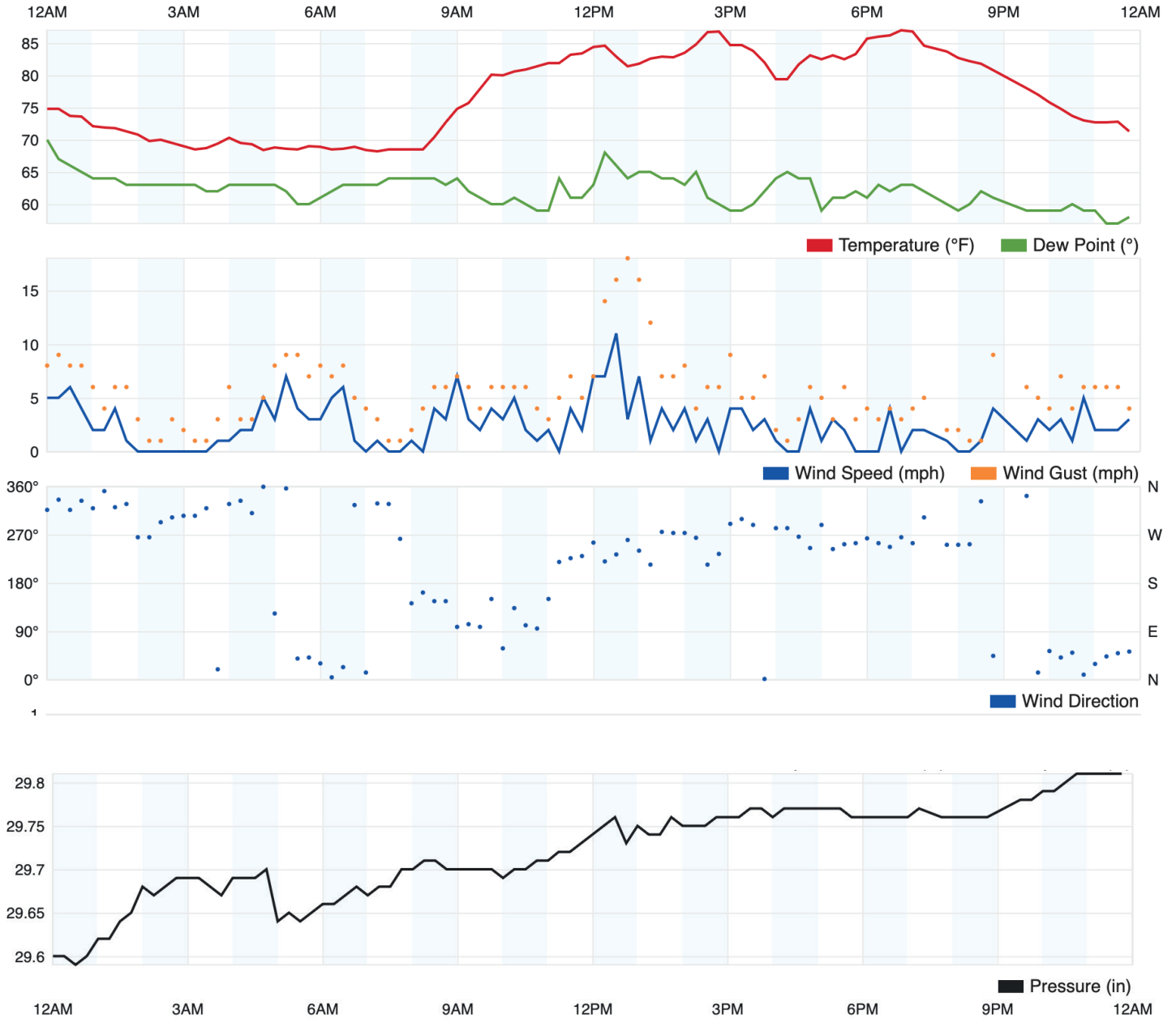


Don and Nancy Hein will celebrate their 65th Wedding Anniversary on July 3, 2024. Greetings may be sent to 918 Arbor Lane #46, Aberdeen SD 57401.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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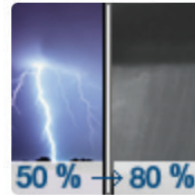
Wednesday

Wednesday
Night

Thursday

Thursday
Night

Friday



High: 79 °F

Low: 58 °F

High: 77 °F

Low: 64 °F

High: 83 °F

Sunny

Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Chance
T-storms and
Breezy

Breezy.
Chance
T-storms then
Showers

Slight Chance
T-storms



Severe Weather Threat Overview

June 26, 2024
3:30 AM

Thursday Afternoon/Evening/Overnight

Hazards

Hail (Golfball & larger) and Damaging Winds. An isolated Tornado or two can not be ruled out.

Timing/Location

Storms develop along a front during the heat of the afternoon Thursday in western SD - moving east into the Missouri valley late afternoon & evening. Storms continue east but with lower risk of severe weather Thursday night in eastern SD

Tornado



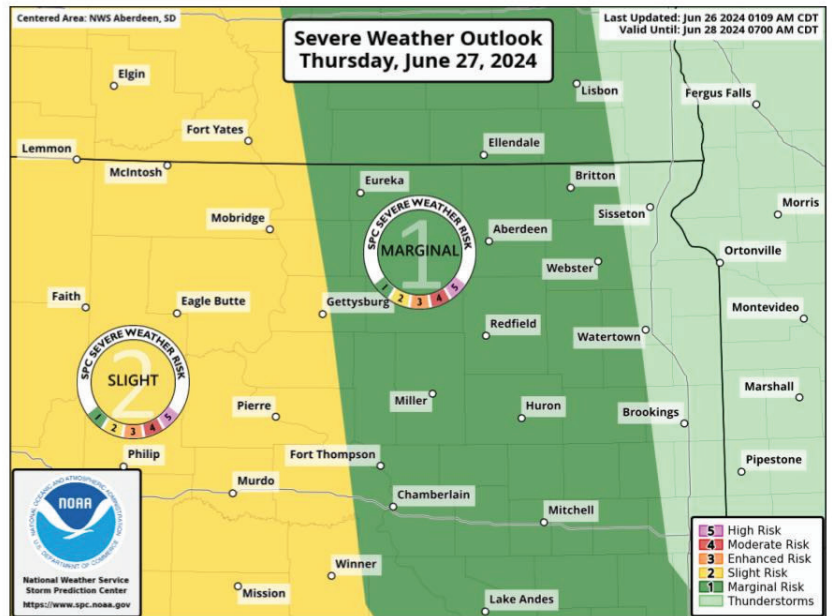
Hail



Wind



Flooding



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The severe weather threat for Thursday afternoon/evening is focused across mainly western SD, with a lower risk for the eastern half of the state Thursday night.

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Off & On Chances For Moisture

Today



Highs:
75 to 83°

Thursday



Highs:
75 to 81°

Rainfall
Chance
60-80%

Friday



Highs:
79 to 85°

Rainfall
Chance
30-80%

Saturday



Highs:
68 to 74°

Lows
Sunday AM:
48 to 53°

Sunday



Highs:
71 to 78°

Rainfall
Chance
10-20%

Cool This Weekend

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A couple of opportunities for moisture over the next few days, with the best chance late Thursday/early Friday with a frontal passage. This system presents a severe weather risk as well. Should be unusually cool for late June with lows around 50 Sunday morning!

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87 °F at 2:44 PM

Low Temp: 68 °F at 5:26 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 12:42 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 42 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 109 in 1933

Record Low: 39 in 2017

Average High: 83

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in June.: 3.24

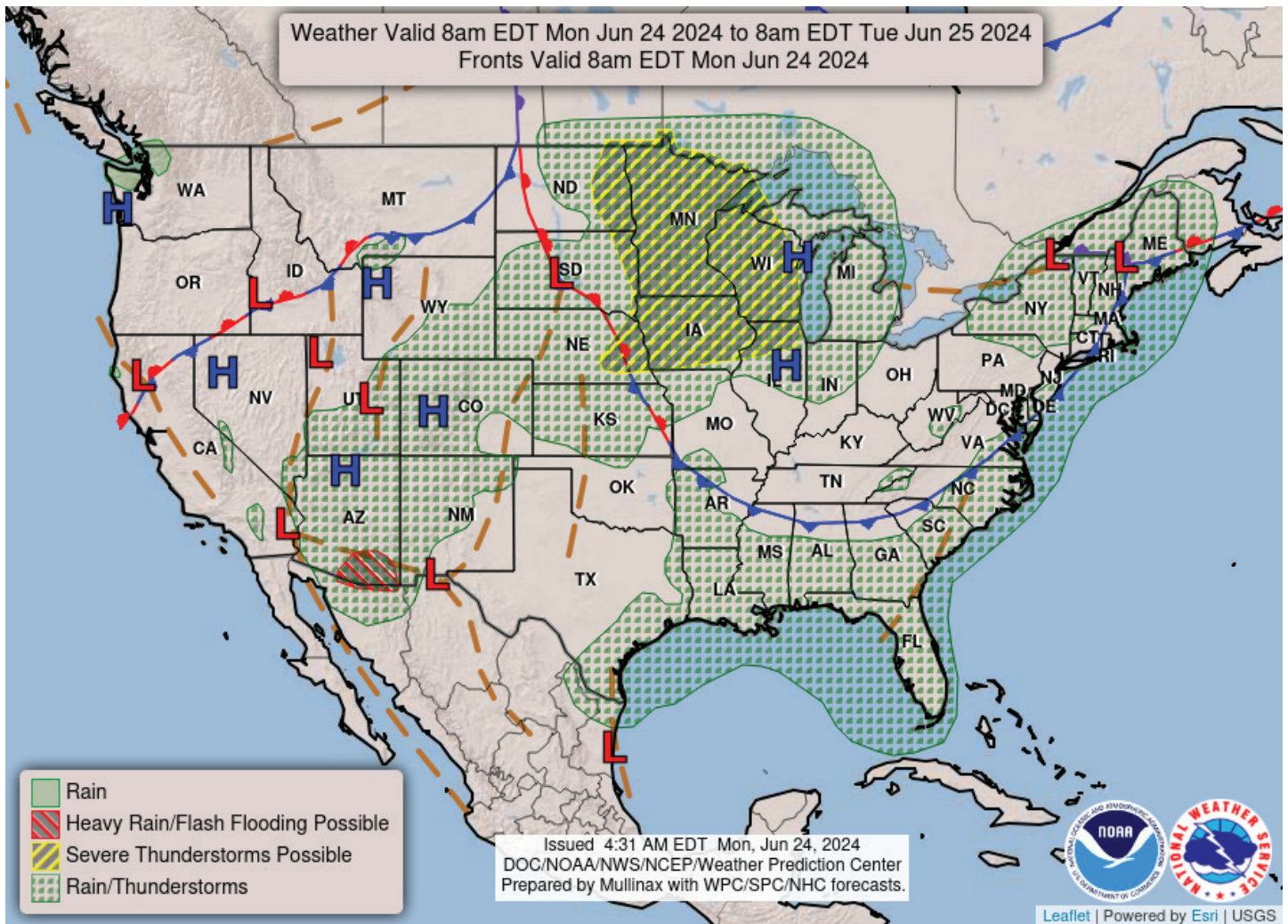
Precip to date in June: 2.73

Average Precip to date: 10.49

Precip Year to Date: 9.80

Sunset Tonight: 9:26:55 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:44:25 am



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Today in Weather History

June 26, 1998: Heavy rains of 2 to 5 inches fell across much of northern and eastern Brown, western and northern Day and all of Marshall County during the afternoon and evening hours. The additional heavy rain only exacerbated the flooding which had been occurring over much of this area for years. Kidder, in northern Marshall County, received up to 5 inches of rain on the 26th after receiving around 2 inches on the 25th. The heavy rain on the 26th flooded the whole town, filling nearly every basement. One resident had the basement walls cave in. Areas of Britton were also flooded with water in many basements. The heavy rains added to the already thousands of acres of crop and pastureland under water. One farmer in Day County, near Webster, had documented over one-half million dollars in damages to fences, buildings, land, and income from the prolonged flooding. On his farm, he had 15 buildings under water. This farmer said the highest he had measured the water from flooding was 9 feet, but for this year it had gone up to 21 feet. As a result of this and past heavy rains and also many years of above-average precipitation, about 22 percent of the total farm and pastureland acres in the three counties were flooded or too wet to farm. Some rainfall amounts included 2.30 inches at Sand Lake NWR, 2.7 inches at Langford, 2.95 inches at Groton, 3.5 inches northwest of Bristol, and 5.10 inches 9N 9W of Britton.

June 26, 2008: During the evening hours, a compact upper-level low-pressure system tracking through the Northern Plains interacted with a very moist and unstable air mass over western and central South Dakota resulting in a widespread severe weather outbreak. Three confirmed tornadoes occurred briefly in western Dewey County. Little or no damage was reported, and all three tornadoes were rated EF0. In addition to the tornadoes, multiple reports of large hail were received over Corson and Dewey Counties, including some to the size of baseballs near the communities of McLaughlin and Isabel. The large hail broke out many home and vehicle windows and damaged many roofs in Dewey, Corson, and Sully Counties. Significant wind damage occurred over sections of Sully County. There were multiple reports of wind gusts more than 70 mph, with the most concentrated swath of damaging winds extending from near Sutton Bay, eastward to the city of Onida, then southeast to the community of Harrold. The storm survey began near Sutton Bay on Lake Oahe, where a wind gust of 92 mph was recorded. The most significant property damage was found further east near the community of Agar where multiple grain bins were either damaged or destroyed. Nine miles west of Agar, a barn was destroyed, and a large pine tree was snapped in half. Winds in this area were estimated to range from 80 to 100 mph. Near the intersection of Highways 1804 and 175th Street, several Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) electrical transmission towers were collapsed entirely. The damage is consistent with wind speeds ranging from 130-140 mph. In the city of Onida, a bank roof was damaged, and the city was without power until the next day. Four miles north of Onida, a feed wagon was tossed nearly 40 feet. In Harrold, several railroad cars were tipped over. Also of great significance during the event was the peak wind speed of 124 mph recorded at the Onida airport. This wind speed is the strongest wind gust ever measured in the Aberdeen County Warning Area and the 4th highest wind speed ever reported in South Dakota.

1807: Lightning strikes a gunpowder factory in the small European country of Luxembourg, killing more than 300 people. The Luxembourg disaster may have been the most deadly lightning strike in history.

1888 - Residents of New York suffered through a record heat wave. Daily average temperatures were above 80 degrees for fourteen straight days. The heat wave was a sharp contrast to the severe blizzard in March of that year, which buried the city under nearly two feet of snow. (David Ludlum)

1977 - The Human Lightning Conductor, park ranger Roy C. Sullivan, was struck by lightning for the seventh time. He was first hit in 1942, then again in 1970, 1972, 1973 and 1976. (The Weather Channel)

1983 - Record heat prevailed from Texas to Michigan. Alpena MI hit 98 degrees. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1985 - A spectacular early morning waterspout developed at 5:20 AM (MST) from a stationary thunderstorm over the south end of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. It was visible 20 miles away, and lasted four minutes. (The Weather Channel)

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1986: Hurricane Bonnie made landfall on the upper Texas coast. A wind gust to 98 mph occurred at Sea Rim State Park. Ace, Texas recorded a total of 13 inches of rain.

1987 - Hot weather prevailed in the Pacific Northwest. Afternoon highs of 88 degrees at Seattle, WA, 103 degrees at Medford, OR, and 111 degrees at Redding, CA, were records for the date. Cloudy and cool weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S. The high at Boston, MA, was just 60 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thirteen cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. In Montana, the record high of 102 degrees at Billings, MT, was their fifteenth of the month, and the high of 108 degrees at Glasgow MT equalled their record for June. Thunderstorms in the Atlantic Coast Region produced wind gusts to 102 mph at Tall Timbers MD. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Central Plains to the Middle Mississippi Valley. There were 129 reports of severe weather during the day and night. Thunderstorms in Kansas produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Liberal, and hail four inches in diameter at Quinter. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin spawned a tornado at Lake Delton injuring four persons. Lightning struck and killed a woman at Junction City, KS, who had gotten out of her car to photograph the lightning. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)crossed northern Mexico), began to spread heavy rain into southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana. (The National Weather Summary)

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE MIRACLE WORKER

Twelve ministers boarded a flight in Miami for New York. Shortly after takeoff the plane encountered a terrible unexpected storm. The people onboard became frightened as the aircraft bounced and seemed to shift with the currents.

One of the clergymen called to a flight attendant and said, "Tell the Captain that everything will be okay because twelve ministers from Miami are onboard."

Politely excusing herself she phoned the Captain with the news. A moment later she returned to the minister and said, "The Captain asked that I tell you that he was honored to have all of you onboard the flight. But he also asked that I tell you he would rather have four dependable jet engines."

Jesus, our Savior, was a miracle worker. He specialized in accomplishing supernatural things for God with ordinary people and ordinary things. What He did then He can do now. He has not changed nor has His power changed.

When He fed the five thousand, He used the lunch of a small boy to feed the hungry crowd. He took that small insignificant gift and accomplished one of His greatest miracles. The lesson: No one is ever too young or no gift ever too small for God to accept and use to accomplish great things that will honor Him.

Prayer: Father, help us to realize that it is not the gift we offer You but the need that will be met by our willingness to work with You to do Your work. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" John 6:1-14



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:
06.25.24

3 16 27 47 62 8

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$116,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 8
Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.24

6 18 22 25 35 1

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,765,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 23 Mins 55
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.25.24

15 20 23 33 45 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 56
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.22.24

15 20 25 27 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 38 Mins 56
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.24

1 31 33 54 60 26

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 7 Mins 55
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.24.24

5 6 36 53 69 8

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$95,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 7 Mins 55
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Native American ceremony will celebrate birth of white buffalo calf in Yellowstone park

By AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Ceremonies and celebrations are planned Wednesday near the west entrance of Yellowstone National Park to mark the recent birth of a white buffalo calf in the park, a spiritually significant event for many Native American tribes.

A white buffalo calf with a dark nose and eyes was born on June 4 in the the park's Lamar Valley, according to witnesses, fulfilling a prophecy for the Lakota people that portends better times but also signals that more must be done to protect the earth and its animals.

"The birth of this calf is both a blessing and warning. We must do more," said Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the spiritual leader of the Lakota, Dakota and the Nakota Oyate in South Dakota, and the 19th keeper of the sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman Pipe and Bundle.

Looking Horse has performed a naming ceremony for the calf and will announce its name during Wednesday's gathering in West Yellowstone at the headquarters of Buffalo Field Campaign, an organization that works to protect the park's wild bison herds.

The calf's birth captured the imaginations of park visitors who hoped to catch a glimpse of it among the thousands of burly adult bison and their calves that spend the summer in the Lamar Valley and nearby areas.

For the Lakota, the birth of a white buffalo calf with a dark nose, eyes and hooves is akin to the second coming of Jesus Christ, Looking Horse has said.

"It's a very sacred time," he said.

Lakota legend says about 2,000 years ago — when nothing was good, food was running out and bison were disappearing — White Buffalo Calf Woman appeared, presented a bowl pipe and a bundle to a tribal member and said the pipe could be used to bring buffalo to the area for food. As she left, she turned into a white buffalo calf.

"And some day when the times are hard again," Looking Horse said in relating the legend, "I shall return and stand upon the earth as a white buffalo calf, black nose, black eyes, black hooves."

The birth of the sacred calf comes as after a severe winter in 2023 drove thousands of Yellowstone buffalo, also known as American bison, to lower elevations. More than 1,500 were killed, sent to slaughter or transferred to tribes seeking to reclaim stewardship over an animal their ancestors lived alongside for millennia.

Members of several Native American tribes are expected to explain the spiritual and cultural significance of the birth of the white buffalo under their traditions, during Wednesday's gathering.

Jordan Creech, who guides in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, was one of a few people who captured images of the white buffalo calf on June 4.

Creech was guiding a photography tour when he spotted a cow buffalo as she was about to give birth in the Lamar Valley, but then she disappeared over a hill. The group continued on to a place where grizzly bears had been spotted, Creech said.

They returned to the spot along the Lamar River where the buffalo were grazing and the cow came up the hill right as they stopped their vehicle, Creech said. It was clear the calf had just been born, he said, calling it amazing timing.

"And I noted to my guests that it was oddly white, but I didn't announce that it was a white bison, because, you know, why would I just assume that I just witnessed the very first white bison birth in recorded history in Yellowstone?" he said.

Yellowstone park officials have no record of a white bison being born in the park previously and park officials were unable to confirm this month's birth.

There have been no reports of the calf being seen again. Erin Braaten, who also captured images of the white calf, looked for it in the days after its birth but couldn't find it.

"The thing is, we all know that it was born and it's like a miracle to us," Looking Horse said.

What happened to Minnesota's Rapidan Dam? Here's what to know about its flooding and partial failure

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The visuals were stunning: Water from the Blue Earth River surged around a southern Minnesota dam, carrying a shipping container with it as it toppled utility poles, wrecked a substation and washed away part of a riverbank. A home teetered on the edge of an eroded slope as floodwaters rushed underneath.

Earlier this week, authorities said the Rapidan Dam near Mankato faced an "imminent threat" of collapse, but later they said an abutment had partially failed. The river swelled after an onslaught of rain pummeled the Midwest for days. More than 3 million people live in areas impacted by flooding, from Iowa to Nebraska to Minnesota to South Dakota.

On Tuesday, the dam was still intact and there were no mass evacuations. Authorities said the partial failure of the abutment was caused by the recent bout of heavy rain, but a past assessment of the dam revealed it was already at risk. Here are some things to know.

What happened? Early Monday morning, emergency management workers gave notice that water was surging over the dam. As water flows peaked, debris plugged parts of the structure and the west abutment of the dam partially failed. The conditions around the dam spun a current that was too vicious for workers to cross safely in order to clear the detritus.

The rush of water destroyed a power station and caused outages for about 600 households, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz said. Water levels peaked Monday at 34,800 cubic feet per second, and Blue Earth County officials issued an imminent threat warning. Those figures make this flood the second largest in the dam's history.

The levels had begun to lower by Tuesday, county officials said.

Water continued flowing around and eroding the west side of the dam Tuesday, officials said. But as overall water levels decreased, they said the prospect of a total collapse was unlikely. Still, it remained possible. Blue Earth County has not issued any mass evacuation orders, but a nearby bridge and a campground downstream of the river was closed. Late Tuesday, county officials said the house that was at risk along the river's edge had partially fallen into the river. Officials were monitoring for any impacts downstream.

Officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission were on site Tuesday evaluating the damage to the dam and ongoing risks.

Was the dam already in disrepair? Construction of the Rapidan dam was finished in 1910 and is described by the county as a hollow concrete dam, founded on sandstone bedrock in a steep, U-shaped valley. The dam is approximately 475 feet (145 meters) long, and 87 feet (27 meters) high.

A 2019 Associated Press investigation into dams across the country found that the Rapidan Dam was in fair condition and there likely would be loss of property if it failed. But that same year, the dam experienced what was one of its highest floods on record. Severe weather from that flood and other rainfall since have caused significant damage to the dam's structure and usability, according to Blue Earth County, which said the dam was in a "state of disrepair."

After the 2019 flood, ice jams formed in a narrow bend of the river downstream of the dam from January through March 2020. These jams continued to build and caused water to rise and flood, a 2021 study found. The buildup caused further damage, and an April 2023 assessment conducted by the National Inventory of Dams found Rapidan to be in poor condition.

Officials have not said whether the issues identified in past assessments led to the partial failure.

"The structural integrity of the dam has been in question for a long time," Walz said. "The removal of the dam has been a question that's been up there."

What are the dangers to surrounding areas? Areas downstream of the dam have no permanent inhabited structures, lessening the risk of fatalities and property damage, county officials said. But officials closed a park downstream of the dam that attracts hikers and fishermen.

The reservoir upstream of the dam provides power generation storage and recreation. But it is full of sediment, making boat access difficult, the county said. Because the reservoir is full, sediment is now pushed downstream of the dam.

Blue Earth County Public Works Director Ryan Thilges said there is more than a century's worth of sediment upstream of the dam. Severe environmental damage could occur if that sediment broke loose and seeped into the river, he said.

How often do aging dams need repairs? American Rivers, a conservation group that monitors dam safety issues and advocates for more federal and state resources for dam inspections, repair and removal, saw the Rapidan Dam as an example of how aging dams across the U.S. need far more attention than they're getting.

