

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, July 20

Common Cents Community Thrift Store open, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 21

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