Dams are often built to last 50 years, and like other infrastructure, they deteriorate with age.

"This is a serious risk for public safety that should have been avoided. Aging, unsafe dams are ticking time bombs," Graber said. "While the immediate focus must be on ensuring nearby residents are safe, we must do a better job at the state and federal level to improve the safety of dams nationwide."

Midwest flooding devastation comes into focus as flood warnings are extended in other areas

By HANNAH FINGERHUT, DAVE COLLINS and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Kathy Roberts has almost nothing left.

The South Dakota resident escaped flooding Sunday night with her cat and the clothes on her back, KTIV-TV reported.

"I heard screaming outside and looked outside and I had neighbors that had water rushing into their place and water was slowly rising in my driveway," Roberts said. "Within eight minutes, I was leaving my house and driving through water that was up over my step rails on my jeep."

In the residential development where Roberts lived along McCook Lake in North Sioux City, the devastation was coming into focus as floodwaters began to recede, exposing collapsed streets, utility poles and trees. Some homes were washed off their foundations.

There was no water, sewer, gas or electrical service in that area, Union County Emergency Management said Tuesday in a Facebook post.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said in a post on the social platform X Tuesday night that people needed to stay out of the area unless escorted by public safety officials.

"We are working on a schedule for families to get their belongings," Noem said. "Until then, downed power lines, sinkholes, and other threats make it too dangerous to go in alone."

A vast swath of lands from eastern Nebraska and South Dakota to Iowa and Minnesota has been under siege from flooding from torrential rains since last week, while also experiencing a scorching heat wave. Up to 18 inches (46 centimeters) of rain have fallen in some areas, and some rivers rose to record levels. Hundreds of people were rescued, homes were damaged and at least two people died after driving in flooded areas.

Tornado warnings, flash flooding and large hail Tuesday night also added insult to injury for some people in the Midwest.

The National Weather Service on Tuesday afternoon and evening issued multiple tornado warnings in parts of Iowa and Nebraska as local TV news meteorologists showed photos of large hail and spoke of very heavy rain. No damage from tornadoes was immediately reported and the extent of any hail damage wasn't clear.

The weather service on Tuesday night also extended flood warnings for multiple rivers in South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. Earlier Tuesday, floodwaters breached levees in Iowa, creating dangerous

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conditions that prompted evacuations.

The sheriff's office in Monona County, near the Nebraska border, said the Little Sioux River breached levees in several areas. In neighboring Woodbury County, the sheriff's office posted drone video on Facebook showing the river overflowing the levee and flooding land in rural Smithland. No injuries were immediately reported.

As new areas flooded Tuesday, some cities and towns were cleaning up after the waters receded while others downstream were piling sandbags and taking other measures to protect against the oncoming swelled currents. Some normal, unassuming tributaries ballooned into rushing rivers, damaging homes, buildings and bridges.

South Dakota state geologist Tim Cowman said that the five major rivers in the state's southeastern corner have crested and are slowly dropping.

In Sioux City and Woodbury County, Iowa, officials responded to residents' complaints that they had received little warning of the flooding and its severity. Sioux City Fire Marshal Mark Aesoph said at a news conference Tuesday that rivers crested higher than predicted.

"Even if we would have known about this two weeks ago, there was nothing we could do at this point. We cannot extend the entire length of our levee," Sioux City Fire Marshal Mark Aesoph said.

Water had spilled over the Big Sioux River levee, and Aesoph estimated hundreds of homes likely have some internal water damage.

Homes on the south side of Spencer, Iowa, near the Little Sioux River are unlivable as water has reached the main floor, resident Ben Thomas said. A lot of people in town are facing a "double whammy," with homes and businesses affected.

Officials in Woodbury County said around a dozen bridges over the Little Sioux River had been topped by flood water, and each would need to be inspected to see if they can reopen to traffic.

President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for affected counties in Iowa on Monday, a move that paves the way for federal aid to be granted.

Forever Wildlife Lodge and Clinic, a nonprofit animal rescue, in northwest Iowa has answered over 200 calls since the flooding started, said licensed wildlife rehabilitator Amanda Hase.

Hase described the flooding as "catastrophic" for Iowa wildlife, which are getting washed out of dens, injured by debris and separated from each other. She and other rehabilitators are responding to calls about all kinds of species, from fawns and groundhogs to bunnies and eaglets.

"I've never seen it this bad before, ever," she said.

Further to the east in Humboldt, Iowa, a record crest of 16.5 feet (5 meters) was expected Wednesday at the west fork of the Des Moines River. Amid high temperatures and humidity, nearly 68,000 sandbags have been laid, according to county emergency manager Kyle Bissell.

Bissell told reporters Tuesday that flooding had begun in some backyards and was reaching up to foundations. Humboldt is home to nearly 5,000 residents.

The weather service also predicted more than two dozen points of major flooding in southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and northern Iowa.

Many streams, especially with additional rainfall, may not crest until later this week as the floodwaters slowly drain down a web of rivers to the Missouri and Mississippi. The Missouri will crest at Omaha on Thursday, said Kevin Low, a weather service hydrologist.

North of Des Moines, Iowa, the lake above the Saylorville Dam was absorbing river surge and expected to largely protect the metro area from flooding, according to the Polk County Emergency Management Agency. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projected Tuesday that water levels at Saylorville Lake will rise by more than 30 feet (9 meters) by the Fourth of July.

Iowa floodwaters breach levees as even more rain dumps onto parts of the Midwest

By HANNAH FINGERHUT, DAVE COLLINS and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press
DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Tornado warnings, flash flooding and large hail added insult to injury for people in the Midwest already contending with heat, humidity and intense flooding after days of rain.

The National Weather Service on Tuesday afternoon and evening issued multiple tornado warnings in parts of Iowa and Nebraska as local TV news meteorologists showed photos of large hail and spoke of very heavy rain.

Earlier on Tuesday, floodwaters breached levees in Iowa, creating dangerous conditions that prompted evacuations.

A vast swath of lands from eastern Nebraska and South Dakota to Iowa and Minnesota has been under siege from flooding from torrential rains since last week, while also being hit with a scorching heat wave. Up to 18 inches (46 centimeters) of rain have fallen in some areas, and some rivers rose to record levels. Hundreds of people were rescued, homes were damaged and at least two people died after driving in flooded areas.

The sheriff's office in Monona County, near the Nebraska border, said the Little Sioux River breached levees in several areas. In neighboring Woodbury County, the sheriff's office posted drone video on Facebook showing the river overflowing the levee and flooding land in rural Smithland. No injuries were immediately reported.

Patrick Prorok, emergency management coordinator in Monona County, described waking people at about 4 a.m. in Rodney, a town of about 45 people, to recommend evacuation. Later Tuesday morning, the water hadn't yet washed into the community.

"People up the hill are saying it is coming our way," Prorok said.

As new areas were flooding Tuesday, some cities and towns were cleaning up after the waters receded while others downstream were piling sandbags and taking other measures to protect against the oncoming swelled currents. Some normal, unassuming tributaries ballooned into rushing rivers, damaging homes, buildings and bridges.

"Normally, this river is barely a trickle," 71-year-old Hank Howley said as she watched the Big Sioux's waters gush over a broken and partially sunken rail bridge in North Sioux City, South Dakota, on Monday. "Really, you could just walk across it most days."

South Dakota state geologist Tim Cowman said that the five major rivers in the state's southeastern corner have crested and are dropping, albeit it slowly. The last of those rivers to crest, the James, did so early Tuesday.

In a residential development along McCook Lake in North Sioux City, the devastation became clear Tuesday as floodwaters began to recede from Monday, exposing collapsed streets, utility poles and trees. Some homes had been washed off their foundations.

"Currently, there is no water, sewer, gas or electrical service in this area," Union County Emergency Management said in a Facebook post.

President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for affected counties in Iowa on Monday, a move that paves the way for federal aid to be granted.

To the south in Sioux City and Woodbury County, Iowa, officials responded to residents' complaints that they had received little warning of the flooding and its severity. Sioux City Fire Marshal Mark Aesoph said at a news conference Tuesday that rivers crested higher than predicted.

"Even if we would have known about this two weeks ago, there was nothing we could do at this point. We cannot extend the entire length of our levee," Sioux City Fire Marshal Mark Aesoph said. "It's impossible."

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Bissell told reporters Tuesday that there was no water on the streets yet, but flooding had begun in some backyards and was reaching up to foundations. Humboldt is home to nearly 5,000 residents.

In Michigan, more than 150,000 homes and businesses were without power Tuesday morning after severe thunderstorms barreled through, less than a week after storms left thousands in the dark for days in suburban Detroit.

The weather service also predicted more than two dozen points of major flooding in southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and northern Iowa, and flood warnings are expected to continue into the week.

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North of Des Moines, Iowa, the lake above the Saylorville Dam was absorbing river surge and expected to largely protect the metro area from flooding, according to the Polk County Emergency Management Agency. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projected Tuesday that water levels at Saylorville Lake will rise by more than 30 feet (9 meters) by the Fourth of July.

Outside Mankato, Minnesota, the local sheriff's office said Monday that there was a "partial failure" of the western support structure for the Rapidan Dam on the Blue Earth River after the dam became plugged with debris. Flowing water eroded the western bank, rushed around the dam and washed out an electrical substation, causing about 600 power outages.

Eric Weller, emergency management director for the Blue Earth County sheriff, said the bank would likely erode more, but he didn't expect the concrete dam itself to fail. The two homes downstream were evacuated.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Tuesday cautioned against rebuilding too fast, instead emphasizing more sustainable repairs that could prevent or mitigate future flooding.

"Nature doesn't care whether you believe in climate change or not," Walz said. "The insurance companies sure believe in it. The actuarials sure believe in it, and we do."

Midwestern carbon dioxide pipeline project gets approval in Iowa, but still has a long way to go

By JACK DURA Associated Press

Iowa public utility regulators on Tuesday approved a controversial carbon dioxide pipeline for transporting emissions of the climate-warming greenhouse gas for storage underground in a win for Summit Carbon Solutions' project after setbacks in other states and opposition from landowners around the Midwest.

The company still has many hoops to jump through before it can begin building in Iowa, including gaining other states' approval.

The \$5.5 billion, 2,500-mile (4,023.36 kilometers) pipeline network would carry planet-warming CO2 emissions, liquefied under pressure, from more than 50 ethanol plants in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota to be stored deep underground in central North Dakota.

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Farmers and the ethanol industry see the pipeline as a way to qualify for federal tax breaks they see as key for growing a market for a cleaner-burning aviation fuel. Corn is among the top two crops in the Midwest, and Iowa is the leader in corn and ethanol production.

"Whether you think it's smart or silly, the world's largest airlines want to decarbonize their fuel. Carbon capture and sequestration gets Iowa ethanol into that market, potentially providing a generational boost to Iowa's economy," Iowa Renewable Fuels Association Executive Director Monte Shaw said in a statement.

Summit CEO Lee Blank welcomed the decision in a statement.

The project's opponents, including many landowners, fear their land will be taken for the pipeline and that a potential pipeline rupture could release dangerous CO2 gas. A coalition opposing Summit's project vowed to fight the Iowa board's decision.

Landowner attorney Brian Jorde said the decision was expected, with a lengthy process for Summit still ahead, such as applying in South Dakota.

"It's just one small thing in a maze, in a track-and-field event full of hurdles that they have to get over," Jorde said.

The Iowa Utilities Board approved Summit's January 2022 application for a permit to build and operate the pipeline. But before the board issues the permit, the company must file proof of an insurance policy of at least \$100 million to pay for any damages resulting from the pipeline project. Summit must provide proof of the insurance annually.

The company also can't start construction until it has approvals from North Dakota and South Dakota, including for routes in both states and underground storage in North Dakota. Summit also needs approvals from Minnesota and in Nebraska before it can begin to build lines out to ethanol plants in those states.

The Iowa regulators' decision comes after hearings last year and setbacks in other states. North Dakota regulators denied a siting permit in August, but later agreed to reconsider. Hearings on the underground storage proposal were held earlier this month.

South Dakota regulators denied Summit's application in September; Summit said it plans to file again in early July. In Nebraska, where Summit must work with individual counties, at least one county has denied a permit.

The Iowa panel also granted the company the right of eminent domain over numerous parcels of land, but only after the permit is issued. The extent of Summit's eminent domain powers wasn't immediately clear from the 500-page order. The board denied use of some parcels of land; others require modifications to the route. Eminent domain is the taking of private land for public use with compensation for landowners.

The order also includes numerous other requirements of Summit, such as monthly construction reports and grants for equipment for cities and counties to respond to incidents.

Supporters view carbon capture projects such as Summit's as a combatant of climate change, with new federal tax incentives and billions from Congress for such carbon capture efforts. Opponents question the technology's effectiveness at scale and the need for potentially huge investments over cheaper renewable energy sources.

Companies behind two other CO2 pipeline projects proposed in the Midwest have canceled or shelved their plans. From the renewable fuels industry perspective, blows to projects such as Summit's could put at risk the huge potential of a new aviation fuel market the industry believes would continue for many years.

North Dakota Republican Gov. Doug Burgum supports the pipeline. He has hailed North Dakota's underground rock formations as a "geologic jackpot" for CO2 storage potential. In 2021, he set a goal for North Dakota to become carbon neutral by 2030. He isn't seeking reelection this year, and is a top choice to be former President Donald Trump's running mate.

A potential Trump VP pick backs a controversial CO2 pipeline favored by the Biden White House

By RICHARD LARDNER and JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum is one of Donald Trump's most visible and vocal backers, sprinting around the country to drum up support for the former president's comeback bid while auditioning to be his running mate.

Far from the glare of the campaign trail, however, Burgum is wrestling with a mammoth carbon dioxide pipeline project in his home state. The \$5.5 billion venture has split North Dakota and left him straddling an awkward political divide as Trump and President Joe Biden offer voters starkly different visions about how to deal with climate change.

A Republican little known outside North Dakota, Burgum is a serious contender to be Trump's vice-presidential choice. The two-term governor has stood out in the narrowing field of choices due to his executive experience and business savvy. And Burgum has close ties to deep-pocketed energy industry CEOs whose money Trump wants to help bankroll his third run for the White House.

Burgum is championing the pipeline project, which would gather planet-warming CO2 from ethanol plants across the Midwest and deposit the gas a mile underground. The pipeline aligns with Biden's push to tackle global climate change, a position that could put him at odds with Trump.

In backing the pipeline, Burgum is navigating the tricky issue of land ownership in deep-red North Dakota and the politics of climate change inside the GOP.

While Burgum has outlined plans to make North Dakota carbon neutral by 2030, he's steered clear of describing the pipeline or other carbon capture initiatives as environmentally friendly. Instead, he touts them as a lucrative business opportunity for North Dakota that might ultimately assist the fossil fuel industry.

"This has nothing to do with climate change," Burgum said in early March on a North Dakota radio program. "This has to do with markets."

The pipeline, known as the Midwest Carbon Express, is financed by hundreds of investors and will be built by Summit Carbon Solutions of Ames, Iowa. The 2,500-mile pipeline route snakes through Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota before ending in west central North Dakota, where up to 18 million metric tons of CO2 would be entombed each year in underground rock formations.

The North Dakota Industrial Commission, which Burgum chairs, is expected to decide in the coming months whether to approve Summit's application for a permit to store all the CO2 it collects. Regulators in nearby states are also weighing approval of the pipeline.

As part of Biden's investment in combating climate change, companies may receive \$85 from the federal government for every metric ton of CO2 collected from industrial facilities and permanently sequestered. They can also get \$60 for each ton stored and later used to produce more oil, a process that involves injecting carbon dioxide into oilfields to keep them productive.

Summit stands to receive as much as \$1.5 billion annually from the tax credits. The company said it has no plans to use CO2 in oil drilling, which is known as enhanced oil recovery, or EOR. But a carbon dioxide storage permit application drafted by Summit appears to leave open the potential for the CO2 to be used for that purpose.

"Our business model is for 100% sequestration," the company said in an emailed response to questions. "No customers have ever approached us to move their CO2 for EOR."

For several environmental and public interest groups, providing tax credits for more climate-polluting oil is a handout to oil drillers that upends the goal of weaning corporations and consumers off fossil fuels.

"It's just not the right answer," said Brett Hartl, government affairs director at the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity. "You're incentivizing the extension of the use of fossil fuels for many more years or decades to come."

Burgum's office declined a request to interview the governor for this story. He has hailed his state's underground CO2 storage capacity as a "geologic jackpot." North Dakota, according to Burgum, has the capacity to store 250 billion tons of carbon dioxide underground.

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That message has been amplified by North Dakota's mineral resources department, which has estimated CO2 can help extract billions more barrels of oil from the rich Bakken shale formation. The Bakken is a 200,000-square-mile deposit that spans North Dakota, Montana and southern Canada.

Pipeline blowbackIn North Dakota, the blowback to the Summit project has been intense, with Burgum caught in the crossfire.

There are fears a pipeline rupture would unleash a lethal cloud of CO2. In 2020, a pipeline carrying compressed carbon dioxide ruptured in Satartia, Mississippi. At least 45 people required hospital treatment and 200 more had to be evacuated from the area, according to the federal agency that oversees pipeline safety.

Summit said the CO2 line in Mississippi may have contained high amounts of hydrogen sulfide, a toxic gas. Its system will transport nearly pure carbon dioxide, the company said, and any hydrogen sulfide or other elements in the stream "will not be considered impactful."

Landowners also worry their property values will plummet if the pipeline passes under their property. And they're outraged over what they allege are hardball tactics employed by Summit to secure easements for the project.

Burgum has largely avoided the dicey subject of eminent domain. If landowners don't want the pipeline on their property, he's said, the route can be shifted, and someone else can get the "big check."

Julia Stramer, whose family owns cropland in Emmons County and opposes the pipeline, said the amount of money Summit offered her for a 99-year easement was insulting.

"I have informed Gov. Burgum that we have not received an offer of 'the big check,'" she told North Dakota's Public Service Commission earlier this month.

Stramer scoffed at the safety measures Summit says it is taking, telling the commission the pipeline is to be buried only 4 feet deep.

"We bury people deeper than that," Stramer said.

Kurt Swenson and his family own or have an interest in 1,750 acres at or near the proposed CO2 storage site. At a public hearing earlier this month on Summit's storage permit application, Swenson said he had a warning for anyone who attempts to take his land without his consent.

"It seems like everybody wants what isn't theirs," Swenson said. "You're going to end up taking it from my cold, dead hands. And you're going to see how that works out for you."

Summit said it has signed easement deals with landowners along 82% of the pipeline's route in North Dakota and obtained 92% of the lease agreements needed at the storage site. The company added that the project also is supported by state lawmakers and emergency managers.

Concerns over Summit's project in North Dakota's second most populous county, Burleigh, led the county commission to approve an ordinance restricting the pipeline from running too close to residential areas, churches and schools.

"I have not gotten one single contact from anybody that's not affiliated with Summit asking me to support this pipeline," said Brian Bitner, the Burleigh County Commission chairman. "Every contact has asked me to oppose it."

Gaylen Dewing, who has worked as a farmer and rancher near Bismarck for more than 50 years, criticized Burgum for what he sees as the governor's tilt to the left. Burgum's embrace of carbon neutrality has put the governor in cahoots with the "Green New Deal people," he said.

"Although he professes to be a conservative, he is anything but when it comes to environmental issues," Dewing said.

Not a climate warriorWhen he's out stumping for Trump, Burgum doesn't sound at all like a climate warrior.

Speaking at the North Carolina Republican Party Convention last month, Burgum accused the Biden administration of trying to shut down the oil and gas industries and declared that Trump would reverse the federal rules and mandates that he said are stifling energy companies.

Trump has long criticized federal and state efforts to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and has been backed by the oil and gas industry in his three presidential bids. The former president, who in the past

called global warming a "hoax," claims on his campaign website that Biden has surrendered to the "crazed climate crusaders."

Oil and gas interests have already donated nearly \$8 million to Trump's 2024 presidential campaign, according to the political money website Open Secrets.

Burgum, with his close ties to his state's dominant industry, is the type of running mate who could help boost such donations.

If Burgum is not selected to be the GOP's vice-presidential nominee and does not take a job in a second Trump administration, he can always return to North Dakota to finish out his last term, with key decisions looming for the pipeline.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange returns to Australia after US legal battle ends

By RICK RYCROFT and ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange returned to his homeland Australia aboard a charter jet on Wednesday, hours after pleading guilty to obtaining and publishing U.S. military secrets in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that concludes a drawn-out legal saga.

The criminal case of international intrigue, which had played out for years, came to a surprise end in a most unusual setting with Assange, 52, entering his plea in a U.S. district court in Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands. The American commonwealth in the Pacific is relatively close to Assange's native Australia and accommodated his desire to avoid entering the continental United States.

Assange had flown from a London prison to Saipan in a charter jet and flew in the same aircraft to the Australian capital Canberra on the same day.

He was accompanied on the flights by Australian Ambassador to the United States Kevin Rudd and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Stephen Smith, both of whom played key roles in negotiating his freedom with London and Washington.

The flights were paid for by the "Assange team," Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said, adding his government played a role in facilitating the transport.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told Parliament that Assange's freedom, after he spent five years in a British prison fighting extradition to the U.S., was the result of his government's "careful, patient and determined work."

"Over the two years since we took office, my government has engaged and advocated including at leader-level to resolve this. We have used all appropriate channels," Albanese said.

Assange's lawyer Jennifer Robinson, speaking outside the Saipan court, thanked Albanese "for his statesmanship, his principled leadership and his diplomacy, which made this outcome possible."

It is unclear where Assange will go from Canberra and what his future plans are. His South African lawyer wife and mother of his two children, Stella Assange, has been in Australia for days awaiting her husband's release.

Another of Julian Assange's lawyers, Barry Pollack, expected his client would continue vocal campaigning.

"WikiLeaks's work will continue and Mr. Assange, I have no doubt, will be a continuing force for freedom of speech and transparency in government," Pollack told reporters outside the Saipan court.

Assange's father John Shipton said ahead of his son's arrival that he hoped the iconoclastic internet publisher was coming home to the "great beauty of ordinary life."

"He will be able to spend quality time with his wife, Stella, and his two children, be able to walk up and down the beach and feel the sand through his toes in winter, that lovely chill," Shipton told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

The plea deal required Assange to admit guilt to a single felony count but also permitted him to return to Australia without any time in an American prison. The judge sentenced him to the five years he'd already spent behind bars in the U.K. fighting extradition to the U.S. on an Espionage Act indictment that could have carried a lengthy prison sentence in the event of a conviction. He was holed up for seven years

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before that in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

The conclusion enables both sides to claim a degree of satisfaction.

The Justice Department, facing a defendant who had already served substantial jail time, was able to resolve — without trial — a case that raised thorny legal issues and that might never have reached a jury at all given the plodding pace of the extradition process. Assange, for his part, signaled a begrudging contentment with the resolution, saying in court that though he believed the Espionage Act contradicted the First Amendment, he accepted the consequences of soliciting classified information from sources for publication.

The plea deal, disclosed Monday night in a sparsely detailed Justice Department letter, represents the latest — and presumably final — chapter in a court fight involving the eccentric Australian computer expert who has been celebrated by supporters as a transparency crusader but lambasted by national security hawks who insist that his conduct put lives at risks and strayed far beyond the bounds of traditional journalism duties.

The criminal case brought by the Trump administration Justice Department centers on the receipt and publication of hundreds of thousands of war logs and diplomatic cables that included details of U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prosecutors alleged that he teamed with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to obtain the records, including by conspiring to crack a Defense Department computer password, and published them without regard to American national security. Names of human sources who provided information to U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were among the details exposed, prosecutors have said.

But his activities drew an outpouring of support from press freedom advocates, who heralded his role in bringing to light military conduct that might otherwise have been concealed from view and warned of a chilling effect on journalists. Among the files published by WikiLeaks was a video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists.

The indictment was unsealed in 2019, but Assange's legal woes long predated the criminal case and continued well past it.

Weeks after the release of the largest document cache in 2010, a Swedish prosecutor issued an arrest warrant for Assange based on one woman's allegation of rape and another's allegation of molestation. Assange has long maintained his innocence, and the investigation was later dropped.

He presented himself in 2012 to the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he claimed asylum on the grounds of political persecution, and spent the following seven years in self-exile there, welcoming a parade of celebrity visitors and making periodic appearances from the building's balcony to address supporters.

In 2019, his hosts revoked his asylum, allowing British police to arrest him. He remained locked up for the last five years while the Justice Department sought to extradite him, in a process that encountered skepticism from British judges who worried about how Assange would be treated by the U.S.

Ultimately, though, the resolution sparing Assange prison time in the U.S. contradicts years of ominous warnings by Assange and his supporters that the American criminal justice system would expose him to unduly harsh treatment, including potentially the death penalty — something prosecutors never sought.

Last month, Assange won the right to appeal an extradition order after his lawyers argued that the U.S. government provided "blatantly inadequate" assurances that he would have the same free speech protections as an American citizen if extradited from Britain.

His wife, Stella Assange, told the BBC from Australia that it had been "touch and go" over 72 hours whether the deal would go ahead but she felt "elated" at the news.

Assange on Monday had left the London prison where he has spent the last five years after being granted bail during a secret hearing last week.

George Latimer, a pro-Israel centrist, defeats Rep. Jamaal Bowman in New York Democratic primary

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

George Latimer, a pro-Israel centrist, defeated U.S. Rep. Jamaal Bowman on Tuesday in a Democratic primary in suburban New York that highlighted the party's deep divisions over the war in Gaza.

With the victory, Latimer has ousted one of the most liberal voices in Congress and one of its most outspoken critics of Israel. Bowman has accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza, where thousands of Palestinians have died in military strikes.

Latimer, who got into the race at the urging of Jewish leaders and had heavy financial backing from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is a former state legislator who has served as Westchester County executive since 2018.

In a victory speech, Latimer called for more civility following the contentious election.

"We have to fight to make sure we don't vilify each other and we remember that we're all Americans, and our common future is bound together," he told supporters at an event in White Plains.

"We argue, we debate, we find a way to come together," he said, adding that all representatives had a duty to find ways to work across political divides and prevent the country from splintering.

Bowman had been seeking a third term, representing a district in New York City's northern suburbs. His defeat is a blow to the party's progressive wing and a potential cautionary tale for candidates trying to shape their messaging around the Israel-Hamas conflict.

His loss also disrupted what has generally been a stable primary season for congressional incumbents. Most current members of Congress have been able to repel challenges from within their party, though GOP Rep. Bob Good is in a tight contest with a rival backed by Donald Trump in a race that is too close to call.

"This movement has always been about justice. It has always been about humanity. It has always been about equality," Bowman said at his election party in Yonkers, conceding that he lost the race but remaining unapologetic about his opposition to the war in Gaza.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee's political action committee spent nearly \$15 million on the primary, filling airwaves and mailboxes with negative ads in an effort to unseat Bowman, who has accused the influential pro-Israel lobbying group of trying to buy the race.

"The outcome in this race once again shows that the pro-Israel position is both good policy and good politics — for both parties," the American Israel Public Affairs Committee said in a statement.

Some major progressive figures have rushed to Bowman's defense. In the final stretch of the race, he rallied with liberals Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders, while Latimer pulled in the endorsement of former presidential candidate and former New York Sen. Hillary Clinton.

On Israel, both Bowman and Latimer support a two-state solution. They have also both condemned Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that killed around 1,200 people. But Bowman was one of a few progressives who rejected a symbolic House resolution in support of Israel following the Oct. 7 attack. Latimer firmly backs Israel and said negotiating a cease-fire with Hamas is a non-starter because he believes it is a terrorist group.

Bowman was first elected in 2020 after running as a liberal insurgent against moderate U.S. Rep. Eliot Engel, a 16-term congressman who chaired a House committee on foreign affairs. Bowman, 48, embraced the political outsider strategy this year as well, depicting Latimer as a tool of Republican donors and pro-Israel groups.

Latimer said Bowman's criticism of Israel was only part of the reason why he decided to challenge the incumbent. He said Bowman hasn't been attentive to the needs of the district, maintained few relationships with its leaders, and was more interested in getting spots on cable news than he was in helping people.

During the campaign, Latimer, who has more than three decades of political experience, often displayed his deep regional knowledge and connections to make the case that he would be an effective member of Congress. Latimer has said that's the sort of politics people expect from their elected officials, rather than caustic fights between the far right and far left — a clear dig at Bowman.

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Aside from his position on Israel, Bowman has been followed by lingering criticism over an incident last year when he triggered a fire alarm in a House building while lawmakers were working on a funding bill. He said it was unintentional, with the alarm going off when he tried to open a locked door while trying to vote. Bowman was censured by his colleagues in the House, and the incident drew embarrassing news coverage.

The congressional district's boundaries have shifted since Bowman first won office in 2020, losing most of its sections in the Bronx and adding more of Westchester County's suburbs.

Today, 21% of its voting-age population is Black and 42% is non-Hispanic white, according to U.S. Census figures, compared to 30% Black and 34% white in the district as it existed through 2022. Bowman is Black. Latimer is white.

Bowman, as the election neared, focused on driving up turnout in what parts of the Bronx remain in his district, telling supporters there that the contest could hinge on their votes. He spent the bulk of his election day in the Bronx, too, and a video posted to the social media site X showed Bowman walking down a street in the Bronx with a drum line behind him on Tuesday.

Latimer, 70, will be the prohibitive favorite to win in the general election. The district, which includes parts of Westchester and a small piece of the Bronx, is a Democratic stronghold.

Nationally, Democratic Party leaders have emphasized moving toward centrist candidates who might fare better in suburban races.

Also on Tuesday, Democratic voters on Long Island picked former CNN anchor John Avlon as the candidate who will challenge incumbent Republican Rep. Nick LaLota in a district that's been controlled by the GOP for a decade.

Avlon defeated retired chemistry professor Nancy Goroff in the Democratic primary. The Long Island congressional district has become a priority for Democrats as the party tries to flip suburban seats in New York as part of a strategy to win a House majority.

But winning the seat could be an uphill battle for Democrats in November, after Democratic state lawmakers changed its borders during redistricting to make it slightly more friendly to Republicans to improve their chances in other districts.

In central New York, Democrats picked state Sen. John Mannion as the party's nominee to take on U.S. Rep. Brandon Williams, a Republican who represents a recently reconfigured congressional district where President Joe Biden beat Trump by 11 points in the 2020 election. Mannion defeated Sarah Klee Hood, a town councilor in the Syracuse suburb of Dewitt.

In another race, incumbent U.S. Rep. Claudia Tenney thwarted a primary challenge from Mario Fratto, an attorney and businessman who had previously lost to Tenney in the last primary election for the safely Republican seat located along Lake Ontario.

A US journalist goes on trial in Russia on espionage charges that he and his employer deny

By KIRILL ZARUBIN and JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

YEKATERINBURG, Russia (AP) — Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich went on trial behind closed doors in Yekaterinburg on Wednesday, 15 months after his arrest in the Russian city on espionage charges that he, his employer and the U.S. government vehemently deny.

The 32-year-old journalist appeared in the court in a glass defendants' cage, his head shaved and wearing a black-and-blue plaid shirt. A yellow padlock was attached to the cage.

Journalists were allowed into the courtroom for a few minutes before the proceedings were closed. Also briefly permitted in court were two consular officers from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, according to the embassy.

The next hearing for Gershkovich was set for Aug. 13, court officials said.

Jay Conti, executive vice president and general counsel for Dow Jones, publisher of the Journal, described

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the trial as a sham in an interview with The Associated Press.

"He was an accredited journalist doing journalism, and this is a sham trial, bogus charges that are completely trumped up," Conti said.

The American-born son of immigrants from the USSR, Gershkovich is the first Western journalist arrested on espionage charges in post-Soviet Russia. Authorities arrested Gershkovich when he was on a reporting trip to Yekaterinburg, in the Ural Mountains, and claimed he was gathering secret information for the U.S. The State Department has declared him "wrongfully detained," thereby committing the government to assertively seek his release.

The Journal has worked diligently to keep the case in the public eye and it has become an issue in the combative months leading up to the U.S. presidential election.

After his arrest on March 29, 2023, Gershkovich was held in Moscow's notoriously dismal Lefortovo Prison. He has appeared healthy during court hearings in which his appeals for release have been rejected.

"Evan has displayed remarkable resilience and strength in the face of this grim situation," U.S. Ambassador Lynne Tracy said on the first anniversary of his arrest.

Gershkovich faces up to 20 years in prison if the court finds him guilty, which is almost certain. Russian courts convict more than 99% of the defendants who come before them, and prosecutors can appeal sentences that they regard as too lenient, and they even can appeal acquittals.

In addition, Russia's interpretation of what constitutes high crimes like espionage and treason is broad, with authorities often going after people who share publicly available information with foreigners and accusing them of divulging state secrets.

Paul Whelan, an American corporate security executive, was arrested in Moscow for espionage in 2018 and is serving a 16-year sentence.

Gershkovich's arrest came about a year after President Vladimir Putin pushed through laws that chilled journalists, criminalizing criticism of what the Kremlin calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine and statements seen as discrediting the military. Foreign journalists largely left the country after the laws' passage; many trickled back in subsequent months, but there were concerns about whether Russian authorities would act against them.

After he was detained, fears rose that Russia was targeting Americans as animosity between Moscow and Washington grew. Last year, Alsu Kurmasheva, a reporter with dual American-Russian citizenship for the U.S. government-funded Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe was arrested for alleged violation of the law requiring so-called "foreign agents" to register.

Another dual national, Los Angeles resident Ksenia Karelina, is on trial, also in Yekaterinburg, on treason charges for allegedly raising money for a Ukrainian organization that supplied arms and ammunition to Kyiv. Several Western reporters have been forced to leave after Gershkovich's arrest because Russia refused to renew their visas.

With Gershkovich's trial being closed, few details of his case may become public. But the Russian Prosecutor General's office said this month that he is accused of "gathering secret information" on orders from the CIA about Uralvagonzavod, a plant about 150 kilometers (90 miles) north of Yekaterinburg that produces and repairs tanks and other military equipment.

Not only is Uralvagonzavod strategically sensitive, it's also been a nest of vehement pro-Putin sentiment where an inquisitive American could offend and alarm. In 2011, a plant manager, Igor Kholmanskikh, attracted national attention on Putin's annual call-in program by denouncing mass protests in Moscow at the time. Putin later appointed him as his regional envoy and as a member of the National Security Council.

"Evan Gershkovich is facing a false and baseless charge. ... The Russian regime's smearing of Evan is repugnant, disgusting and based on calculated and transparent lies. Journalism is not a crime," Journal publisher Almar Latour and chief editor Emma Tucker said in a statement after his trial date was announced.

"We had hoped to avoid this moment and now expect the U.S. government to redouble efforts to get Evan released," they said.

In a letter to the Journal's readers on Tuesday, Tucker said that to even call the proceeding a trial "is

unfair to Evan and a continuation of this travesty of justice that already has gone on for far too long.”

She added that “it will not be a trial as we understand it, with a presumption of innocence and a search for the truth. ... This bogus accusation of espionage will inevitably lead to a bogus conviction for an innocent man.”

Russia has not ruled out a prisoner exchange involving Gershkovich but says that’s not possible before a verdict in his case. That could be months away, because Russian trials often adjourn for weeks. The post-verdict prospects are mixed.

Although Russia-U.S. relations are highly troubled because of the conflict in Ukraine, the Kremlin and Washington did work out a swap in 2022 that freed WNBA star Brittney Griner, who was serving a 9 1/2-year sentence for cannabis possession.

But that exchange also freed the highest-value Russian prisoner in the United States, arms dealer Viktor Bout, and the U.S. may not hold another card that strong. Putin has alluded to interest in freeing Vadim Krasikov, a Russian imprisoned in Germany for assassinating a Chechen rebel leader in Berlin, but Germany’s willingness to aid in a Russia-U.S. dispute is uncertain.

The Biden administration would also be sensitive to appearing to be giving away too much after coming under substantial criticism in trading Bout, widely called “the Merchant of Death,” for a sports figure.

But Biden may feel an incentive to secure Gershkovich’s release because of boasts by former President Donald Trump, who is his main challenger in this year’s election, that he can easily get the journalist freed. Putin “will do that for me, but not for anyone else,” Trump claimed in May.

The Kremlin, however, says it has not been in touch with Trump, and Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Pevkov bristled at the attention given to a possible exchange, saying “these contacts must be carried out in total secrecy.”

Amid heavy police presence, Kenya starts clearing debris after protests in which at least 6 died

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenyans woke up to the acrid smell of tear gas still lingering in the capital on Wednesday, a day after protesters stormed parliament amid violent demonstrations over a controversial tax plan during which at least six people have been killed.

As the day began, there were no reports of violence. Police and soldiers patrolled the streets as city workers began cleaning up debris. Parliament, the city hall and the supreme court were cordoned off with tape reading “Crime Scene Do Not Enter.”

The military was deployed overnight to support police on as President William Ruto called the events treasonous and vowed to quash the unrest “at whatever cost.”

Kenya has been rocked by massive protests for over a week in opposition to a proposed finance bill that would raise taxes as frustrations over the cost of living are simmering. Many young people who helped vote Ruto into power with cheers for his promises of economic relief have taken to the streets to object to the pain of reforms.

Thousands of protesters stormed Kenya’s parliament Tuesday, burning parts of the building while legislators fled. Police responded with gunfire and several protesters were killed. The city mortuary told The Associated Press that it received six bodies from police on Tuesday.

Authorities said police fired over 700 blanks to disperse protesters in the suburb of Githurai, east of the capital Nairobi. Videos of gunfire piercing the night air were shared online.

More than 100 people were injured in Tuesday’s protests, according to civil society groups. It is still unclear how many people were arrested.

U.N. Secretary General António Guterres said he was deeply saddened by reports of deaths and injuries.

“I urge the Kenyan authorities to exercise restraint, and call for all demonstrations to take place peacefully,” he wrote on the social media platform X.

In Nairobi, a regional hub for expatriates and home to a United Nations complex, inequality among

Kenyans has sharpened along with long-held frustrations over state corruption.

Opposition to the finance bill has united a large part of the country, with some explicitly rejecting the tribal divisions that have torn Kenya apart in the past. Some who had passionately supported Ruto felt betrayed.

A Kenyan newspaper, Daily Nation, called for dialogue. "Let's reason together," its front page said.

Citizen TV, a local broadcaster, led a discussion titled "A Nation on the Brink" with panelists calling on the government to engage with the public.

Biden pardons potentially thousands of ex-service members convicted under now-repealed gay sex ban

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden pardoned potentially thousands of former U.S. service members convicted of violating a now-repealed military ban on consensual gay sex, saying Wednesday that he is "righting an historic wrong" to clear the way for them to regain lost benefits.

Biden's action grants a pardon to service members who were convicted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice's former Article 125, which criminalized sodomy. The law, which has been on the books since 1951, was rewritten in 2013 to prohibit only forcible acts.

Those covered by the pardon will be able to apply to receive proof that their conviction has been erased, petition to have their discharges from the military upgraded and move to recover lost pay and benefits.

"Today, I am righting an historic wrong by using my clemency authority to pardon many former service members who were convicted simply for being themselves," Biden said in a statement. "We have a sacred obligation to all of our service members — including our brave LGBTQI+ service members: to properly prepare and equip them when they are sent into harm's way, and to care for them and their families when they return home. Today we are making progress in that pursuit."

The president's use of his pardon powers is occurring during Pride Month and his action comes just days before he is set to hold a high-profile fundraiser with LGBTQ donors in New York on Friday. Biden is trying to rally support within the Democratic-leaning community ahead of the presidential election.

Administration officials declined to say why Biden did not act on the pardons sooner.

This is the third categorical pardon by Biden — using his clemency powers to cover a broad group of people convicted of particular crimes — after moves in 2022 and 2023 to pardon those convicted federally for possessing marijuana.

The White House estimates that several thousand service members will be covered — the majority convicted before the military instituted the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in 1993 that eased the way for LGBTQ troops to serve if they didn't disclose their sexual orientation. That policy was repealed in 2011, when Congress allowed for their open service in the military.

Service members convicted of nonconsensual acts are not covered by Biden's pardon action. And those convicted under other articles of the military justice code, which may have been used as pretext to punish or force-out LGBTQ troops, would need to request clemency through the normal Department of Justice pardon process.

Biden had previously ordered the Department of Veterans Affairs to move to provide benefits to service members who were other than honorably discharged because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status.

Rep. Lauren Boebert wins GOP primary after switching Colorado districts; Hurd, Crank also notch wins

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press/Report for America

DENVER (AP) — U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert won Tuesday's Republican primary in a U.S. House race that she jumped into last year, surviving a scandal over a video of her at a Denver theater and accusations of carpetbagging after fleeing what could have been a tough reelection bid in her current district.

Boebert's resounding win over four other candidates in the new district across the state from where she lived before showcased her political cachet among Republicans and positions her for a likely easy win in the November general election. It was also a victory for the far-right flank of the House GOP, a group that takes no prisoners, makes no concessions and stays on the attack.

Taking the stage at her election night victory party, Boebert wore a pair of reflective gold sneakers sold by former President Donald Trump and a white "Make America Great Again" hat with his signature across the bill.

"America will rise again, and I am so excited that you all are here to be a part of it with me," Boebert said to applause.

Boebert responded to questions about her switch to the 4th District by saying, "While the crops may be slightly different here in CD4, the values are not."

She promised to fight for policies including shutting down the southern border and also signaled that she intends to continue her combative style.

"A lot of folks criticize my approach on things," Boebert said, "but I learned very early on in Washington, D.C., that nothing happens without force."

In two other closely watched Republican contests, Attorney Jeff Hurd won the primary for the 3rd District seat currently held by Boebert, and political consultant and talk radio host Jeff Crank defeated Colorado GOP Chairman Dave Williams, who was endorsed by Trump, in the 5th District.

Boebert built national hard-line conservative stardom that likely made it easier for her to weather the scandals of the last year, which included the video of her vaping and causing a disturbance at a musical production of "Beetlejuice."

While the theater incident and district jump rattled some Republicans, Gilbert Kendzior shrugged them off, saying, "Who's perfect?"

Kendzior said he voted for Boebert because she shakes things up. "It's gotten too staid. Same promises, nothing happens," he said. "We need to get rid of the old farts."

On Tuesday she beat a group of more traditional, homegrown primary candidates who had far less name recognition and generally less combative political styles: former state Sen. Jerry Sonnenberg; current state Reps. Mike Lynch and Richard Holtorf; and parental rights advocate Deborah Flora.

Sonnenberg congratulated Boebert and pledged to support her, saying, "I look forward to helping her win this seat in November and then being a resource to her on rural issues in this district."

The 4th District, which sweeps across a wide expanse of ranches, ghost towns and conservative parts of the Denver metro area that make up much of the plains of eastern Colorado, overwhelmingly went for Trump in the 2020 election.

The seat opened up after former Republican Rep. Ken Buck resigned, citing the divisiveness of today's politics and his party's devotion to Trump. In a special election Tuesday to fill the remaining months of Buck's term, Republican Greg Lopez, a former mayor of the city of Parker, beat a Democrat and third-party candidates.

In the 5th District, which is home to the city of Colorado Springs, Crank bested Williams after the latter faced condemnation from fellow Republicans over his leadership including the use of party resources to boost his own campaign.

Crank said Tuesday night that he looks forward to being his district's conservative voice in Congress and urged Republicans to unite behind Trump, posting on the social platform X: "We have a country to save from Joe Biden's Open Border Crisis and the failure of the Democrats' economic policy."

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Williams, a former state representative, has tried to realign the state GOP with the far-right flank of the national party. In recent GOP communications, he called people celebrating Gay Pride Month “godless groomers” and urged people to burn pride flags.

Crank is a more traditional Republican, less inclined toward fiery invective and the party’s hard-right wing. A complaint against Williams with the Federal Elections Commission alleges that he used the state party email list to announce his campaign for Congress and spent party money on mailers that included an attack on Crank.

The race is to fill the seat of Republican Rep. Doug Lamborn, who did not seek reelection. As in the 4th District, the winner of the Republican-friendly 5th District will be favored in the general election.

Another GOP House race watched at the national level was the 8th District, newly minted after redistricting in 2021 and hotly contested with voters roughly split between the two major parties.

Republican state Rep. Gabe Evans, a former police officer, defeated former state Rep. Janak Joshi, a retired physician, in the race to challenge Democratic incumbent Yadira Caraveo. Caraveo won the 8th District, which stretches north of Denver, by fewer than 2,000 votes in 2022.

Evans will likely benefit from a windfall of support from the National Republican Campaign Committee, which is intent on defending the party’s thin House majority.

And farther to the west, among the Rocky Mountains and high desert mesas, Hurd won the GOP primary for the 3rd District, home to Boebert’s current seat.

Hurd, a softer-spoken and less hard-line conservative, will face Democrat Adam Frisch, who lost to Boebert by only 546 votes in 2022. That narrow margin was largely attributed to Boebert’s divisiveness among voters, and Hurd is considered to have the advantage in the general election in the Republican-leaning district.

Still, Frisch’s near victory in 2022, which caught national attention and showed donors he had a path to flip the seat, has helped him raise over \$13 million. It’s one of the biggest House campaign chests in the nation and far overshadows Hurd’s \$1 million.

Despite that, Frisch labeled Hurd as a “corporate lawyer funded by corporate PAC money.”

“My presumptive opponent won’t have the backbone to stand up to Washington interests,” Frisch said in a statement.

Hurd thanked voters for their support.

“On to the general election in November, where a brighter future for Colorado families will be on the ballot,” he said on X.

In the primary, Hurd defeated former Republican state Rep. Ron Hanks; Stephen Varela, a former Democrat who switched parties; businessman Lew Webb; and financial adviser Russ Andrews.

As Iran’s presidential vote looms, tensions boil over renewed headscarf crackdown

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Seemingly every afternoon in Iran’s capital, police vans rush to major Tehran squares and intersections to search for women with loose headscarves and those who dare not to wear them at all.

The renewed crackdown comes not quite two years since mass protests over the death of Mahsa Amini after she was detained for not wearing a scarf to the authorities’ liking. A United Nations panel has found that the 22-year-old died as a result of “physical violence” wrought upon her by the state.

Amini’s death set off months of unrest that ended in a bloody crackdown, and for a time morality police disappeared from the streets. But now videos are emerging of women being physically forced into vans by police as lawmakers continue to push for harsher penalties. Meanwhile, authorities have seized thousands of cars over women having their hair uncovered while also targeting businesses that serve them.

The renewed hijab push, which police are calling the Noor — or “Light” — Plan, began before President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash, and whoever wins a vote to replace the hard-line cleric on Friday

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will have an influence over just how intense it becomes — and how Iran responds to any further unrest. “An intervention ... under the Noor Plan will take us into darkness,” reformist presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian recently told a group of female supporters

Enforcement began ramping up in April, with videos spreading online showing women having violent encounters with female enforcers dressed in the all-encompassing black chador alongside uniformed police officers.

While police haven’t published arrest numbers about the crackdown and media haven’t given it major attention, it’s widely discussed in Iran. But still, many women continue to wear their hijabs loosely or leave them draped around their shoulders while walking in Tehran.

On a recent afternoon in northern Tehran, women sat in cafes and other public places, as a police officer in his 50s told those passing by: “Please cover yourselves, ladies,” and then muttered audibly: “My God, I am fed up repeating this without getting any attention.”

“We know the police are not eager to fight women, but they are under pressure to,” said Fatemeh, a 34-year-old math teacher who gave only her first name for fear of reprisal. “Sooner or later, the authorities will realize that it would serve their interests better to pull back.”

Iran and neighboring Taliban-controlled Afghanistan are the only countries where the hijab remains mandatory — even conservative Saudi Arabia has dialed back on its morality patrols. While women attend school, work and can manage their own lives in Iran, hard-liners insist that the hijab must be enforced.

The garment has long has been entwined with politics in Iran. Former ruler Reza Shah Pahlavi banned it in 1936, part of his efforts to mirror the West. The ban lasted only five years, but many middle and upper-class Iranian women chose not to wear it.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, some of the women who helped overthrow the shah embraced the even more conservative chador. But others protested a decision by Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to order women to wear hijabs in public. In 1983, it became law, enforced with penalties including fines and up to two months in prison.

Amini’s death in September 2022 sparked months of protests and a security crackdown that killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained. But less than two years later, hard-liners within Iran’s theocracy have pressed forward with a crackdown.

The government’s insistence on enforcing the hijab also reflects its conspiratorial view of the world. Iran’s national police chief, Gen. Ahmad Reza Radan, has alleged without providing evidence that the country’s enemies plan to transform the nation’s culture by encouraging women to avoid the veil.

Already, “tens of thousands of women have had their cars arbitrarily confiscated as punishment for defying Iran’s veiling laws,” Amnesty International said in March. “Others have been prosecuted and sentenced to flogging or prison terms or faced other penalties such as fines or being forced to attend ‘morality’ classes.”

On Saturday, police said they would release some 8,000 vehicles held over women not wearing the hijab in them for the Eid al-Ghadir holiday marked by Shiites.

There’s also been a push to close down businesses that serve women who aren’t wearing hijabs.

“The Islamic Republic is using the distraction of its presidential ‘election’ to go after its women activists and cow them into silence through imprisonment and abuse,” said Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran. The center said at least 12 women activists have been sentenced to prison since Raisi’s deaths for their work.

But there are signs that Iran’s government, and 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, know there are risks to escalating enforcement. A bill passed by Iran’s parliament that could impose 10-year prison sentences for hijab violations has yet to be approved by the country’s Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Khamenei.

So far among the presidential candidates, only Pezeshkian has criticized the hijab law. Others, including current parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, asked for the law to be implemented in a softer way. Candidate Mostafa Pourmohammadi, a Shiite cleric, criticized the use of violence against women, saying police should use “the language of trust and gratitude” rather than the baton.

Meanwhile, the imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, a prominent women’s rights

activist, has issued a call from prison urging a boycott of the presidential vote, saying it only supports "a regime that believes in repression, terror and violence."

At a recent Friday prayers in Tehran, women uniformly wore the chador while attending, as they always do. "Every women should cover herself in veil, this is an order by Allah," said Masoumeh Ahmadi, a 49-year-old housewife.

But even among the pious, there can be differences of opinion.

"Yes, it is an order by God, but it is not a must for all women as far as I have learned," said Ahmadi's 37-year-old friend, Zahra Kashani.

Most Americans plan to watch Biden-Trump debate, and many see high stakes, AP-NORC poll finds

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most U.S. adults plan to watch some element of Thursday's presidential debate and many think the event will be important for the campaigns of both President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Both men remain broadly unpopular as they prepare to face off for the first time since 2020, although Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, maintains a modest enthusiasm advantage with his base compared to Biden, the Democratic incumbent.

About 6 in 10 U.S. adults say they are "extremely" or "very" likely to watch the debate live or in clips, or read about or listen to commentary about the performance of the candidates in the news or social media.

The poll suggests tens of millions of Americans are likely to see or hear about at least part of Thursday's debate despite how unusually early it comes in the campaign season. Both Biden and Trump supporters view the debate as a major test for their candidate — or just a spectacle not to miss.

"I think it's super important," said Victoria Perdomo, a 44-year-old stay-at-home mom and a Trump supporter in Coral Springs, Florida. "It shows America what you're going to see for the next four years."

Nic Greene, a libertarian who is a registered independent, said he'll likely vote for Trump as the "least worst candidate." He doesn't think debates do much to help voters make decisions, but he's expecting to be entertained and plans to listen to post-debate analysis on podcasts.

"I think the majority of people have their minds made up with or without these debates," he said. "It's a circus."

Both sides see the debate as important. About half, 47%, of Americans say the debate is "extremely" or "very" important for the success of Biden's campaign and about 4 in 10 say it's highly important for Trump's campaign. About 3 in 10 Americans say it is at least "very" important for both campaigns.

Most Democrats, 55%, think the upcoming debate is extremely or very important for the success of the Biden campaign. About half of Republicans, 51%, say the same thing about the importance of the debate for the Trump campaign. Only about one-third of independents say the debate is highly important for either campaign.

Arthur Morris, a 40-year-old operations manager at a major financial firm, is an undecided voter open to Biden, Trump or a third-party option such as independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. He, along with a significant share of Americans, has doubts about the mental capabilities of the aging candidates, and sees Biden's debate performance as an important test.

"I need Biden to demonstrate to me that he's cogent enough to be able to hold this office and execute to the level that we need him to," Morris said.

Trump, meanwhile, needs to show he can be trusted after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol in which Trump supporters briefly disrupted the certification of his 2020 loss to Biden and Trump's recent conviction in a hush money scheme, said Murray, of Lewiston, Ohio.

About 4 in 10 say they are likely to watch or listen to some or all of the debate live, while a similar share

say they will watch or listen to clips later. Another 4 in 10, roughly, expect to consume commentary about the debate and candidate performance in the news or on social media. Republicans and Democrats are more likely than independents to be following debate coverage in some capacity.

Voters are still unhappy about their options Biden and Trump are each entering the debate with low favorability ratings. About 6 in 10 U.S. adults say they have a very or somewhat unfavorable view of Biden, and a similar number have a negative view of Trump.

Most Americans, 56%, say they are "very" or "somewhat" dissatisfied with Biden being the Democratic Party's likely nominee for president, and a similar majority are dissatisfied with Trump as the likely GOP nominee. The poll indicates that Republicans continue to be more satisfied with a re-nomination of Trump than Democrats are with an anticipated Biden re-nomination. Six in 10 Republicans are satisfied with Trump as a nominee; just 42% of Democrats say that about Biden.

About 3 in 10 U.S. adults are dissatisfied with both Trump and Biden as their party's likely nominees – with independents and Democrats being more likely than Republicans to be dissatisfied with both.

Republicans and Democrats are more likely to have a negative view of the opposing party's candidate than they are to have a positive view of their own.

About 9 in 10 Republicans have an unfavorable view of Biden, and about 9 in 10 Democrats have a negative view of Trump. By comparison, roughly 7 in 10 Democrats have a favorable view of Biden, and about 7 in 10 Republicans have a positive view of Trump.

About 4 in 10 U.S. adults approve of how Biden is handling his job as president, in line with where that number has stood for the past two years. Biden's approval rating among U.S. adults on handling the economy is similar, as is his handling of abortion policy. Only 3 in 10 approve of his approach to immigration.

"I do believe there has been some progress under Biden, but I believe it's Congress who is the one stalling on any of the policies that Biden wants to proceed with," said Jane Quan-Bell, 70, a school librarian from Chico, California, and a Democrat.

The conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is an especially vulnerable spot for Biden. With only 26% of U.S. adults approving of his handling of the issue, it's well below his overall approval rating. Nearly 6 in 10 Democrats disapprove of his approach.

A Palestinian was shot, beaten and tied to an Israeli army jeep. The army says he posed no threat

By JULIA FRANKEL and MAYA ALLERUZZO Associated Press

JENIN, West Bank (AP) — When Mujahid Abadi stepped outside to see if Israeli forces had entered his uncle's neighborhood, he was shot in the arm and the foot. That was only the start of his ordeal. Hours later, beaten and bloodied, he found himself strapped to the searing hood of an Israeli military jeep driving down a road.

The army initially said Abadi was a suspected militant, but later acknowledged he had not posed a threat to Israeli forces and was caught in crossfire with militants.

Video showing the 24-year-old strapped to the jeep circulated on social media, sparking widespread condemnation, including from the United States. Many said it showed that Israeli soldiers were using him as a human shield — a charge Israel has frequently leveled at Hamas as it battles the group in Gaza.

The military said it was investigating the incident and that it did not reflect its values. But Palestinians saw it as yet another act of brutality in Israel's crackdown on the occupied West Bank, where violence has surged since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the war in Gaza.

Abadi, speaking to The Associated Press from a hospital bed on Tuesday, said he stepped outside his uncle's house in the volatile West Bank city of Jenin on Saturday after he heard a commotion.

"I went outside to see what was happening, and looked towards the neighbors' houses, where I saw the army," he said. "When I tried to return to the house, heavy and indiscriminate gunfire was suddenly directed at me. My cousin who was near me was also hit."

After he was shot in the arm, he hid behind his family's car. Then he was shot again, in the foot. Unable

to move, he called his father and told him he was about to die.

"I told him to try not to lose consciousness and to keep talking to me," Raed Abadi said as he stood over his son's hospital bed. "Suddenly, the call was disconnected."

Raed later saw false reports on social media that a Palestinian had been killed in the raid. "I collapsed, because I was 90% sure it was my son," he said.

Abadi was not dead, but his suffering had just begun.

After a couple of hours, Israeli soldiers found him. He says they struck his head and face and in the areas where he had been shot. Then they dragged him by his legs, lifted him by his hands and feet and threw him onto the hood of the military jeep.

"I screamed because of the heat," he said. "Then, one of the soldiers started cursing at me and told me to be quiet."

The military said its forces had tied Abadi to the hood of the jeep to transport him to paramedics.

But Nebal Farsakh, a spokesperson for the Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service, said the army had sealed off the area and prevented paramedics from tending to the wounded for at least an hour.

In dashboard camera footage obtained by the AP, the jeep to which Abadi was tied drove past at least two ambulances. Abadi said he was lashed to the jeep for about half an hour before soldiers untied him and released him to paramedics.

In Washington, D.C., State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the video was "shocking."

"Civilians should never be used as human shields. The IDF should swiftly investigate what happened and hold people accountable," he said, referring to the Israeli military.

Israel has long accused Hamas of using civilians as human shields because the militants operate in dense, residential neighborhoods in Gaza. It blames Hamas for the high death toll in Gaza, where local health officials say over 37,000 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the war, without specifying how many were civilians. The Hamas attack that ignited the war killed some 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians.

In the West Bank, Israeli forces have carried out near-nightly raids, often setting off gunbattles with militants, and over 550 Palestinians have been killed.

Rights groups say Israel itself has a long history of using Palestinians as human shields during military operations in both territories, which it captured in a 1967 war and which Palestinians want for their future state.

For decades, the military routinely ordered Palestinian civilians to remove suspicious objects from roads and to tell people to come out of their homes so the military could arrest them, a practice known as the "neighbor procedure," according to the Israeli rights group B'Tselem.

Israel's Supreme Court ordered the military to stop using Palestinians as human shields in 2005, but rights groups have continued to document examples over the years. In 2021, Israeli soldiers operating in the West Bank held an AP photographer against his will in an area where Palestinians were hurling stones and the troops were firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

Here's what led Kenyans to burn part of parliament and call for the president's resignation

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Kenya's president came to power by appealing to the common people, describing himself as a "hustler" and vowing relief from economic pain. But Tuesday's deadly chaos in the capital, Nairobi, shows how far support for him has turned.

Part of parliament burned as protesters rushed in and lawmakers fled. Bodies lay in the streets, and medical workers and watchdogs said police had opened fire. The military was deployed. A youth-led movement had warned the government of President William Ruto against passing a finance bill they said would add to Kenyans' economic troubles. Lawmakers passed it anyway. Ruto is expected to sign it, even as religious leaders called it "unwarranted."

Here's a look at the unrest in East Africa's most stable democracy and the most serious assault on Ke-

nya's government in decades.

From internet data to diapersThe finance bill was meant to raise or introduce taxes or fees on a range of daily items and services including internet data, fuel, bank transfers and diapers. Some measures were stripped as anger grew. The proposals are part of the Kenyan government's efforts to raise an extra \$2.7 billion in domestic revenue.

The government says the changes are necessary to pay interest on national debt, reduce the budget deficit and keep the government running. Protesters see them as punitive, since the high cost of living already makes it hard to get by.

A 2023 finance bill signed into law by Ruto was also unpopular, featuring a tax on salaries for housing, but the anger was nothing like this.

A youth-led protestYoung Kenyans have been organizing on social media, organizing peaceful street demonstrations meant to force authorities to drop this finance bill altogether. The protests started on June 18 after the bill was made public for the first time.

The protests began in Nairobi but have spread to other parts of Kenya, including the Indian Ocean city of Mombasa and even in Eldoret, a town in the Rift Valley region that's been a bastion of support for the president.

Kenya's political opposition stormed out of Tuesday session's in which the bill was passed.

The president is questionedRuto, elected in 2022, has consistently urged all Kenyans to pay their fair share of taxes. Some Kenyans now mock him as "Zakayo," after the biblical tax collector Zacchaeus. Many see his aggressive stance as a form of dictatorship that's out of sync with the realities of ordinary people.

In 2023, after the courts blocked some of his tax proposals, the president threatened to disregard court orders. That drew criticism from the Law Society of Kenya, whose leader accused Ruto of seeing himself as above the law.

Pro-democracy activists have warned that Ruto's attacks on the judiciary indicate an authoritarian streak. Some see similarities between Ruto and his mentor Daniel arap Moi, the former president who led Kenya during a long period of one-party rule.

Common man, chartered planeRuto in his presidential campaign called himself the anti-establishment candidate and vowed to implement policies to put more money in Kenyans' pockets. But the so-called "hustlers" who supported him were dismayed when his government removed crucial fuel and maize flour subsidies. Many Kenyans saw it as a betrayal.

Ruto, now fabulously wealthy, frequently urges Kenyans to tighten their belts. But his state visit to the United States in May created controversy when he chartered a luxury private jet instead of using the presidential jet or Kenya's national carrier. Ruto later said the chartered jet had been paid for by friends he didn't name.

Baby cousin with cancer inspires girls to sew hospital gowns for sick kids across U.S. and Africa

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

FREEHOLD, N.J. (AP) — Fighting brain cancer, little Giada Demma was lying in her pediatric hospital bed, her tiny body virtually swimming in a drab green hospital gown.

Her cousin Giuliana Demma remembers looking at the 1-year-old and thinking how sad the scene was: a small child awash in an ugly gown several sizes too big for her.

"I thought to myself, 'Why does she have to wear this? Why can't she wear something nicer?'" Giuliana said.

Inspired by that moment, Giuliana Demma, 13, and her 11-year-old sister Audrina have sewn and donated more than 1,800 brightly colored, playfully patterned gowns to hospitalized children in 36 states. They've even sent them to Uganda, with three other African nations set to get them in the fall.

"I wanted to do something to help kids like (Giada) and give them hospital gowns that have nice patterns, that are colorful, that they can feel comfortable in while they're going through a rough time," Giuliana said.

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Their family hired a seamstress to make a custom Disney princess gown for little Giada, who was hospitalized in 2017 and is doing well now. But as Giuliana grew over the next four or five years, she developed an interest in sewing, and remembered how lost her little cousin looked in a drab, ill-fitting gown years earlier.

Once Giuliana learned to sew, her cousin was no longer hospitalized. But she started making cheerful gowns for other sick kids. Her first creations were gowns with flamingos and Paris-themed patterns for a child with cancer that her aunt knew.

No child is ever charged for one of her gowns, which are paid for by donations of money and material. A local Starbucks outlet gave the project a \$3,000 grant this year. A hospital linen company, ImageFIRST in Clifton, New Jersey, cleans all the garments for free before they are sent to hospitals, and a women's group at a nearby housing development and a church youth group help out with about 40 volunteers cutting fabric for the girls.

Giuliana gets help from her sister, who also loves sewing. Audrina will pitch in when Giuliana has homework to do, heading to the basement of their home in Freehold, New Jersey, not far from the Jersey Shore, that has been taken over by the sewing operation.

Audrina's specialty is sewing small pillows for young patients. They are sent with boxes of markers so that the recipients can color them as they like while they're in the hospital.

Audrina made 100 pillows as part of an effort to earn her Girl Scout Bronze award, packaged them and sent them off to hospitals. She makes seasonally themed pillows for St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day and other special times; last winter she made 100 snowman pillows.

They are often part of packages the girls create that include rubber duckies and other toys, and a local pediatric cancer charity, LIV Like a Unicorn, includes them in boxes they send to children battling cancer. The Minnesota charity Children's Surgery International took 60 of the gowns to hospitals in Uganda in February with more headed to Gambia, Liberia and Ethiopia in the fall.

Some of the recipients write back to thank the girls for the gowns and pillows.

"I like seeing the smiles on the kids' faces, even though they're going through such a hard time," said Audrina, who wants to be a veterinarian.

The girls have recently begun sewing zippers into brightly colored T-shirts to accommodate infusion ports for chemotherapy or other drugs that could allow young patients not to have to wear a gown at all while hospitalized.

Samantha DiSimone's son Vito was hospitalized in January in New York for a heart valve ailment at 9 months old. Hospital staff brought in a sealed package with a gown Giuliana made from material with a pattern from the "Cars" movie.

He broke out in a big smile when they unpackaged the garment.

"I was so emotional," Samantha DiSimone said. "You're in a hospital praying that your child will make it through the surgery, and to see him in the gown with a big smile on his face is an amazing thing."

Soft-spoken yet entirely at ease recounting her efforts, Giuliana has the poise and maturity of someone beyond her years, though she just graduated from middle school. She wants to be a cancer surgeon, and said she loves hearing from recipients of the gowns.

"I'm really happy I can help make a difference for them during this tough time," she said. "I want them to feel confident and know that they're an inspiration, they're loved and they're strong and they're brave. They can wear these gowns and have something to cheer them up."

Melissa Demma, Giada's mother, said the drive by her child's young cousins to make and give away gowns "blows me away and touches me each and every day."

"They're young girls and this is what they choose to do, spending their time helping others," she said. "If everyone could be like this, our world would be a better place. It makes me feel better for the future and what this world could be."

Long-vacant storefront that once housed part of the Stonewall Inn reclaims place in LGBTQ+ history

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It was half of the Stonewall Inn, the gay dive bar where a 1969 police raid became a landmark moment for the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

Yet for much of the 55 years since, there has been little outward indication that 51 Christopher St. was part of that history.

It had housed the Stonewall's biggest bar and one of the two dance floors that drew its young, diverse crowd. But after raid sparked an uprising and the Stonewall shut down, 51 Christopher St. became a bagel shop, a gay bar briefly again, a clothing store, a nail salon, then vacant space. Its big "STONEWALL INN" sign came down in 1989, a few years before a new version of the tavern opened next door.

Now the community is reclaiming the building and its place in history. It opens as the Stonewall National Monument's visitor center on Friday, the anniversary of the 1969 rebellion that helped reshape LGBTQ+ life in the United States in the ensuing decades.

"Today, if you look around the world, there are millions of people who are celebrating Pride. And it all started in this building," visitor center senior adviser Mark Segal said recently while showing it to guests.

The gay activist and publisher stood in front of a discovery made during construction: a bricked-up doorway that once connected the two sections of the original Stonewall Inn.

The very doorway Segal himself had walked through early on the morning of June 28, 1969, as an 18-year-old who'd just moved to New York's Greenwich Village neighborhood from Philadelphia and found the LGBTQ+ community for which he'd longed.

What happened in the ensuing hours would anger him, and many others — and also give them a new sense of purpose.

"It told me we had to be out, loud and proud," he recalled.

The visitor center aims to tell the Stonewall story in more depth than the monument itself, which centers on a tiny park that features historical photographs but limited interpretive information. Overseen by the National Park Service and the LGBTQ+ advocacy group Pride Live, the \$3.2 million visitor center was financed chiefly with private donations, except for \$450,000 from the park service's charitable arm, which gets private and federal money.

"When people think of the National Park Service, they don't usually think 'queer and urban,'" said visitor center co-founder Diana Rodriguez. "So we're a very different type of visitor center."

Where other such facilities might have plaques about wildlife and geology, this one has photographs of protests and a line on the floor marking where the timeworn bar once stood. A 1967 jukebox, the same model that was playing on the night of the Stonewall Rebellion, is loaded with songs from the era and beyond.

Spanning two former horse stables at 51 and 53 Christopher St., the Stonewall Inn was a speakeasy-like establishment with blacked-out windows, steel doors, a doorman who screened patrons, no liquor license and notoriously overpriced drinks.

At the time, LGBTQ+ social life in New York City was an open secret, but a risky and repressed one nonetheless. From the 1950s until 1973, the U.S. psychiatric establishment classified homosexuality as a mental illness. Law enforcement in New York and elsewhere often viewed expressions of LGBTQ+ identity — from dancing or displaying affection with a same-sex partner to wearing gender-fluid attire — as illegal.

Police often raided gay bars. Patrons usually left quietly, rather than risk an arrest that could expose their sexual orientation and cost them jobs and family relationships.

But when officers showed up at the Stonewall that day, patrons and their friends suddenly and spontaneously decided they had enough.

"If the police can do this to us, anybody can do this to us," Segal remembers thinking as he stood by the dance floor at 51 Christopher St. — his preferred side of the Stonewall — and watched what he recalls as officers harshly handling customers. News and other accounts describe police checking or threaten-

ing to check the sex of some people based on their clothing, and arresting some (the police department apologized in 2019 for its actions).

Some patrons resisted arrest as they were taken out to police vehicles. Officers responded roughly. A growing crowd began throwing coins, bottles and more at the police.

The officers then retreated and barricaded themselves inside the bar. Some in the throng outside tried to break in. Riot police showed up to clear the demonstrators away, but they kept regrouping and returning until about 4:30 a.m.

Protests and clashes with police continued the next several nights.

LGBTQ+ Americans had sometimes demonstrated and even fought with police before. But at the end of a decade of civil rights, women's liberation and anti-Vietnam War protests, the Stonewall rebellion touched off a broader and more confrontational phase of LGBTQ+ rights activism.

Many new groups formed and pushed for anti-discrimination laws, held demonstrations and social events in the open and otherwise demanded rights and recognition.

What became annual Pride marches began on the first Stonewall anniversary. The site of the rebellion, including both parts of the original Stonewall Inn, became a National Historic Landmark in 2000 — and, in 2016, the first U.S. national monument dedicated to LGBTQ+ history.

Meanwhile, the current Stonewall Inn has served as something of an unofficial welcome and education site for the monument.

"I'm here for the history," co-owner Kurt Kelly explained in a recent interview in the still-denlike bar, bedecked with photos and documents. The original Stonewall Inn closed soon after the uprising, but the 53 Christopher St. portion reopened as a gay bar in the 1990s. Kelly and co-owner Stacy Lentz acquired it in 2006.

They see the visitor center as a fitting neighbor and hope it will draw more people to the site and the bar. Recent years have been rough, they said, because of pandemic shutdowns, inflation, rising insurance costs and other challenges.

"It's really hard to keep this place open," said Lentz, but she feels a responsibility that goes beyond the bar business. She also works as CEO of the Stonewall Inn Gives Back Initiative, a charity that she and Kelly launched in 2017.

"The fight that started here on Christopher Street in 1969, it's not done," Lentz said.

For Segal, that fight would lead him to a lifetime of advocacy, including founding a gay youth group, disrupting 1970s TV news and talk shows to press for coverage of LGBTQ+ rights issues, lobbying officials, establishing the Philadelphia Gay News and developing affordable housing for LGBTQ+ seniors.

And one day last year, it led him back inside 51 Christopher St., with the Fifth Dimension's 1969 "Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In" queued up on his cellphone.

"I went to the back of the bar, played that, and I danced in Stonewall for the first time in 50-some years," he said. "And it brought back memories, and it brought back tears."

Illinois man accused in mass shooting at Fourth of July parade expected to change not-guilty plea

By SOPHIA TAREEN and KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

WAUKEGAN, Ill. (AP) — A man accused of killing seven people and injuring dozens more at a Fourth of July parade in suburban Chicago in 2022 is expected to change his initial plea of not guilty at a hearing Wednesday.

Robert Crimo III is scheduled to face trial in February on dozens of charges, including murder and attempted murder, for the shooting in Highland Park. Lake County prosecutors confirmed last week that Crimo may change his not guilty plea at a hearing set for Wednesday morning, about a week before the two-year anniversary of the mass shooting.

The statement released by Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart's office did not provide more detail on the expected changes or how it could influence sentencing. Crimo would face a mandatory sentence

of life without parole if convicted of first-degree murder.

The public defender's office, which is defending Crimo, didn't return a request for comment last week and generally does not comment on its cases.

The criminal case has proceeded slowly for months. At one point, Crimo insisted he wanted to fire his public defenders and represent himself. He abruptly reversed that decision weeks later.

Authorities have said the accused gunman confessed to police in the days after he opened fire from a rooftop in Highland Park, an affluent suburb that is home to about 30,000 people near the Lake Michigan shore. They said he initially fled to the Madison, Wisconsin, area and contemplated a second shooting at a parade there but returned to Chicago's northern suburbs.

Those killed in the attack were Katherine Goldstein, 64; Jacquelyn Sundheim, 63; Stephen Straus, 88; Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, 78; and Eduardo Uvaldo, 69, and married couple Kevin McCarthy, 37, and Irina McCarthy, 35.

The McCarthys' 2-year-old son was found alone at the scene and eventually reunited with extended family members.

All of them were from the Highland Park area except for Toledo-Zaragoza, who was visiting family in the city from Morelos, Mexico.

The violence focused attention on Highland Park's 2013 ban on semi-automatic weapons and large-capacity magazines. Illinois officials have long contended that legal and illegal weapons are easily purchased in surrounding states, hampering even the toughest local laws' effectiveness.

Authorities said that Crimo, a resident of nearby Highwood, legally purchased the rifle. But he first applied for a state gun license in 2019 when he was 19, too young to apply independently in Illinois.

His father sponsored the application, though police reports show that months earlier a relative reported to police that Crimo III had threatened to "kill everyone" and had made several threats to kill himself.

Prosecutors initially charged the father, Robert Crimo Jr., with seven felony counts of reckless conduct and he pleaded guilty in November to seven misdemeanor counts of reckless conduct. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail and released early for good behavior.

Biden and Trump are set to debate. Here's what their past performances looked like

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — What people remember from Joe Biden and Donald Trump's first debate four years ago are likely the interruptions, the shouting and the "will you shut up, man?"

Then-President Trump arrived at that first matchup in Cleveland seemingly determined to steamroll Biden at every turn, leaving the Democratic candidate exasperated and moderator Chris Wallace scrambling to regain control.

Now, in 2024, many of the rules insisted on this time by Biden's team — and agreed to by the Trump campaign — are designed to minimize the potential of a chaotic rerun. Each candidate's microphone will be muted, except when it's his turn to speak. There will be no studio audience to chime in with hoots and jeers.

The second and final presidential debate of 2020, held in Nashville, Tennessee, was a far more subdued event than the first, aided by a mute button and participants who were perhaps chastened by terrible reviews from the first matchup, particularly for Trump.

But if the Biden-Trump debate this Thursday in Atlanta spirals into pandemonium, consider that past was prologue.

A look back at that first Biden-Trump faceoff on Sept. 29, 2020:

The debate begins to devolveIt started out calmly enough, with a brief exchange about the Supreme Court vacancy that had opened up days before with the sudden death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. But the conversation turned contentious as the men tangled over health care and Trump's handling of COVID-19.

The sparring over the pandemic was tense enough — with Biden telling Wallace at one point, "You're

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not going to be able to shut him up." Then Biden pivoted back to the court and abortion rights, triggering yet another outburst from Trump that continued to irritate the Democrat (and likely Wallace, and perhaps the viewing public).

"The point is that the president also is opposed to Roe v. Wade," Biden said of Trump. "That's on the ballot as well and the court, in the court, and so that's also at stake right now. And so the election is all —"

"You don't know what's on the ballot. Why is it on the ballot?" Trump interrupted. "Why is it on the ballot? It's not on the ballot."

Trump would continue to interject until Biden showed his first real sign of irritation with his opponent and said: "Donald, would you just be quiet for a minute?"

But Trump didn't relent, refusing to let Wallace question him about his Obamacare replacement plan without interruptions and taunting Biden that his primary election victory over Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders was "not by much" and that he "just lost the left" when he distanced himself from Sanders' vision for health care.

"Folks," Biden finally said, conveying his irritation to the audience, "do you have any idea what this clown's doing?"

Biden: "Will you shut up, man?" One clip replayed at length from the chaos in Cleveland was Biden finally snapping at Trump: "Will you shut up, man?"

It came during a discussion over progressive proposals to overhaul Senate procedural rules or the Supreme Court itself — topics that have been tricky for an institutionalist such as Biden. The Democrat was, as he openly admitted, refusing to answer the question.

So Trump took matters into his own hands.

"Are you going to pack the court? Are you going to pack the court?" Trump demanded as Biden tried to make a case directly to the audience. Trump muttered that Biden didn't want to answer the question.

"Why wouldn't you answer that question? You want to put a lot of new Supreme Court justices. Radical left," Trump concluded.

That's when Biden — again — lost patience. "Will you shut up, man?"

But Trump — again — wouldn't relent, forcing Wallace to cut the segment short and move on to a different topic. Biden lamented how unproductive the discussion was.

Trump insults Biden's intelligenceThe Republican also didn't hesitate to get personal, from attacking Biden's sole living son, Hunter, to mocking the Democrat's academic credentials.

It seemed like Trump had been waiting for Biden to use any derivation of the word "smart" to go after his intelligence. So when Biden warned that more Americans would die from COVID-19 unless the president got smarter in his handling of the pandemic, Trump pounced.

"Did you use the word smart?" Trump said. "So you said you went to Delaware State, but you forgot the name of your college. You didn't go to Delaware State. You graduated either the lowest or almost the lowest in your class."

"Don't ever use the word smart with me," continued Trump, who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. "Don't ever use that word ... Because you know what? There's nothing smart about you, Joe."

Biden received his undergraduate degree from the University of Delaware in Newark in 1965 and enrolled shortly thereafter at Syracuse University law school. He wasn't known for his stellar grades; at Syracuse, he graduated 76th in a class of 85.

Trump nods to the Proud BoysIt was one of Trump's most memorable moments that didn't involve interrupting Biden.

Wallace pushed Trump to condemn white supremacists and militia groups, particularly as the Republican president spent so much of his energy denouncing so-called "Antifa" or far-left militant groups.

Trump responded that he was willing to do so, but never explicitly condemned right-wing extremist groups by name. When goaded by Biden to condemn the Proud Boys, one of such groups on the right, Trump seemingly did the opposite.

"Proud Boys, stand back and stand by," Trump said. Those words, and the broader exchange, left some members of the neofascist group celebrating what they saw as an implicit approval from the president.

Trump was forced into clean-up duty one day later, saying he did not know who the Proud Boys were and adding that "whoever they are, they have to stand down. Let law enforcement do their work."

The contentious exchange about Biden's sons Biden has long criticized Trump's attitude toward American troops, including his reported comments that in 2018, he did not want to visit a U.S. military cemetery in France because he thought the deceased soldiers were "suckers" and "losers."

"The way you talk about the military, the way you talk about them being losers and being, and, and, and just being suckers," Biden said to Trump. Speaking of his older son, Beau, a veteran who died of brain cancer, Biden continued: "My son was in Iraq. He spent a year there. He got — he got the Bronze Star. He got the Conspicuous Service Medal. He was not a loser. He was a patriot."

Trump swung back hard, taking aim at Biden's younger son, Hunter, instead.

"Are you talking Hunter? Are you talking about Hunter?" Trump responded, continuing: "I don't know Beau. I know Hunter. Hunter got thrown out of the military."

Trump then claimed that Hunter Biden was dishonorably discharged, which Biden quickly refuted. Hunter Biden was administratively discharged — which is not a dishonorable discharge — from the Navy in 2014 after testing positive for cocaine.

"My son ... like a lot of people we know at home had a drug problem. He's overtaken it," Biden said, adding: "I'm proud of my son."

Biden commits to not declaring victory until the election is certified, Trump does not During the final moments of the first debate, Wallace asked both candidates whether they would commit to not declaring victory until the election had been independently certified, as well as urging their respective supporters to stay calm.

Trump declined to do so, instead saying he would encourage his supporters to go watch the polls and musing about election fraud.

Biden, in sharp contrast, responded to the same question: "Yes."

Trump, who would go on to lose the 2020 race, never conceded the election. Just over three months after the Cleveland debate, a mob of his supporters fueled by his election lies stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

FDA warns maker of Sara Lee and Entenmann's not to claim foods contain allergens when they don't

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Federal food safety regulators said Tuesday that they have warned a top U.S. bakery to stop using labels that say its products contain potentially dangerous allergens when they don't.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspectors found that Bimbo Bakeries USA — which includes brands such as Sara Lee, Oroweat, Thomas', Entenmann's and Ball Park buns and rolls — listed ingredients such as sesame or tree nuts on labels even when they weren't in the foods.

Under FDA regulations, such products are "misbranded," FDA officials said in a warning letter sent to officials at the company's Horsham, Pennsylvania, headquarters earlier this month.

"Food labels must be truthful and not misleading," officials said. The warning followed inspections late last year at Bimbo plants in Phoenix, Arizona, and Topeka, Kansas, that make Sara Lee and Brownberry breads.

In addition, FDA officials indicated that allergen labeling is a "not a substitute" for preventing cross-contamination in factories.

Advocates with the nonprofit group FARE, Food Allergy Research & Education, said such labeling "does a disservice" to the estimated 33 million people in the U.S. with food allergies. Those consumers have to be constantly aware of foods that can cause potentially life-threatening allergic reactions, said Sung Poblete, FARE's chief executive.

"Our community relies on accurate product labeling for their health and safety," Poblete said in an email. "These findings about Bimbo Bakeries' products undermine their trust and further limit their choices."

Bimbo, a Mexico City-based food giant, bills its U.S. operations as the largest commercial baking company in the country. In an email, company officials said they “take their role in protecting consumers with allergen sensitivities very seriously” and that they are corresponding with FDA to resolve the issue.

Concerns over labels at Bimbo and other companies followed a law that took effect in 2022, which added sesame to the list of major allergens that must be listed on packaging.

Because it can be difficult and expensive to keep sesame in one part of a baking plant out of another, some companies began adding small amounts of sesame to products that didn’t previously contain the ingredient to avoid liability and cost. FDA officials said that violated the spirit, but not the letter, of federal regulations.

Some companies, including Bimbo, began listing allergens such as sesame on labels as a “precaution” in case of cross-contamination.

FDA officials acknowledged Tuesday that statements that a product “may contain” certain allergens “could be considered truthful and not misleading.” Bimbo officials have until July 8 to identify steps taken to remedy the issue — or to explain why the labeling doesn’t violate FDA standards.

WikiLeaks’ Assange pleads guilty to publishing US military secrets in deal that secures his freedom

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, KIMBERLY ESMORES, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

SAIPAN, Northern Mariana Islands (AP) — WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange pleaded guilty to obtaining and publishing U.S. military secrets Wednesday in a deal with Justice Department prosecutors that secures his liberty and concludes a drawn-out legal saga that raised divisive questions about press freedom and national security.

The criminal case of international intrigue, which had played out for years in major world stages of Washington and London, came to a surprise end in a most unusual setting with Assange, 52, entering his plea in a U.S. district court in Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands. The American commonwealth in the Pacific is relatively close to Assange’s native Australia and accommodated his desire to avoid entering the continental United States.

The deal required the iconoclastic internet publisher to admit guilt to a single felony count but also permitted him to return to Australia without any time in an American prison. The judge sentenced him to the five years he’d already spent behind bars in the United Kingdom, fighting extradition to the United States on an Espionage Act indictment that could have carried a lengthy prison sentence in the event of a conviction. He was holed up for seven years before that in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

He smiled slightly as U.S. District Judge Ramona Manglona imposed the sentence, pronouncing him a “free man.”

The conclusion enables both sides to claim a degree of satisfaction. The Justice Department, facing a defendant who had already served substantial jail time, was able to resolve — without trial — a case that raised thorny legal issues and that might never have reached a jury at all given the plodding pace of the extradition process. Assange, for his part, signaled a begrudging contentment with the resolution, saying in court that though he believed the Espionage Act contradicted the First Amendment, he accepted the consequences of soliciting classified information from sources for publication.

Jennifer Robinson, one of Assange’s lawyers, told reporters after the hearing that the case “sets a dangerous precedent that should be a concern to journalists everywhere.”

“It’s a huge relief to Julian Assange, to his family, to his friends, to his supporters and to us — to everyone who believes in free speech around the world — that he can now return home to Australia and be reunited with his family,” she said.

Assange arrived at court in a dark suit, with a tie loosened around the collar, after flying from Britain on a charter plane accompanied by members of his legal team and Australian officials, including the top Australian diplomat in the U.K.

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Inside the courthouse, he answered basic questions from Manglona, an appointee of former President Barack Obama, and appeared to listen intently as terms of the deal were discussed.

He appeared upbeat and relaxed during the hearing, at times cracking jokes with the judge. While signing his plea agreement, he made a joke about the 9-hour time difference between the U.K. and Saipan. At another point, when the judge asked him whether he was satisfied with the plea conditions, Assange responded: "It might depend on the outcome," sparking some laughter in the courtroom.

"So far, so good," the judge responded.

The plea deal, disclosed Monday night in a sparsely detailed Justice Department letter, represents the latest — and presumably final — chapter in a court fight involving the eccentric Australian computer expert who has been celebrated by supporters as a transparency crusader but lambasted by national security hawks who insist that his conduct put lives at risks and strayed far beyond the bounds of traditional journalism duties.

The criminal case brought by the Trump administration Justice Department centers on the receipt and publication of hundreds of thousands of war logs and diplomatic cables that included details of U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prosecutors alleged that he teamed with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to obtain the records, including by conspiring to crack a Defense Department computer password, and published them without regard to American national security. Names of human sources who provided information to U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were among the details exposed, prosecutors have said.

But his activities drew an outpouring of support from press freedom advocates, who heralded his role in bringing to light military conduct that might otherwise have been concealed from view and warned of a chilling effect on journalists. Among the files published by WikiLeaks was a video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists.

The indictment was unsealed in 2019, but Assange's legal woes long predated the criminal case and continued well past it.

Weeks after the release of the largest document cache in 2010, a Swedish prosecutor issued an arrest warrant for Assange based on one woman's allegation of rape and another's allegation of molestation. Assange has long maintained his innocence, and the investigation was later dropped.

He presented himself in 2012 to the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he claimed asylum on the grounds of political persecution, and spent the following seven years in self-exile there, welcoming a parade of celebrity visitors and making periodic appearances from the building's balcony to address supporters.

In 2019, his hosts revoked his asylum, allowing British police to arrest him. He remained locked up for the last five years while the Justice Department sought to extradite him, in a process that encountered skepticism from British judges who worried about how Assange would be treated by the U.S.

Ultimately, though, the resolution sparing Assange prison time in the U.S. contradicts years of ominous warnings by Assange and his supporters that the American criminal justice system would expose him to unduly harsh treatment, including potentially the death penalty — something prosecutors never sought.

Last month, Assange won the right to appeal an extradition order after his lawyers argued that the U.S. government provided "blatantly inadequate" assurances that he would have the same free speech protections as an American citizen if extradited from Britain.

His wife, Stella Assange, told the BBC from Australia that it had been "touch and go" over 72 hours whether the deal would go ahead but she felt "elated" at the news.

After the morning court hearing, Assange left Saipan by plane around midday headed for Australia, where relatives were waiting to be reunited with him.

Assange on Monday had left the London prison where he has spent the last five years after being granted bail during a secret hearing last week. The plane carrying him and Australian officials landed for refueling in Bangkok en route to Saipan. A video posted by WikiLeaks on the X platform showed Assange staring intently out the window at the blue sky as the plane headed toward the island.

"Imagine. From over 5 years in a small cell in a maximum security prison. Nearly 14 years detained in the U.K. To this," WikiLeaks wrote.

Who is Julian Assange, the polarizing founder of the secret-spilling website WikiLeaks?

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — He emerged on the information security scene in the 1990s as a “famous teenage hacker” following what he called an “itinerant minstrel childhood” beginning in Townsville, Australia. But the story of Julian Assange, eccentric founder of secret-spilling website WikiLeaks, never became less strange — or less polarizing — after he jolted the United States and its allies by revealing secrets of how America conducted its wars.

Since Assange drew global attention in 2010 for his work with prominent news outlets to publish war logs and diplomatic cables that detailed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other matters, he has provoked fervor among his admirers and loathing from his detractors with little in-between — seen either as a persecuted hero for open and transparent government, or a villain who put American lives at risk by aiding its enemies, and prompting fraught debates about state secrecy and freedom of the press.

Assange, 52, grew up attending “37 schools” before he was 14 years old, he wrote on his now-deleted blog. The details in it are not independently verifiable and some of Assange’s biographical details differ between accounts and interviews. A memoir published against his will in 2011, after he fell out with his ghostwriter, described him as the son of roving puppeteers, and he told *The New Yorker* in 2010 that his mother’s itinerant lifestyle barred him from a consistent or complete education. But by the age of 16, in 1987, he had his first modem, he told the magazine. Assange would burst forth as an accomplished hacker who with his friends broke into networks in North America and Europe.

In 1991, at age 20, Assange hacked a Melbourne terminal for a Canadian telecommunications company, leading to his arrest by the Australian Federal Police and 31 criminal charges. After pleading guilty to some counts, he avoided jail time after the presiding judge attributed his crimes to merely “intelligent inquisitiveness and the pleasure of being able to — what’s the expression? — surf through these various computers.”

He later studied mathematics and physics at university, but did not complete a degree. By 2006, when he founded WikiLeaks, Assange’s delight at being able to traverse locked computer systems seemingly for fun developed into a belief that, as he wrote on his blog, “only revealed injustice can be answered; for man to do anything intelligent he has to know what’s actually going on.”

In the year of WikiLeaks’ explosive 2010 release of half a million documents about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the non-profit organization’s website was registered in Sweden and its legal entity in Iceland. Assange was “living in airports,” he told *The New Yorker*; he claimed his media company, with no paid staff, had hundreds of volunteers.

He called his work a kind of “scientific journalism,” Assange wrote in a 2010 op-ed in *The Australian* newspaper, in which readers could check reporting against the original documents that had prompted a story. Among the most potent in the cache of files published by WikiLeaks was video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists.

Assange was not anti-war, he wrote in *The Australian*.

“But there is nothing more wrong than a government lying to its people about those wars, then asking these same citizens to put their lives and their taxes on the line for those lies,” he said. “If a war is justified, then tell the truth and the people will decide whether to support it.”

U.S. prosecutors later said documents published by Assange included the names of Afghans and Iraqis who provided information to American and coalition forces, while the diplomatic cables he released exposed journalists, religious leaders, human rights advocates and dissidents in repressive countries.

Assange said in a 2010 interview that it was “regrettable” that sources disclosed by WikiLeaks could be harmed, prosecutors said. Later, after a State Department legal adviser informed him of the risk to “countless innocent individuals” compromised by the leaks, Assange said he would work with mainstream news organizations to redact the names of individuals. WikiLeaks did hide some names but then published 250,000 cables a year later without hiding the identities of people named in the papers.

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Weeks after the release of the largest document cache in 2010, a Swedish prosecutor issued an arrest warrant for Assange based on one woman's allegation of rape and another's allegation of molestation.

Assange has always denied the accusations and, from Britain, fought efforts to extradite him to Sweden for questioning. He decried the allegations as a smear campaign and an effort to move him to a jurisdiction where he might be extradited to the U.S.

When his appeal against the extradition to Sweden failed, he breached his bail imposed in Britain and presented himself to the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he claimed asylum on the grounds of political persecution. There followed seven years in self-exile inside the embassy — and one of the most unusual chapters in an already strange tale.

Refusing to go outside, where British police awaited him around the clock, Assange made occasional forays onto the embassy's balcony to address supporters.

With a sunlamp and running machine helping to preserve his health, he told The Associated Press and other reporters in 2013, he remained in the news due to a stream of celebrity visitors, including Lady Gaga and the designer Vivienne Westwood. Even his cat became famous.

He also continued to run WikiLeaks and mounted an unsuccessful Australian senate campaign in 2013. Before a constant British police presence around the embassy was removed in 2015, it cost U.K. taxpayers millions.

But relations with his host country soured, and the Ecuadorian Embassy severed his internet access after posts Assange made on social media. In 2019, his hosts revoked his asylum, allowing British police to arrest him.

Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno said he decided to evict Assange from the embassy after "repeated violations to international conventions and daily-life protocols." He later lashed out at him during a speech in Quito, calling the Australian native a "spoiled brat" who treated his hosts with disrespect.

Assange was arrested and jailed on a charge of breaching bail conditions and spent the next five years in prison as he continued to fight his extradition to the United States.

In 2019, the U.S. government unsealed an indictment against Assange and added further charges over WikiLeaks' publication of classified documents. Prosecutors said he conspired with U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to hack into a Pentagon computer and release secret diplomatic cables and military files on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Manning had served seven years of a 35-year military sentence before receiving a commutation from then-President Barack Obama.

At the time, Australia's then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he had no plans to intervene in Assange's case, calling it a matter for the U.S. Swedish prosecutors also dropped the rape allegation against Assange because too much time had elapsed.

On Wednesday, his guilty plea in an American commonwealth in the Pacific resolved the U.S. legal case against him without any time in an American prison.

While he was held in London's Belmarsh Prison as the extradition case wound through the British courts, he was in a "terrible state" of health, his wife told the BBC on Tuesday.

Assange married his partner, Stella Moris, in jail in 2022, after a relationship that began during Assange's years in the Ecuadorian Embassy. Assange and the South Africa-born lawyer have two sons, born in 2017 and 2019.

Iowa floodwaters breach levees as even more rain dumps onto parts of the Midwest

By HANNAH FINGERHUT, DAVE COLLINS and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press
DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Tornado warnings, flash flooding and large hail added insult to injury for people in the Midwest already contending with heat, humidity and intense flooding after days of rain.

The National Weather Service on Tuesday afternoon and evening issued multiple tornado warnings in parts of Iowa and Nebraska as local TV news meteorologists showed photos of large hail and spoke of

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very heavy rain.

Earlier on Tuesday, floodwaters breached levees in Iowa, creating dangerous conditions that prompted evacuations.

A vast swath of lands from eastern Nebraska and South Dakota to Iowa and Minnesota has been under siege from flooding from torrential rains since last week, while also being hit with a scorching heat wave. Up to 18 inches (46 centimeters) of rain have fallen in some areas, and some rivers rose to record levels. Hundreds of people were rescued, homes were damaged and at least two people died after driving in flooded areas.

The sheriff's office in Monona County, near the Nebraska border, said the Little Sioux River breached levees in several areas. In neighboring Woodbury County, the sheriff's office posted drone video on Facebook showing the river overflowing the levee and flooding land in rural Smithland. No injuries were immediately reported.

Patrick Prorok, emergency management coordinator in Monona County, described waking people at about 4 a.m. in Rodney, a town of about 45 people, to recommend evacuation. Later Tuesday morning, the water hadn't yet washed into the community.

"People up the hill are saying it is coming our way," Prorok said.

As new areas were flooding Tuesday, some cities and towns were cleaning up after the waters receded while others downstream were piling sandbags and taking other measures to protect against the oncoming swelled currents. Some normal, unassuming tributaries ballooned into rushing rivers, damaging homes, buildings and bridges.

"Normally, this river is barely a trickle," 71-year-old Hank Howley said as she watched the Big Sioux's waters gush over a broken and partially sunken rail bridge in North Sioux City, South Dakota, on Monday. "Really, you could just walk across it most days."

South Dakota state geologist Tim Cowman said that the five major rivers in the state's southeastern corner have crested and are dropping, albeit it slowly. The last of those rivers to crest, the James, did so early Tuesday.

In a residential development along McCook Lake in North Sioux City, the devastation became clear Tuesday as floodwaters began to recede from Monday, exposing collapsed streets, utility poles and trees. Some homes had been washed off their foundations.

"Currently, there is no water, sewer, gas or electrical service in this area," Union County Emergency Management said in a Facebook post.

President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for affected counties in Iowa on Monday, a move that paves the way for federal aid to be granted.

To the south in Sioux City and Woodbury County, Iowa, officials responded to residents' complaints that they had received little warning of the flooding and its severity. Sioux City Fire Marshal Mark Aesoph said at a news conference Tuesday that rivers crested higher than predicted.

"Even if we would have known about this two weeks ago, there was nothing we could do at this point. We cannot extend the entire length of our levee," Sioux City Fire Marshal Mark Aesoph said. "It's impossible."

Water had spilled over the Big Sioux River levee, and Aesoph estimated hundreds of homes likely have some internal water damage.

Homes on the south side of Spencer, Iowa near the Little Sioux River are unlivable as water has reached the main floor, resident Ben Thomas said. A lot of people in town are facing a "double whammy," with homes and businesses affected.

Officials in Woodbury County said around a dozen bridges over the Little Sioux River had been topped by flood water, and each would need to be inspected to see if they can reopen to traffic.

Forever Wildlife Lodge and Clinic, a nonprofit animal rescue, in northwest Iowa has answered over 200 calls since the flooding started, said licensed wildlife rehabilitator Amanda Hase.

Hase described the flooding as "catastrophic" for Iowa wildlife, which are getting washed out of dens, injured by debris and separated from each other. She and other rehabilitators are responding to calls about all kinds of species, from fawns and groundhogs to bunnies and eaglets.

"I've never seen it this bad before, ever," she said.

Further to the east in Humboldt, Iowa, a record crest of 16.5 feet (5 meters) was expected Wednesday at the west fork of the Des Moines River. Amid high temperatures and humidity, nearly 68,000 sandbags have been laid, according to county emergency manager Kyle Bissell.

Bissell told reporters Tuesday that there was no water on the streets yet, but flooding had begun in some backyards and was reaching up to foundations. Humboldt is home to nearly 5,000 residents.

In Michigan, more than 150,000 homes and businesses were without power Tuesday morning after severe thunderstorms barreled through, less than a week after storms left thousands in the dark for days in suburban Detroit.

The weather service also predicted more than two dozen points of major flooding in southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and northern Iowa, and flood warnings are expected to continue into the week.

Many streams, especially with additional rainfall, may not crest until later this week as the floodwaters slowly drain down a web of rivers to the Missouri and Mississippi. The Missouri will crest at Omaha on Thursday, said Kevin Low, a weather service hydrologist.

North of Des Moines, Iowa, the lake above the Saylorville Dam was absorbing river surge and expected to largely protect the metro area from flooding, according to the Polk County Emergency Management Agency. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projected Tuesday that water levels at Saylorville Lake will rise by more than 30 feet (9 meters) by the Fourth of July.

Outside Mankato, Minnesota, the local sheriff's office said Monday that there was a "partial failure" of the western support structure for the Rapidan Dam on the Blue Earth River after the dam became plugged with debris. Flowing water eroded the western bank, rushed around the dam and washed out an electrical substation, causing about 600 power outages.

Eric Weller, emergency management director for the Blue Earth County sheriff, said the bank would likely erode more, but he didn't expect the concrete dam itself to fail. The two homes downstream were evacuated.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Tuesday cautioned against rebuilding too fast, instead emphasizing more sustainable repairs that could prevent or mitigate future flooding.

"Nature doesn't care whether you believe in climate change or not," Walz said. "The insurance companies sure believe in it. The actuaries sure believe in it, and we do."

Israel's military must enlist the ultra-Orthodox. What will that mean for Netanyahu and the war?

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's Supreme Court unanimously ordered the government to begin drafting ultra-Orthodox Jewish men into the army — a landmark ruling seeking to end a system that has allowed them to avoid enlistment into compulsory military service.

Roughly 1.3 million ultra-Orthodox Jews make up about 13% of Israel's population and oppose enlistment because they believe studying full time in religious seminaries is their most important duty.

An enlistment exemption for the ultra-Orthodox goes back to the founding of Israel in 1948, when small numbers of gifted scholars were exempt from the draft. But with a push from politically powerful religious parties, those numbers have swelled over the decades. The court said the exemptions were illegal in 2017, but repeated extensions and government delay tactics have prevented a replacement law from being passed.

Two parties belonging to the Haredim, or "god-fearing" in Hebrew, are essential parts of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fragile coalition, but the broad exemptions from mandatory military service have reopened a deep divide in the country and infuriated much of the general public during the war in Gaza. Over 600 soldiers have been killed since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. Many reserve soldiers are starting their second tour of duty.

What does the ruling mean for Netanyahu's government? Netanyahu's coalition holds a slim majority of

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64 seats in the 120-member parliament, often requiring him to capitulate to the demands of smaller parties like the ultra-Orthodox.

If those parties leave the government, the country would likely be forced into new elections this fall. Netanyahu's popularity is low as the war in Gaza drags into its ninth month.

Housing Minister Yitzhak Goldknopf heads one of the ultra-Orthodox parties in Netanyahu's coalition. In a post on X, Goldknopf called the Supreme Court's ruling "very unfortunate and disappointing," but did not say whether his party would leave the government. The chairman of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, Aryeh Deri, denounced the ruling and said religious study was "our secret weapon against all enemies."

The court this year temporarily froze state subsidies for seminaries where exempted ultra-Orthodox men study. Along with the enlistment decision, the court also ruled Tuesday that that money should be permanently suspended.

Many religious seminaries depend on government funding and "the general assumption is that the government will not survive this crisis," said Barak Medina, a law professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an expert on constitutional law.

What did the courts rule? Military service is compulsory for most Jewish men and women, who serve three and two years, respectively, in active duty, as well as reserve duty until around age 40.

The Israeli Supreme Court ruled that compulsory military service applies to the ultra-Orthodox just like any other Israeli. The judges said that allowing a certain community a "sweeping avoidance" of service amounted to discrimination.

"Discrimination regarding the most precious thing of all – life itself – is the worst kind," the justices wrote in their opinion.

In 2017, the Supreme Court struck down a law that codified draft exemptions. Repeated extensions of the law and government tactics to delay a replacement law have dragged on for years.

Israel's judiciary plays a large role in checking the government's executive power. Netanyahu attempted to overhaul the judiciary last year, spurring massive protests across the country before a major part of the overhaul was struck down.

When will this go into effect? It will be challenging for the army to integrate a larger number of ultra-Orthodox deeply opposed to service into its ranks.

Among Israel's Jewish majority, mandatory military service is largely seen as a melting pot and a rite of passage. The ultra-Orthodox say that integrating into the army will threaten their generations-old way of life, and that their devout lifestyle and dedication to upholding the Jewish commandments protect Israel as much as a strong army does.

The courts did not set numbers for enlistment in their ruling, but Israel's attorney general's office suggested that at least 3,000 ultra-Orthodox soldiers enlist in the coming year. The court said in its ruling that some 63,000 ultra-Orthodox students are eligible for enlistment.

For decades, the army has attempted to accommodate ultra-Orthodox soldiers by creating separate units that allow them to maintain religious practices, including minimizing interaction with women. One of the units created for this purpose, Netzah Yehudah, faced possible U.S. sanctions over their treatment of Palestinians, though the U.S. eventually decided not to impose sanctions.

What impact will this have on the war in Gaza? The ruling will have little immediate effect on the war in Gaza, where more than 37,600 Palestinians have been killed, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. The number of ultra-Orthodox who might enlist because of the ruling is too small to have a significant impact on day-to-day fighting.

Medina, the law professor, said that if the ruling topples the government, it could give Netanyahu more leeway to reach a deal for a ceasefire that could end the war in Gaza.

"Currently, one of the main reasons he's prevented from reaching an agreement for the end of the war is because it will mean the end of his coalition," said Medina.

If the ultra-Orthodox parties leave the coalition, Netanyahu has "nothing to lose," he said. And that could lead to a change in policy without the pressure from far-right ministers opposed to any kind of ceasefire. Netanyahu will also be under a lot of pressure to wrap up fighting if early elections are called, to avoid going into the elections without the hostages and while a war is still ongoing, Medina said.

Suspect is dead after shootings near Las Vegas leave 5 people dead, teen injured, police say

By RIO YAMAT Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A man who fatally shot five people and critically injured a 13-year-old girl at apartments near Las Vegas has killed himself, authorities said Tuesday.

The North Las Vegas Police Department said the suspected shooter, 47-year-old Eric Adams, killed himself Tuesday morning as he was confronted by officers in a neighborhood. Authorities had been searching for him since Monday night's shootings in separate apartment units.

Efforts to locate relatives of Adams for comment weren't immediately successful.

Police said initially they found two women dead while investigating reports of a shooting late Monday at an apartment in North Las Vegas. One of them was in her early 40s and the other in her late 50s, according to the department.

While officers were investigating, the department said, they learned a teen girl had been taken to a hospital with critical gunshot wounds and that there could be more victims in a nearby apartment.

Officers then found the bodies of two women in their mid-20s and a man in his early 20s. All five victims had been shot, police said. They weren't immediately identified.

The discovery led to an overnight search for Adams, who authorities had described as "armed and dangerous."

Just after 10 a.m. Tuesday, police learned that the suspect had been seen at a business in North Las Vegas.

As officers arrived in the area, they saw the suspect with a firearm, running into the backyard of a nearby home. The department said officers followed him, but the suspect refused to drop his weapon and died by suicide.

Police haven't disclosed a motive for the shootings, which they described as an "isolated incident." A spokesperson for the police department didn't respond Tuesday to phone and emailed requests for more information.

NTSB chair says Norfolk Southern interfered with derailment probe after botching vent-and-burn call

By JOSH FUNK, TOM KRISHER and PATRICK ORSAGOS Associated Press

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (AP) — The head of the National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday that Norfolk Southern repeatedly tried to interfere with the agency's investigation into the East Palestine derailment and shape its conclusions about the flawed decision to blow open five tank cars and burn the vinyl chloride inside.

The NTSB also confirmed at Tuesday's hearing that the February 2023 derailment was caused by a wheel bearing that video showed was on fire for more than 20 miles (32.19 kilometers) beforehand but wasn't caught in time by inaccurate trackside detectors. The board also approved more than two dozen recommendations to prevent similar disasters, including establishing federal rules for those detectors and the way railroads respond to them along with reviewing how officials decide whether to ever conduct a vent and burn again.

More than three dozen freight cars derailed Feb. 3, 2023, on the outskirts of East Palestine near the Pennsylvania border, including 11 carrying hazardous materials. Some residents were evacuated that night, but days later more had to leave their homes amid fears of an imminent explosion. Despite potential health effects, officials intentionally released and burned toxic vinyl chloride three days after the crash, sending flames and smoke into the air.

At the end of the meeting, NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy accused Norfolk Southern of interfering with the investigation and abusing its status as a party to the probe to help gather information.

"Norfolk Southern's abuse of the party process was unprecedented and reprehensible," she said.

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Numerous times, Homendy said, the railroad delayed or failed to give investigators information. Twice, Homendy called the railroad at the request of investigators and threatened to issue subpoenas for information, she said.

A railroad contractor told investigators that it did not take or keep records of temperature changes on the tank cars containing vinyl chloride, she said. But the NTSB suspected otherwise.

"We found through text messages through one of their employees, who provided that information in later interviews that they did keep those records," Homendy said. "It took about two months before the team received those texts and the emails."

Some of the findings discussed Tuesday weren't a surprise because the NTSB has released quite a bit about this investigation already, but the hearing revealed the most details yet about the overheating bearing and the failure of trackside detectors to catch its soaring temperatures. The board also delved into why the decision to deliberately vent and burn the vinyl chloride was flawed.

After discussing how a trackside detector in Salem, Ohio, failed to accurately measure the bearing's temperature, NTSB investigators said that Norfolk Southern and its contractors compromised the integrity of the vent-and-burn decision by withholding information from Oxy Vinyls, the company that made the vinyl chloride, and evidence that the tank cars were cooling after the crash.

The officials who made that decision said they never received any information suggesting the vent and burn wasn't their only option.

"Norfolk Southern and its contractors continued to assert the necessity of a vent and burn, even though available evidence should have led them to re-evaluate their initial conclusion," investigator Paul Stancil said.

The railroad defended the decision again Tuesday and said it was based on more than just the temperature readings. Officials also had concerns about the way the pressure-relief devices malfunctioned on the tank cars though Homendy said some of those fears were misplaced based on what investigators learned. Norfolk Southern added that nothing kept Oxy Vinyls from joining the discussion in the command center and sharing its opinion about the tank cars.

Oxy Vinyls experts testified at earlier NTSB hearings they were certain a feared chemical reaction that could have caused those tank cars to explode wasn't happening. Oxy Vinyls didn't address the questions about its role in the vent and burn decision in a statement Tuesday.

Norfolk Southern emphasized in its statement that it recommended the vent and burn because of safety concerns. Homendy said that in a private meeting two weeks ago a senior company executive told the board that Norfolk Southern wanted to put to rest the "rumor" that the railroad made that decision to get trains moving again more quickly.

The exchange ended, she said, with what she said was a threat from the railroad.

"It was delivered that way to use every avenue and opportunity to vigorously defend their decision-making in media and hearings going forward. That is your right. But it is not our role to defend Norfolk Southern. We're here to protect the American people and the traveling public," Homendy said.

Norfolk Southern had just issued a lengthy statement promising to study the NTSB's recommendations and work to improve safety shortly before Homendy launched into her rebuke. In response, railroad spokesman Tom Crosson said Norfolk Southern always tried to provide the NTSB all the relevant information they needed.

"At all times, Norfolk Southern cooperated fully and ethically with the investigation with full transparency," Crosson said.

But the top safety expert at the largest rail union who was part of the NTSB investigation said that while these findings highlight concerns about Norfolk Southern, he worries about all the major Class I railroads' commitment to safety. Jared Cassity with the SMART-TD union said Union Pacific's recent efforts to undermine regulators' safety survey is one of the latest examples.

"She made NS sound like they're on an island by themselves. But in my opinion, all the Class Ones are kind of a same beast," Cassity said.

East Palestine resident Misti Allison said the community is still worrying about potential health effects from the vinyl chloride and toxic cocktail of other chemicals that spilled and burned in the derailment, and

now they know the railroad hasn't always been forthcoming.

"Community members deserve transparency and proactive protection, not the silence, secrecy and manipulation that has been unveiled today about Norfolk Southern," Allison said.

The NTSB said first responders need good guidance of when to consider the last resort of a vent and burn to protect lives. Until recently, they didn't even have access to previous reports on the topic because railroads had insisted they were sensitive safety information.

Norfolk Southern has already settled with the federal government and announced a \$600 million class action settlement with residents. So it's not clear how many additional consequences the railroad could face other than continuing to pay for the cleanup EPA is overseeing. But Ohio and Pennsylvania haven't wrapped up their investigations, so the states may still do more to hold Norfolk Southern accountable.

Though NTSB recommendations aren't binding, Congress may be willing to enforce some of them because of the crash's spotlight on rail safety.

More than a year ago, a bipartisan group of lawmakers led by Ohio's two senators proposed a package of reforms including requiring two-person crews and setting standards for the inspections and detectors that help prevent derailments. The bill ultimately stalled in the U.S. Senate under resistance from Republicans and the railroads.

"The findings shared by NTSB Chair Homendy today confirm many of my worst fears," Ohio Sen. JD Vance said. "The derailment and subsequent chemical explosion were preventable tragedies resulting from a series of errors made by Norfolk Southern and its contractors."

With limited success, federal regulators also pushed for the railroads to make changes like signing onto an anonymous government hotline to report safety concerns. The industry responded to the crash by promising to install more trackside detectors, review the way they are used and help first responders improve their handling of derailments with more training and better access to information about the cargo.

Israelis' lawsuit says UN agency helps Hamas by paying Gaza staff in dollars

By JENNIFER PELTZ and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Israelis who were taken hostage or lost loved ones during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack are suing the United Nations agency that aids Palestinians, claiming it has helped finance the militants by paying agency staffers in U.S. dollars and thereby funneling them to money-changers in Gaza who allegedly give a cut to Hamas.

But the agency, known as UNWRA, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the staffers were paid in dollars by their own choice. Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank don't have their own national currency, and primarily use Israeli shekels.

The lawsuit, filed Monday in a U.S. federal court in New York, marks the latest challenge to the beleaguered U.N. agency, which has been the main supplier of food, water and shelter to civilians during the Israel-Hamas war. The Israeli government has long assailed the over 70-year-old agency, and scrutiny has intensified during the eight-month-long war, prompting UNRWA to defend itself while grappling with a spiraling humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"UNRWA's staff, facilities and ability to truck cash U.S. dollars into Gaza formed a potent pillar of Hamas' plan to undertake the Oct. 7 attack," the lawsuit says, asserting that the U.N. agency "systematically and deliberately aided and abetted Hamas and its goals."

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said Tuesday that he learned of the case only through the media.

"I don't know what the status of this lawsuit is all about, but for the time being, I see this as an additional way to put pressure on the agency," he said at a press briefing in Geneva.

UNRWA has denied that it knowingly aids Hamas or any other militant group.

Israel invaded Gaza after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted about 250. The war has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza

Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many were civilians or fighters.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of scores of Israelis including Oct. 7 attack survivors, victims' relatives, and rescued captives. It echoes some complaints their government has raised, ranging from claims that UNRWA employs Hamas operatives to complaints about the content of textbooks in UNRWA-run schools.

But the suit also focuses on the agency's practice of paying its 13,000 Gaza staffers in U.S. dollars. The money is wired from a bank in New York and trucked into Gaza, according to the legal complaint, which says the payroll totaled at least \$20 million a month from 2018 until last September.

UNRWA employees use local money-changers to convert their dollars to Israeli shekels, the complaint says. Some Palestinians also use dollars or Jordanian dinars, viewing them as stable and trusted currencies.

The suit claims that Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since 2007, "runs the majority" of the currency exchangers and extracts a 10% to 25% fee from the rest, "ensuring that a predictable percentage of UNRWA's payroll went to Hamas" in dollars useful for black-market weapons deals.

"Hamas' ability to carry out the Oct. 7 attack would have been significantly and possibly fatally weakened without that UNRWA-provided cash," the complaint says.

The complaint points to an UNRWA-commissioned 2018 report about delivering aid in cash that noted risks of misappropriation, fraud or other diversion away from the intended purpose.

UNRWA spokesperson Juliette Touma said in a message to the AP that Gaza staffers asked that "they are paid in US\$ because Gaza does not have an official national currency."

Touma said the U.N., including UNRWA, and their officials are immune from lawsuits. She declined to comment further on the suit in question, saying the agency hadn't officially been served with it.

One of the plaintiffs' lead lawyers, Gavi Mairone, said in a statement Tuesday that they didn't believe the U.N. and officials named in the suit had immunity, "and certainly not from these claims."

Formally called the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA was established to help the estimated 700,000 Palestinians who fled or were driven out of what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding the country's creation. Their descendants now number nearly 6 million.

The agency operates schools, health clinics, infrastructure projects and aid programs in refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Since the war began in Gaza, over 1.7 million people have taken shelter in UNRWA facilities. At least 500 displaced people have been killed when such facilities came under attack, according to UNRWA statistics released Friday. The agency has lost nearly 200 staffers.

Two U.N. officials said Tuesday that the world body warned Israel that Gaza aid operations would be suspended unless protections for humanitarian workers improve.

Israel has accused UNRWA of letting Hamas exploit its aid and facilities, and Israel claimed this winter that a dozen UNRWA employees participated in the Oct. 7 attacks.

The allegations prompted the U.S. and more than a dozen other countries to suspend hundreds of millions of dollars in contributions to the agency, though all but the U.S. and Britain have resumed their funding. Lazzarini said Tuesday that new donors also have come on board, but the agency still faces a year-end shortfall of up to \$140 million.

Anti-tax protesters storm Kenya's parliament, drawing police fire as president vows to quash unrest

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Thousands of protesters stormed Kenya's parliament Tuesday to protest tax proposals, burning part of the building, sending lawmakers fleeing and drawing fire from police in unrest that the president vowed to quash. Several people were killed.

It was the most direct assault on the government in decades. Journalists saw at least three bodies outside the complex where police had opened fire, and medical workers reported five people killed. Clashes spread to other cities. There was no immediate word on arrests.

"Today's events mark a critical turning point on how we respond to threats to our national security,"

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President William Ruto said, calling the events "treasonous" and vowing to quash the unrest "at whatever cost."

Kenya's defense minister said the military had been deployed to support police during the "security emergency" and "breaching of critical infrastructure."

Protesters had demanded that legislators vote against a finance bill imposing new taxes on East Africa's economic hub, where frustrations over the high cost of living have simmered. Youth who had voted Ruto into power with cheers for his promises of economic relief have taken to the streets to object to the pain of reforms.

Lawmakers managed to pass the bill before fleeing through a tunnel as protesters outmaneuvered police and poured in. The fire at the building was later put out.

The Kenya Medical Association said in a statement that at least five people were fatally shot while trying to treat wounded people at the scene. It said more than 30 people were wounded, at least 13 with live bullets. Police fired live ammunition and threw tear gas canisters at protesters who sought treatment at a medical tent at a nearby church. Elsewhere in town, Kenyatta National Hospital said it received 45 casualties.

One person shot dead was wrapped in a Kenyan flag and carried away. Another lay on the sidewalk, their head in the gutter.

Internet service in the country noticeably slowed in what NetBlocks called a "major disruption," and at least one broadcaster issued a statement saying that "we have received threats from the authorities to shut us down."

Ruto had been outside Nairobi attending an African Union retreat. He was expected to sign the finance bill into law this week. He has two weeks to act but faces calls from religious and other leaders to think again.

The nearby office of the Nairobi governor, a member of the ruling party, also was briefly on fire Tuesday, smoke pouring from its white facade. Police water cannons were used to extinguish the fire.

Protesters could be heard shouting, "We're coming for every politician."

The Kenya Human Rights Commission shared a video of officers shooting at protesters, and it urged Ruto to issue an immediate order to "stop the killings."

The president instead said the government had "mobilized all resources" to ensure order.

On Sunday, Ruto tried to calm the rising public tensions, saying he was proud of the young Kenyans who came out to exercise their democratic duty in earlier protests. The politician who had promoted himself as a "hustler" from humble beginnings said he would engage them on their concerns.

Youth had announced they were uniting to keep the government in check as prices for fuel, food and other necessities have soared. In Nairobi, a regional hub for expatriates and home to a United Nations complex, the inequality among Kenyans has sharpened along with long-held frustrations over state corruption.

Opposition to the finance bill has united a large part of the country, with some explicitly rejecting the tribal divisions that have torn Kenya apart in the past. Some who had passionately supported Ruto felt betrayed.

"I fell for his lies. Now I'm out here regretting why I voted for him," youth Oscar Saina told The Associated Press last week

As throngs of protesters rushed through the streets Tuesday, defiance emerged elsewhere in the country — including in the town where the president was, Naivasha, as protesters chanted "Ruto must go."

Protesters tried to storm the State House in the western city of Nakuru, a witness said. There were clashes in the western lakeside city of Kisumu. The governor of Mombasa, Kenya's second largest city, joined protesters outside his office and expressed his support for them.

Protesters burned ruling party offices in Embu in central Kenya, the Nation newspaper reported. Citizen TV showed footage from Nyeri in central Kenya with police confronting protesters in the smoking streets.

A national gathering of Catholic bishops urged police not to attack protesters and pleaded with the government to listen to citizens' pain over the "unwarranted" taxes, saying "the country is bleeding ... families are immensely suffering."

Two people died in similar protests last week, and civil society groups have raised the alarm about a crackdown.

The Kenya Law Society President Faith Odhiambo said earlier Tuesday that 50 Kenyans, including her

personal assistant, had been “abducted” by people believed to be police officers. Some had been vocal in the demonstrations and were taken from homes, workplaces and public spaces ahead of Tuesday’s protests, according to civil society groups.

A statement by diplomats from 13 Western countries including the United States said they were “shocked” by the scenes outside parliament and expressed concern about the violence and abductions of protesters.

Police officials did not immediately return calls seeking comment. Parliament Speaker Moses Wetangula had directed the inspector general of police to provide information on the whereabouts of those missing.

Also Tuesday, hundreds of Kenya’s police officers, long accused of abuses by human rights watchdogs and others, arrived in Haiti to lead a United Nations-backed multinational force against the powerful gangs who have the country in its grip. The deployment faces a legal challenge in Kenya but Ruto’s government has gone ahead, with the thanks of U.S. President Joe Biden.

Karen Read’s jurors must now decide: Was it deadly romance or police corruption?

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

DEDHAM, Mass. (AP) — The fate of Karen Read was handed Tuesday to jurors who must decide whether she ended a rocky romance by angrily striking her boyfriend with her SUV and leaving him mortally injured in the snow, or is a victim of police corruption, framed to cover up a fight at the home of his fellow Boston officer.

Jurors got to work after a two-month murder trial in the death of Boston officer John O’Keefe in January 2022. The case has drawn outsized attention, fanned by true crime bloggers and Read’s pink-shirted supporters.

Defense lawyer Alan Jackson described a cancer of lies that turned into a cover-up, and told jurors they’re the “only thing standing between Karen Read and the tyranny of injustice.”

“You have been lied to in this courtroom. Your job is to make sure you don’t ever ever look the other way,” he said Tuesday.

But Assistant District Attorney Adam Lally told jurors “there is no conspiracy.” He began his closing argument with the words four witnesses reported hearing Read say after O’Keefe was discovered on the snowy lawn: “The defendant repeatedly said ‘I hit him. I hit him. Oh my God. I hit him.’”

“Those were the words that came from the defendant’s mouth,” Lally said.

Read, a former adjunct professor at Bentley College, is charged with second-degree murder, which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, along with manslaughter while operating under the influence of alcohol, and leaving a scene of personal injury and death. The manslaughter charge carries a penalty of five to 20 years in prison, and the other charge has a maximum penalty of 10 years.

Her lawyers contend O’Keefe was dragged outside after he was beaten up in the basement and bitten by a dog at Boston officer Brian Albert’s home in Canton.

“Ladies and gentlemen, there was a cover-up in this case, plain and simple,” Jackson said.

Lally, however, showed the jurors what Read herself said that night, in a voice message she left for O’Keefe moments after her car recorded her driving in reverse at approximately 24 mph (39 kph) and then leaving the scene: He said she was “seething in rage as she’s screaming, ‘John, I (expletive) hate you!’”

The defense said witnesses who claimed to have heard her say she hit O’Keefe had changed their story or couldn’t have heard her comments in the chaos of that moment. Jackson said investigators focused on Read because she was a “convenient outsider” who saved them from having to consider other suspects, including Albert and other law enforcement officers at the house party. He also pointed to connections between Albert and the state trooper who led the investigation.

“Michael Proctor didn’t draw a thin blue line, he erected a tall blue wall,” Jackson said. “A wall that you can’t scale, a wall that Karen Read certainly couldn’t get over. A wall between us and them. A place you folk are not invited. ‘We protect our own.’”

Jackson suggested that Brian Higgins, a federal agent who had exchanged flirty texts with Read, lured

O'Keefe to the house party, where the two got into a fight, leading to punches and a fall.

"The panic sets in," he said. "It wasn't intended to go that far but what is done is done."

Prosecutors spent most of the trial methodically presenting evidence from the scene. The defense called only a handful of witnesses but used its time in cross-examining prosecution witnesses to raise questions about the investigation, echoed by a chorus of supporters outside.

UN-backed contingent of foreign police arrives in Haiti as Kenya-led force prepares to face gangs

By DÁNICA COTO and EVENS SANON Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The first U.N.-backed contingent of foreign police arrived in Haiti on Tuesday, nearly two years after the troubled Caribbean country urgently requested help to quell a surge in gang violence.

A couple hundred police officers from Kenya landed in the capital of Port-au-Prince, whose main international airport reopened in late May after gang violence forced it to close for nearly three months.

It wasn't immediately known what the Kenyans' first assignment would be, but they will face violent gangs that control 80% of Haiti's capital and have left more than 580,000 people homeless across the country as they pillage neighborhoods in their quest to control more territory. Gangs also have killed several thousand people in recent years.

The Kenyans' arrival marks the fourth major foreign military intervention in Haiti. While some Haitians welcome them, others view the force with caution, given that the previous intervention — the U.N.'s 2004-2017 peacekeeping mission — was marred by allegations of sexual assault and the introduction of cholera, which killed nearly 10,000 people.

Romain Le Cour, senior expert at Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, urged the international community and government officials to share details, including the mission's rules of engagement and concept of operation.

"What is going to happen vis-a-vis the gangs," he said. "Is it a static mission? Is it a moving mission? All those details are still missing, and I think it's about time that there's actually transparency."

Hours after the Kenyans landed, Prime Minister Garry Conille thanked the East African country for its solidarity, noting that gangs have vandalized homes and hospitals and set libraries on fire, making Haiti "unlivable."

"The country is going through very difficult times," he said at a news conference. "Enough is enough. ... We're going to start working little by little to retake the country."

Conille said the Kenyans would be deployed in the next couple of days, but he did not provide details. He was accompanied by Monica Juma, Kenya's former minister of foreign affairs who now serves as national security advisor to President William Ruto. She said the Kenyans will "serve as agents of peace, of stability, of hope."

"We stand united in our commitment to support Haiti's National Police to restore public order and security," she said. "It is our hope that this will not become a permanent mission."

The deployment comes nearly four months after gangs launched coordinated attacks, targeting key government infrastructure in Haiti's capital and beyond. They seized control of more than two dozen police stations, fired on the main international airport and stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

"We've been asking for security for the longest time," said Orgline Bossicot, a 47-year-old mother of two who sells carrots and charcoal as a wholesale distributor.

Gang violence has stymied her sales, and she tries to stay out as late as possible before sundown to make up for the losses despite being afraid.

"You don't know who's waiting for you around the corner," she said, adding that she is hopeful about the Kenyan police joining forces with local authorities.

Critics say the gang attacks that began Feb. 29 could have been prevented if the foreign force had been

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deployed sooner, but multiple setbacks — including a legal challenge filed in Kenya and political upheaval in Haiti — delayed its arrival.

The attacks prevented then-Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who at the time was in Kenya to push for the deployment, from returning to Haiti. He resigned in late April as the violence surged. Afterward, a nine-member transitional presidential council chose former U.N. official Conille as prime minister and appointed a new Cabinet in mid-June.

Still, the gang violence has persisted, and experts say it will continue unless the government also addresses socioeconomic factors that fuel the existence of gangs in a deeply impoverished country with a severely understaffed and under-resourced police department.

Le Cour said the reaction of the gangs to the mission is difficult to predict. "Some of them might fight. Some of them might want to negotiate and open dialogue with the Haitian government," he said.

In a recent video, Jimmy Chérizier, a former elite police officer who now leads a powerful gang federation known as G9 Family and Allies, addressed the new prime minister for the first time.

"Do not play into the hands of traditional politicians and businessmen, who used violence for political and economic ends," said Chérizier, best known as Barbecue. "The problem that exists today can only be resolved through dialogue."

When asked about Barbecue's comments on Tuesday, Conille responded with a message of his own: "Put down the guns and recognize the authority of the state, and then we will see where we go from there."

The U.N. Security Council authorized Kenya to lead the multinational police mission in October 2023, a year after Henry first requested immediate help.

President Joe Biden praised the arrival of the first contingent, saying that the mission overall "will bring much needed relief."

"The people of Haiti deserve to feel safe in their homes, build better lives for their families, and enjoy democratic freedoms," he said. "While these goals may not be accomplished overnight, this mission provides the best chance of achieving them."

Rights groups and others have questioned the use of Kenyan police, pointing out the years of allegations against officers of abuses, including extrajudicial killings. On Tuesday, police again were accused of opening fire in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, where thousands of protesters stormed the parliament.

Kenyan police in Haiti will be joined by police from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Chad and Jamaica for a total of 2,500 officers. They will be deployed in phases at a cost of some \$600 million a year, according to the U.N. Security Council.

So far, the U.N.-administered fund for the mission has received only \$18 million in contributions from Canada, France and the United States. The U.S. also has pledged a total of \$300 million in support.

"While gang violence appears to have receded from its peak earlier this year, the country's security situation remains dire," the U.N. Security Council said in a June 21 statement.

More than 2,500 people were killed or injured in the first three months of this year, a more than 50% increase from the same period last year.

Many Haitians live in fear, including Jannette Oville, a 54-year-old mother of two university-age boys. She sells crops like plantains and green peppers, and gangs have robbed her several times as she travels aboard public buses with her goods. She tucks money in her armpit or underwear to try to keep it safe, she said.

"I need security. I need to work. I need the roads to open up so I can provide for my family," she said. "Being a female entrepreneur in Haiti is never easy. There's a lot of risk. But we take a risk to make sure our families are good."

An estimated 1.6 million Haitians are on the brink of starvation, the highest number recorded since the devastating 2010 earthquake, according to the U.N.

Judge alters Trump's gag order, letting him talk about witnesses, jury after hush money conviction

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A Manhattan judge on Tuesday modified Donald Trump's gag order, freeing the former president to comment publicly about witnesses and jurors in the hush money criminal trial that led to his felony conviction, but keeping others connected to the case off limits until he is sentenced July 11.

Judge Juan M. Merchan's decision — just days before Trump's debate Thursday with President Joe Biden — clears the presumptive Republican nominee to again go on the attack against his lawyer-turned-foe lawyer Michael Cohen, porn actor Stormy Daniels and other trial witnesses. Trump was convicted in New York on May 30 of falsifying records to cover up a potential sex scandal, making him the first ex-president convicted of a crime.

In a five-page ruling, Merchan wrote that the gag order was meant to "protect the integrity of the judicial proceedings" and that protections for witnesses and jurors no longer applied now that the trial has ended and the jury has been discharged.

Merchan said it had been his "strong preference" to continue barring Trump from commenting about jurors, whose names have not been made public, but that he couldn't justify doing so. The judge did leave in place a separate order prohibiting Trump and his lawyers from disclosing the identities of individual jurors or their addresses. Trump lawyer Todd Blanche said after the verdict the defense team has destroyed that information.

"There is ample evidence to justify continued concern for the jurors," Merchan wrote.

Merchan also left in place a ban on Trump commenting about court staffers, the prosecution team and their families until he is sentenced, writing that they must "continue to perform their lawful duties free from threats, intimidation, harassment, and harm." Those restrictions do not prohibit Trump from commenting about the judge himself or District Attorney Alvin Bragg, whose office prosecuted the case.

Trump's lawyers had urged Merchan to lift the gag order completely, arguing there was nothing to warrant restricting Trump's First Amendment rights after the trial's conclusion. Trump has said the gag order prevented him from defending himself while Cohen and Daniels continued to pillory him.

Though largely a win for Trump, his campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung criticized Tuesday's ruling as "another unlawful decision by a highly conflicted judge, which is blatantly un-American as it gags President Trump, the leading candidate in the 2024 Presidential Election during the upcoming Presidential Debate on Thursday."

Cheung said Trump and his lawyers "will immediately challenge today's unconstitutional order," arguing that portions of the gag order still in effect prevent him from speaking about the judge, whom he alleges had a conflict of interest, or repeating his unfounded claims that Biden directed the prosecution.

The Manhattan DA's office had asked Merchan to keep the gag order's ban on comments about the jury and trial staff in place at least until Trump is sentenced, but said last week they would be OK allowing Trump to comment about witnesses now that the trial is over.

A message seeking comment was left with the Manhattan DA's office.

Cohen, who testified for four days against his ex-boss, reacted to the ruling via text message. He wrote: "For the past 6 years, Donald and acolytes have been making constant negative statements about me. Donald's failed strategy of discrediting me so that he can avoid accountability didn't work then and won't work now."

Daniels' lawyer Clark Brewster said they "have nothing but respect" for Merchan and defer to his post-verdict review of the gag order "in the context of free speech and any continuing danger to the judicial process."

"His decision to impose restrictions on Mr. Trump, as it related to reckless and unrelenting character attacks on court personnel, trial witnesses, and potentially jurors was extraordinary but clearly justified given the defendant's uncontrollable daily rants," Brewster said.

Trump was convicted on 34 counts of falsifying business records arising from what prosecutors said was

an attempt to cover up a hush money payment to Daniels just before the 2016 presidential election. She claims she had a sexual encounter with Trump a decade earlier, which he denies.

The crime is punishable by up to four years behind bars, but prosecutors haven't said if they would seek incarceration and it's unclear if Merchan would impose such a sentence. Other options include a fine or probation.

Following his conviction, Trump complained he was under a "nasty gag order," while also testing its limits. In remarks a day after his conviction, Trump referred to Cohen as "a sleazebag," though not by name.

In a subsequent Newsmax interview, Trump took issue with jury and its makeup, complaining about Manhattan, "It's a very, very liberal democrat area so I knew we were in deep trouble," and claiming: "I never saw a glimmer of a smile from the jury. No, this was a venue that was very unfair. A tiny fraction of the people are Republicans."

Trump's lawyers, who said they were under the impression the gag order would end with a verdict, wrote to Merchan on June 4 asking him to lift the order.

Prosecutors wanted Merchan to keep the gag order's ban on comments about jurors and trial staff "at least through the sentencing hearing and the resolution of any post-trial motions." They argued the judge had "an obligation to protect the integrity of these proceedings and the fair administration of justice."

Merchan issued Trump's gag order on March 26, a few weeks before the start of the trial, after prosecutors raised concerns about the presumptive Republican presidential nominee's propensity to assail people involved in his cases.

Merchan later expanded it to prohibit comments about his own family after Trump made social media posts attacking the judge's daughter, a Democratic political consultant.

During the trial, Merchan held Trump in contempt of court, fined him \$10,000 for violating the gag order and threatened to put him in jail if he did it again.

In seeking to lift the order, Trump lawyers Todd Blanche and Emil Bove argued that Trump was entitled to "unrestrained campaign advocacy" in light of Biden's public comments about the verdict, and Cohen and Daniels' continued public criticism.

Israel's high court orders the army to draft ultra-Orthodox men, rattling Netanyahu's government

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled unanimously that the military must begin drafting ultra-Orthodox men for compulsory service, a landmark decision that could lead to the collapse of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition as Israel continues to wage war in Gaza.

The historic ruling effectively puts an end to a decades-old system that granted ultra-Orthodox men broad exemptions from military service while maintaining mandatory enlistment for the country's secular Jewish majority. The arrangement, deemed discriminatory by critics, has created a deep chasm in Israel's Jewish majority over who should shoulder the burden of protecting the country.

The court struck down a law that codified exemptions in 2017, but repeated court extensions and government delaying tactics over a replacement dragged out a resolution for years. The court ruled that in the absence of a law, Israel's compulsory military service applies to the ultra-Orthodox like any other citizen.

Under longstanding arrangements, ultra-Orthodox men have been exempt from the draft, which is compulsory for most Jewish men and women, who serve three and two years respectively as well as reserve duty until around age 40.

These exemptions have long been a source of anger among the secular public, a divide that has widened during the eight-month-old war, as the military has called up tens of thousands of soldiers and says it needs all the manpower it can get. Over 600 soldiers have been killed since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack.

Politically powerful ultra-Orthodox parties, key partners in Netanyahu's governing coalition, oppose any change to the current system. If the exemptions are ended, they could bolt the coalition, causing the

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government to collapse and likely leading to new elections at a time when its popularity has dropped.

In the current environment, Netanyahu could have a hard time delaying the matter any further or passing laws to restore the exemptions. During arguments, government lawyers told the court that forcing ultra-Orthodox men to enlist would "tear Israeli society apart."

The ultra-Orthodox see their full-time religious study as their part in protecting the state. Many fear that greater contact with secular society through the military will distance adherents from strict observance of the faith.

A statement from Netanyahu's Likud party criticized the ruling, saying a bill in parliament backed by the Israeli leader would address the draft issue. Critics say it falls short of Israel's wartime needs.

"The real solution to the draft problem is not a Supreme Court ruling," the statement said.

In its ruling, the court found that the state was carrying out "invalid selective enforcement, which represents a serious violation of the rule of law, and the principle according to which all individuals are equal before the law."

It did not say how many ultra-Orthodox should be drafted, but the military has said it is capable of enlisting 3,000 this year.

The security establishment must "act immediately to implement the ruling" and enlist at least that many ultra-Orthodox soldiers in the coming year, the Attorney General's Office demanded in a letter to legal advisors for the defense establishment, the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Education.

Some 66,000 ultra-Orthodox men are now eligible for enlistment, according to Shuki Friedman, an expert on religion and state affairs and the vice-president of the Jewish People Policy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank.

The ruling of Israel's highest court must be followed, and the military is expected to begin doing so once it forms a plan for how to draft thousands of members of a population that's deeply opposed to service, and which follows a cloistered and modest lifestyle the military may not be immediately prepared to accommodate. The army had no immediate comment.

The court also ruled that state subsidies for seminaries where exempted ultra-Orthodox men study should remain suspended. The court temporarily froze the seminary budgets earlier this year.

In a post on the social platform X, Cabinet minister Yitzhak Goldknopf, who heads one of the ultra-Orthodox parties in the coalition, called the ruling "very unfortunate and disappointing." He did not say whether his party would bolt the government.

Israel's ultra-Orthodox make up roughly 13% of the 9.9 million population. The community has a high birthrate, making it the fastest-growing segment of the population, at about 4% annually. Each year, roughly 13,000 ultra-Orthodox males reach the conscription age of 18 but less than 10% enlist, according to the Israeli parliament's State Control Committee.

Ultra-Orthodox men attend special seminaries that focus on religious studies, with little attention on secular topics such as math, English or science. Critics have said they are ill-prepared to serve in the military or enter the secular work force.

Religious women generally receive exemptions that are not as controversial, in part because women are not expected to serve in combat units.

The court ruling does not address the status of Israel's Palestinian citizens, who are not expected to serve and most of whom do not. As descendants of Palestinians who remained in Israel after the 1948 war that led to its creation, their ties to the military are fraught and some in Israel see them as a fifth column because of their solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Tuesday's ruling now sets the stage for growing friction within the coalition over the draft issue. Ultra-Orthodox lawmakers are likely to face intense pressure from religious leaders and their constituents and may have to decide whether remaining in the government is worthwhile for them. Previous court rulings on the issue and threats of enlistment have sparked protests and violence between the ultra-Orthodox and police.

Friedman said the ultra-Orthodox "understand that they don't have a better political alternative, but at

the same time their public is saying 'why did we vote for you?'"

The exemptions have faced years of legal challenges and a string of court decisions has found the system unjust. But Israeli leaders, under pressure from ultra-Orthodox parties, have repeatedly stalled.

The Movement for Quality Government in Israel, which has helped lead the challenge against the exemptions, called on the government to immediately draft all eligible seminary students. "This is their legal and moral duty, especially in light of the complex security situation and the urgent need for personnel" in the army, said Tomer Naor, head of the group's legal department.

Netanyahu's coalition is buoyed by two ultra-Orthodox parties who oppose increasing enlistment for their constituents. The long-serving Israeli leader has tried to adhere to the court's rulings while also scrambling to preserve his coalition. But with a slim majority of 64 seats in the 120-member parliament, he's often beholden to the smaller parties.

The government could try to draft a law that restores the exemptions, but doing so would be politically challenging in light of the court's ruling.

Some moderate members of the government have indicated they will only support a law that enlists sizable numbers of ultra-Orthodox, and the legislative clock is running out with the Knesset soon to leave for summer recess. That could force the military to begin drafting religious men before any new law is in place.

Netanyahu has been promoting a bill tabled by a previous government in 2022 that sought to address the issue by calling for limited ultra-Orthodox enlistment.

But critics say that bill was crafted before the war and doesn't do enough to address a pressing manpower shortfall as the army seeks to maintain its forces in the Gaza Strip while also preparing for potential war with the Lebanese Hezbollah group, which has been fighting with Israel since the war in Gaza erupted last October.

Laugh (or cringe) at these history-making moments from presidential debates

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It could be a well-rehearsed zinger or an offhand, too-loud sigh.

Notable moments from past presidential debates demonstrate how the candidates' words and body language can make them look especially relatable or hopelessly out-of-touch. They also can showcase candidates at the top of their policy game or suggest they're out to sea.

Will past be prologue when President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump debate in Atlanta on Thursday?

"Debates, being live television events, without a script, without any way of knowing how they are going to evolve — anything can happen," said Alan Schroeder, author of "Presidential Debates: 50 years of High-Risk TV."

Here's a look at some standout high moments, low moments and curveballs from presidential debates past.

That old age question (again)When everyone knows a sensitive question is coming yet you make the answer sound spontaneous, you're having a good debate. Republican President Ronald Reagan landed a line for the ages in the second presidential debate of 1984 after an underwhelming opening matchup.

Reagan was 73 and seeking a second term in his race against Democratic challenger Walter Mondale, then 56. In the first debate, Reagan struggled to remember facts and occasionally looked befuddled.

One of his top advisers, Nevada Sen. Paul Laxalt, suggested afterward that aides "filled his head with so many facts and figures that he lost his spontaneity."

So Reagan's team took a more hands-off approach toward his second faceoff with Mondale. And, when Reagan got a question about his mental and physical stamina that he had to know was coming, he was ready enough to make the response feel unplanned.

"You already are the oldest president in history," moderator Henry Trewhitt said before asking whether

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Reagan might not be able to handle a challenge like the Cuban missile crisis.

"Not at all," Reagan responded in defense of his crisis management smarts. He smoothly continued, "I want you to know that, also, I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience."

Then, capitalizing on years of Hollywood-honed comedic training, the president took a sip of water, giving the audience and even Mondale, who himself cracked up, more time to laugh. Finally, he grinned and left little doubt that he'd rehearsed a response, adding, "It was Seneca, or it was Cicero, I don't know which, that said, 'If it was not for the elders correcting the mistakes of the young, there would be no state.'"

Years later, Mondale said that while TV viewers saw him laughing, "I think, if you come in close, you'll see some tears coming down, because I knew he had gotten me there. That was really the end of my campaign that night."

Reagan thereby proved that even at his age, a candidate could get better over time. And with this year's race pitting 81-year-old Biden against 78-year-old Trump, 73 doesn't seem so old anymore.

Reagan is also remembered for using a light touch to neutralize criticisms from Democratic President Jimmy Carter in a 1980 debate.

When Carter accused him of wanting to cut Medicare, Reagan scolded, "There you go again." The line worked so well he turned it into something of a trademark rejoinder going forward.

Gaffes galore In 1976, Republican President Gerald Ford had a notable moment during his second debate against Carter — and not in a good way. The president declared that there is "no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and there never will be under a Ford administration."

With Moscow controlling much of that part of the world, moderator Max Frankel responded, "I'm sorry, wha..?" and asked if he'd understood correctly. Ford stood by his answer, then spent days on the campaign trail trying to explain it away. He lost that November.

"The closer the election, the more zingers and important debate lines can matter," said Aaron Kall, director of the debate program at the University of Michigan. "Not just on who won, or who lost, but how does it affect fundraising, how does it impact the media cycle in coming days and weeks."

Not all slips of the lip have a devastating impact.

Then-Sen. Barack Obama, in a 2008 Democratic presidential primary debate, dismissively told Hillary Clinton, "You're likable enough, Hillary." That haughty answer drew a backlash but Obama recovered.

The same couldn't be said for the short-lived 2012 Republican White House bid of then-Texas Gov. Rick Perry. Despite repeated attempts and excruciatingly long pauses, Perry could not remember the third of the three federal agencies he'd promised to shutter if elected.

Finally, he sheepishly muttered, "Oops."

The Energy Department is what slipped his mind.

Getting personal Another damaging moment opened the second presidential debate in 1988, when CNN anchor Bernard Shaw pressed Democrat Michael Dukakis, the governor of Massachusetts, about his opposition to capital punishment with a question that evoked the candidate's wife.

"If Kitty Dukakis were raped and murdered, would you favor an irrevocable death penalty for the killer?" Shaw asked. Dukakis showed little emotion as he responded, "I don't see any evidence that it's a deterrent."

Dukakis later said he wished he'd said that his wife "is the most precious thing, she and my family, that I have in this world."

That year's vice presidential debate featured one of the best-remembered, pre-planned one-liners.

When Dan Quayle, the Republican vice presidential nominee and Indiana senator, compared himself to John F. Kennedy while debating Texas Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, the Democrat was ready. He'd studied Quayle's campaigning and seen him invoke Kennedy in the past.

"Senator, I served with Jack Kennedy. I knew Jack Kennedy," Bentsen began slowly and deliberately, drawing out the moment. "Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine. Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy."

The audience erupted in applause and laughter. Quayle was left to stare straight ahead.

Blunders without words Quayle and George H.W. Bush still easily won the 1988 election. But they lost in

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1992 after then-President Bush was caught on camera looking at his watch while Democrat Bill Clinton talked to an audience member during a town hall debate. Some thought it made Bush look bored and aloof.

In another instance of a nonverbal debate miscue, then-Democratic Vice President Al Gore was criticized for a subpar opening 2000 debate performance with Republican George W. Bush in which he repeatedly and very audibly sighed.

During their second, town hall-style debate, Gore moved so close to Bush while the Republican answered one question that Bush finally looked over and offered a confident nod, drawing laughter from the audience.

A similar moment occurred in 2016, as Hillary Clinton faced the audience to answer questions during her second debate with Trump. The Republican candidate moved in close behind her, narrowed his eyes and glowered.

Clinton offered no visible reaction then, but later wrote of the incident, "He was literally breathing down my neck. My skin crawled."

Biden-Trump redux Thursday's faceoff will be the first time a current president debates a former.

Historically, incumbents sometimes struggle during opening debates. They're used to being surrounded by White House advisers who offer little pushback. In 2012, then-President Obama's seemingly detached first debate performance against Mitt Romney allowed the Republican to gain momentum.

Romney, though, had an awkward moment during the second debate.

Answering a question about gender pay equity, the former Massachusetts governor talked about going to women's groups to get help finding qualified female applicants for top state posts.

"They brought us whole binders full of women," he declared. Obama turned that into an attack line at subsequent rallies, gleefully saying, "We don't have to collect a bunch of binders to find qualified, talented, driven young women."

If Biden's debate skills are rusty this time, his opponent's might be as well. Trump skipped all the GOP primary debates this time, meaning he's not done one since squaring off with Biden twice in 2020.

Trump interrupted so frequently when they first debated four years ago that Biden eventually cried out, "Will you shut up, man?" — a visceral moment if there ever was one. Trump is remembered that night for instructing members of the far-right Proud Boys group from the stage to "stand back and stand by." Some members of the extremist group took it as a sign of encouragement.

The second Biden-Trump debate of 2020 saw producers cut the mics to discourage interrupting, making it less chaotic. It featured Biden wistfully declaring, "I am anxious to have this race. I'm anxious to see this take place."

It did. And now it's happening again.

Takeaways from AP's report on new footage from the fatal shooting of a Black motorist in Georgia

By RUSS BYNUM and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — In the summer following the 2020 police killing of George Floyd, the fatal shooting of Julian Lewis generated headlines far beyond rural Georgia.

The Georgia State Patrol quickly fired the trooper who opened fire on Lewis within seconds of forcing the Black motorist to drive into a ditch in Screven County. Trooper Jake Thompson was arrested on a murder charge and jailed, though a grand jury declined to indict him. The state of Georgia eventually paid Lewis' family a \$4.8 million settlement.

But unlike Floyd's death — and so many other questionable uses of force by police — no footage of the Aug. 7, 2020, shooting has been made public until now. An Associated Press report and the never-before-released dashcam video have raised fresh questions about how the trooper avoided prosecution.

Here are key takeaways from the AP report.

Why is the video just coming out? Dashcam footage of Lewis' shooting had been kept under wraps for nearly four years as state and federal authorities conducted their respective investigations. Those cases

were closed last fall, making the video releasable as a public record.

Journalists Louise Story and Ebony Reed obtained the video as part of reporting for their new book "Fifteen Cents on the Dollar: How Americans Made the Black-White Wealth Gap." They shared the footage with AP, which verified its authenticity and obtained additional investigative records that also have not previously been made public.

Thompson was not wearing a body camera, so the dashcam video is the only available footage of the shooting.

What does the footage show?The video shows Thompson following Lewis for what he later said was a broken taillight. A few minutes into the pursuit, Lewis points a hand out the window of his Nissan Sentra and turns onto a darkened dirt road. Lewis rolls through an intersection with a stop sign before Thompson uses a tactical maneuver to force the vehicle into a ditch.

The video does not show the actual shooting, but it captured audio of Thompson barking, "Hey, get your hands up!" He does not even finish the warning before the gunshot is heard. Investigators determined Thompson fired 1.6 seconds after stopping his patrol cruiser.

Use-of-force experts said the shooting appeared to be unjustified.

"This goes beyond a stupid mistake," said Charles "Joe" Key, a former Baltimore police lieutenant and use-of-force expert who has consulted on thousands of such cases.

What happened to the trooper?Thompson spent more than 100 days in jail but walked free without a trial. A state grand jury in 2021 declined to bring an indictment in the case, and the district attorney overseeing the case closed it.

The U.S. Justice Department considered civil rights charges against Thompson but instead entered into a non-prosecution agreement with him that forbids him from ever working in law enforcement again.

"It's inadequate," said Lewis' son, Brook Bacon. "I thought the shortcomings that occurred at the state level would be more thoroughly examined at the federal level, but that's apparently not the case."

Neither Thompson nor his attorney, Keith Barber, would discuss the case. District Attorney Daphne Toten did not respond to requests for comment.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for Georgia's Southern District, which reached the non-prosecution deal with Thompson, declined to discuss it except to say the Justice Department communicated with the Lewis family "consistent with the law and DOJ policy."

Shot in 1.6 seconds: Video raises questions about how trooper avoided charges in Black man's death

By RUSS BYNUM and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Julian Lewis didn't pull over for the Georgia State Patrol cruiser flashing its blue lights behind him on a rural highway. He still didn't stop after pointing a hand out the window and turning onto a darkened dirt road as the trooper sounded his siren.

Five minutes into a pursuit that began over a broken taillight, the 60-year-old Black man was dead — shot in the forehead by the white trooper who fired a single bullet mere seconds after forcing Lewis to crash into a ditch. Trooper Jake Thompson insisted he pulled the trigger as Lewis revved the engine of his Nissan Sentra and jerked his steering wheel as if trying to mow him down.

"I had to shoot this man," Thompson can be heard telling a supervisor on video recorded by his dash-mounted camera at the shooting scene in rural Screven County, midway between Savannah and Augusta. "And I'm just scared."

But new investigative details obtained by The Associated Press and the never-before-released dashcam video of the August 2020 shooting have raised fresh questions about how the trooper avoided prosecution with nothing more than a signed promise never to work in law enforcement again. Use-of-force experts who reviewed the footage for AP said the shooting appeared to be unjustified.

An investigative file obtained by AP offers the most detailed account yet of the case, including docu-

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ments that spell out why the Georgia Bureau of Investigation concluded the 27-year-old trooper's version of events did not match the evidence. For instance, an inspection of Lewis' car indicated the crash had disconnected the vehicle's battery and rendered it immobile.

Footage of the pursuit has never been made public. It was first obtained by the authors of a new book about race and economic inequality titled "Fifteen Cents on the Dollar: How Americans Made the Black-White Wealth Gap." Louise Story and Ebony Reed shared the video with AP, which verified its authenticity and obtained additional documents under Georgia's open-records law.

The footage does not include visuals of the actual shooting, which happened outside the camera's view. But it shows the crucial final moments in which Thompson uses a police maneuver to send Lewis' car spinning into a ditch. Then the trooper's cruiser stops parallel to Lewis' vehicle and Thompson's voice barks, "Hey, get your hands up!" The gunshot rings out before he can finish the warning.

The documents show Thompson fired just 1.6 seconds after his cruiser stopped.

"This guy just came out shooting" and did not give Lewis "remotely sufficient time to respond" to his order, said Andrew Scott, a former Boca Raton, Florida, police chief who wrote a dissertation about police chases.

"This goes beyond a stupid mistake," added Charles "Joe" Key, a former Baltimore police lieutenant and use-of-force expert who has consulted on thousands of such cases.

Key also took issue with the maneuver to disable Lewis' vehicle, saying that, too, was unwarranted. And he deemed Thompson's claim that he fired because of the revving engine "total garbage."

"I'm not in favor of people running from the police," Key said. "But it doesn't put him in the category of people deserving to be shot by the police."

Thompson was fired and arrested on a murder charge a week after the Aug. 7, 2020, shooting, which came amid a summer of protests in the wake of the police killings of George Floyd and other Black people. The trooper was denied bail and spent more than 100 days in jail.

But in the end, Thompson walked free without a trial. A state grand jury in 2021 declined to bring an indictment. The district attorney overseeing the case closed it last fall, when federal prosecutors also ruled out civil rights charges.

At the same time, the U.S. Justice Department quietly entered into a non-prosecution agreement with Thompson forbidding him from ever working in law enforcement again – a highly unusual deal that brought little solace to Lewis' family.

"It's inadequate," said Lewis' son, Brook Bacon. "I thought the shortcomings that occurred at the state level would be more thoroughly examined at the federal level, but that's apparently not the case."

The state of Georgia in 2022 paid Lewis' family a \$4.8 million settlement to avoid a lawsuit.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for Georgia's Southern District, which reached the non-prosecution deal with Thompson, declined to discuss it except to say the Justice Department communicated with the Lewis family "consistent with the law and DOJ policy."

District Attorney Daphne Totten did not respond to requests for comment. Neither Thompson nor his attorney, Keith Barber, would discuss the case.

Because Georgia law doesn't require troopers to use body cameras, the dashcam footage is the only video of the shooting.

"It's a heartbreaking case and sheds light on the complexities and difficulties Black families face when intersecting with the justice system," said Reed, a former AP journalist and one of the authors who first obtained the footage.

Lewis worked odd jobs as a carpenter and handyman. He helped put a new roof and siding on a local church, relatives said, and repaired plumbing and electrical wiring in people's homes. He would often charge friends and family only for materials.

"He was just a good, kind-hearted person," said Tonia Moore, one of Lewis' sisters. "Everybody has flaws."

Lewis also struggled with drugs and alcohol. He served prison time for cocaine possession and multiple DUI violations. After the shooting, blood tests found alcohol, cocaine and methamphetamine in his system.

Thompson, who policed Georgia highways for six years before the shooting, was described in a per-

formance evaluation as "hard working and aggressive." He led his post in DUI arrests, according to his personnel file, and preferred working nights to improve his chances of catching intoxicated drivers.

Days after the shooting, Thompson told GBI investigators he used the tactical maneuver to end the chase – which he estimated reached top speeds of 65 mph (105 kph) — out of concern that the pursuit was approaching a more populated area. He acted right after Lewis' car rolled without stopping through an intersection with a stop sign.

Thompson said that after getting out of his cruiser beside Lewis' car in the ditch, he heard the Nissan's engine "revving up at a high rate of speed."

"It appeared to me that the violator was trying to use his vehicle to injure me," Thompson said in an audio recording of the GBI interview obtained by the AP. He said he fired "in fear for my life and safety."

On the dashcam footage, a brief noise resembling a revving engine can be heard just before Thompson shouts his warning and fires. Less than two minutes later, the trooper can be heard saying: "Jesus Christ! He almost ran over me."

According to the GBI case file, Thompson fired facing the open driver's side window of Lewis' car less than 10 feet (3 meters) away.

Agents at the scene found Lewis' front tires pointing away from the trooper's cruiser. They also determined Lewis' car had no power after the Nissan struck the ditch. Raising the hood, they discovered the battery had tipped onto its side after its mounting broke. One of the battery cables had been pulled loose, and the engine's air filter housing had come partially open.

Investigators later performed a field test on Lewis' car in which they connected the battery and started the engine. When an agent disconnected one of the cables from the battery, the car's engine immediately stopped. Likewise, opening the air filter cover caused the engine to die.

Because grand jury proceedings are generally secret, it's unknown why the panel declined to indict Thompson in June 2021. Georgia affords law enforcement officers the chance to defend themselves before a grand jury, a privilege not given to any other defendants.

Totten, the district attorney, decided not to try again, saying in a Sept. 28 letter to the GBI that "there has been no new evidence developed in this case."

For Bacon, Lewis' son, the lack of charges is an open wound. He worries no one will remember what happened given the passage of almost four years — and the number of others killed by police under questionable circumstances.

"It's hard for anybody to even reach back that far, especially if they didn't hear about it initially," he said. "But these issues haven't gone away."

More than 500 people have been charged with federal crimes under the gun safety law Biden signed

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 500 people — some linked to transnational cartels and organized crime rings — have been charged with gun trafficking and other crimes under the landmark gun safety legislation President Joe Biden signed two years ago Tuesday.

A White House report obtained by The Associated Press on the implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act also said that enhanced background checks under the new law have stopped roughly 800 sales of firearms to people under age 21 who would be prohibited from buying them.

It highlights that 14 states are using or planning to use funding from the legislation to make better use of red flag laws, which allow law enforcement to remove weapons from people in crisis but are often underused or not well understood. And the report lays out how \$85 million in funding has been awarded to 125 school districts across 18 states to help identify students who need mental health care and help them access it.

"It was designed to reduce gun violence and save lives," Biden said recently of the law. "And I'm so proud of the tremendous progress we've made since then."

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The bill was a signature achievement for the Democratic president, and the particulars on how it has been implemented come as he seeks reelection in November. But Biden is also quick to say the law didn't go far enough, as he continues to push for stricter background checks and has called for a ban on assault weapons.

Republican presumptive presidential nominee Donald Trump, meanwhile, has promised no new gun regulations if he returns to the White House.

Trump has spoken twice this year at National Rifle Association events and was endorsed by the group in May. The former president has claimed that Biden "has a 40-year record of trying to rip firearms out of the hands of law-abiding citizens." His campaign and the Republican National Committee also announced the creation of a Gun Owners for Trump coalition that includes gun rights activists and those who work in the firearms industry.

Biden created the first-ever White House office of gun violence prevention and issued new rules that mean tens of thousands more firearms dealers across the United States will have to run background checks on buyers at gun shows or other places outside brick-and-mortar stores. He's also pushed to make firearms storage safer.

Biden's campaign believes gun control is a motivating issue for voters, in particular suburban college-educated women who may be decisive in several key battlegrounds this fall. Biden's campaign and allies have circulated clips of Trump saying, "We have to get over it," after an Iowa school shooting in January and then telling NRA members in May that he "did nothing" on guns during his presidency.

About 7 in 10 suburban college-educated women who voted in the 2022 midterm elections supported stricter gun control laws, although fewer than 1 in 10 named it as the top problem facing the country, according to AP VoteCast, a wide-ranging survey of voters.

Violent crime dropped in 2023, reversing a coronavirus pandemic-era spike, but firearms are the No. 1 killer of children in the U.S., according to research from the American Academy of Pediatrics. So far this year, 110 children younger than 11 have died by guns, and 566 between the ages of 12 and 17 have died. The number of children and teenagers killed by gunfire in the U.S. increased 50% between 2019 and 2021, according to the Pew Research Center.

And there have been 12 mass killings by firearms in 2024, according to data tracked by the AP. A mass killing is defined as an attack in which four or more people have died, not including the perpetrator, within 24 hours. The U.S. surgeon general on Tuesday declared gun violence a public health crisis, driven by the fast-growing number of injuries and deaths involving firearms in the country.

Efforts to control guns are often stymied by the courts. The conservative-majority U.S. Supreme Court expanded gun rights in 2022, changing the way courts are supposed to evaluate restrictions on firearms. It recently overturned a Trump-era ban on bump stocks, the rapid-fire gun accessories used in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

But late last week, the court upheld a gun control law intended to protect victims of domestic violence. The case had been closely watched for its potential to affect cases in which other gun ownership laws have been called into question, including the prosecution of Hunter Biden. The president's son was convicted of lying on a form to buy a firearm while he was addicted to drugs, and his lawyers have signaled they will appeal.

President Biden signed the gun safety legislation on June 25, 2022, a bipartisan compromise forged following a series of mass shootings, including the massacre of 19 students and two teachers at a Texas elementary school.

Gun safety groups on Tuesday praised the law and Biden's work. "We are determined to build on this momentum and urge Congress to continue prioritizing gun safety laws to keep our communities safe," said Angela Ferrell-Zabala, executive director of Moms Demand Action.

The federal cases prosecuted under the new law include a defendant sentenced to 23 years in prison for trafficking guns in gang-related shootings and another who got two years for running an illegal gun trafficking enterprise.

In March, five men were arrested in Texas on charges of trafficking military-grade weapons headed for a drug cartel in Mexico. The charges include gun trafficking and straw purchases, in which a gun is bought by one person on behalf of another who is legally unable to make the purchase. Hundreds of illegal firearms were pulled off the streets.

The Biden administration has also funded nearly 80 organizations nationwide using \$250 million from the legislation and other appropriations to expand community violence intervention initiatives, according to the implementation report.

On heartland roads, and a riverboat, devout Catholics press on with two-month nationwide pilgrimage

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

STEBENVILLE, Ohio (AP) — “Bye bye, Jesus!” a child called out as the riverboat chugged away from shore into the Ohio River, a solemn bell tolling amid the thrumming of an old-fashioned sternwheel.

Two Catholic bishops on board, representing dioceses on each side of the river, took turns holding aloft the guest of honor — the consecrated Eucharistic host, in which Catholics believe Jesus is truly present in the Communion bread.

Scores of devotees watched reverently from the shore on Sunday — nuns and families with clusters of young children — fingering rosaries, uttering prayers, singing quietly. Some knelt on the gravel surface.

The event culminated three days of devotions in this small Ohio city, launched by a procession through downtown streets on a sweltering Friday evening, where hundreds of devotees passed bars, shops, vacant storefronts and the curious stares of residents in folding chairs.

Among those in the procession were seminarians in black cassocks, nuns in habits, girls in First Communion dresses, and members of lay orders in traditional garb. One girl’s T-shirt proclaimed, “Get holy or die tryin’.”

It’s just a snapshot of a wider project. Catholic pilgrims are in the middle of a two-month journey on four routes across the United States. They’re planning to converge on Indianapolis in mid-July for a climactic stadium gathering called the National Eucharistic Congress, the first such event in more than 80 years.

Everywhere, the center of attention is the Eucharistic host, held in a golden vessel known as a monstrance. “The pilgrimage is a really exciting opportunity for us to literally walk with Jesus, like the apostles did,” said Zoe Dongas, one of a small group of “perpetual” pilgrims traveling an entire route.

Starting in May in New Haven, Connecticut, her group has processed through cities, ridden by boat to the Statue of Liberty and trekked through rural Pennsylvania in a heat wave. The group will travel from West Virginia across Ohio to Indianapolis, meeting up with pilgrims who started from California, Texas and Minnesota.

Organizers are hoping that — as with the child on the riverbank — the enterprise reinforces the core Catholic belief that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist, and not just symbolized by bread and wine, as many Protestants believe.

Some have questioned the need for the event, and the congress’s \$14 million cost — saying belief in the Eucharist is stronger than feared, that the event is only appealing to those already drawn to traditional piety and that it’s partly the byproduct of a political debate.

But Bishop Mark Brennan of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, said reinforcing Eucharistic faith is crucial.

“If that is weakened in our people, then they’ll be weakened in their response to Christ and to the service of God and neighbor that they’re supposed to offer,” Brennan said aboard the boat taking him and his counterpart from the Diocese of Steubenville downriver toward Wheeling.

If the scenes in Steubenville seemed like something out of another era, they are.

The last time a Eucharistic National Congress was held, it was in an era when urban Catholics thronged to massive devotional parades and stadium events. That kind of traditional piety began waning by mid-

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20th century.

But Steubenville, a Rust Belt city showing the wear of its post-industrial years, is a hub for some hoping to revive traditional piety. The region is home to a conservative Catholic university, a Catholic family camp and a cluster of religious orders.

This weekend, participants spoke of the Eucharist simply as Jesus.

The idea of taking Jesus out on a riverboat was natural in light of the assigned gospel reading at Sunday Mass, in which Jesus rides in a boat with his disciples and miraculously calms a storm, said Steubenville seminarian Sam Ivkovich.

"He preached from boats, so this seems fitting," Ivkovich said on the wind-whipped Wellsburg Bridge, where he gathered with several devotees to kneel, sing and pray as the boat passed below.

The 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 like President Joe Biden or Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Democrats who supported abortion rights. Following cautionary signals from the Vatican, the document ultimately did not directly address that question, though it called on Catholics to examine whether they align with church teachings.

Some bishops cited a 2019 survey that found most church members don't believe Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist. Bishops devised a three-year focus on the doctrine, culminating in pilgrimages and the Indianapolis gathering.

Some researchers have cast doubt on the original survey's phrasing.

A follow-up by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in 2022 used multiple phrasings and found that 64% of Catholics expressed belief in Jesus' presence in the Eucharist in at least one response. Virtually all Catholics who attend Mass weekly affirmed this belief, according to the Georgetown University-based center.

This raises the question of whether the pilgrimage and congress amount to "a solution in search of a problem," said Steven Millies, professor of public theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He wondered if bishops' real worry is over Catholics' "lost sense of difference" from a society they have assimilated into.

In the early to mid-20th century, when Catholics were defined by growing communities of European immigrants and their descendants, they gathered by the scores of thousands for Eucharistic and other traditional devotions at landmarks like Chicago's Soldier Field, Louisville's Churchill Downs and Pittsburgh's Forbes Field.

"This was a way of announcing to the rest of the United States, 'We are here, and we are here in large numbers,'" Millies said. The rituals, he added, served as a reminder that while Catholics had arrived as Americans, they were distinct from their neighbors.

These mass piety events began to wane by the 1950s. The reformist Second Vatican Council of the 1960s spawned simpler liturgies increasing lay involvement, though today some are working to revive older ways. Catholics are more diverse while also facing an increasingly secular culture.

"Catholics aren't the same as we were 100 years ago," Millies said. "The world has changed around us. Eucharistic piety is one form of devotion in the Catholic Church. There are many others. It doesn't speak to everybody."

He also questioned the event's timing.

"I would find it very hard to accept this is a coincidence this is happening in an election year," he said.

Pilgrimage participants, however, spoke in personal and spiritual terms.

Katherine Ball of St. Clairsville, Ohio, who joined Friday's procession with fellow members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, dressed in its medieval black cape and veil, choked back tears as she spoke of how the presence of the Eucharist helped console her after losing her parents to cancer.

Weeks earlier, she said, she happened to drive alongside the well-marked van in which the perpetual pilgrims were traveling, with the host displayed in the monstrance. She stayed close to the van for some

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time, her spirits lifting as she recalled a saint's writing that "Jesus never travels alone" but brings all of heaven into the Eucharist.

"I know that when I receive Holy Communion, I'm unified with my parents, and this is just a foretaste of heaven," she said.

Today in History: June 26, Berlin Airlift begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, June 26, the 178th day of 2024. There are 188 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: In 1948, the Berlin Airlift began in earnest after the Soviet Union cut off land and water routes to the isolated western sector of Berlin.

Also on this date:

In 1917, the first troops of the American Expeditionary Force deployed to France during World War I landed in St. Nazaire.

In 1925, Charles Chaplin's classic comedy "The Gold Rush" premiered at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood.

On June 26, 1945, the charter of the United Nations was signed by 50 countries in San Francisco.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin, where he delivered his famous speech expressing solidarity with the city's residents, declaring: "Ich bin ein Berliner" ("I am a Berliner").

In 1977, 42 people were killed when a fire sent toxic smoke pouring through the Maury County Jail in Columbia, Tennessee. Elvis Presley performed his last concert at Market Square Arena in Indianapolis.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush went back on his "no-new-taxes" campaign pledge, conceding that tax increases would have to be included in any deficit-reduction package worked out with congressional negotiators.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton announced the U.S. had launched missiles against Iraqi targets because of "compelling evidence" Iraq had plotted to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush.

In 1996, the Supreme Court ordered the Virginia Military Institute to admit women or forgo state support.

In 1997, the first Harry Potter novel, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" by J.K. Rowling, was published in the United Kingdom (it was later released in the United States under the title "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone").

In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a handgun ban in the District of Columbia as it affirmed, 5-4, that an individual right to gun ownership existed.

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court gave the nation's legally married gay couples equal federal footing with all other married Americans and also cleared the way for same-sex marriages to resume in California.

In 2020, after protesters in Washington, D.C., attempted to pull down a statue of Andrew Jackson, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to protect monuments, memorials and statues.

In 2022, U.S. Navy destroyer that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines became the deepest wreck ever discovered, according to explorers.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician-film composer Dave Grusin is 90. Singer Billy Davis Jr. is 86. Brazilian singer-songwriter and politician Gilberto Gil is 82. R&B singer Brenda Holloway is 78. Actor Robert Davi is 73. Singer-musician Mick Jones (The Clash, Big Audio Dynamite) is 69. Actor Gedde Watanabe (GEH'-dee wah-tah-NAH'-bee) is 69. Rock singer Chris Isaak is 68. Rock singer Patty Smyth (Scandal) is 67. Singer Terri Nunn (Berlin) is 63. Cyclist Greg LeMond is 63. Rock musician Colin Greenwood (Radiohead) is 55. Writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson is 54. Actor Sean Hayes is 54. Actor Chris O'Donnell is 54. Actor Nick Offerman is 54. Baseball Hall of Famer Derek Jeter is 50. Country singer Gretchen Wilson is 51. Pop-rock singer-musician Ryan Tedder (OneRepublic) is 45. Actor Jason Schwartzman is 44. Actor Aubrey Plaza is 40. Author-actor Jennette McCurdy is 32. Actor-singer Ariana Grande is 31. Actor Jacob Elordi is 27.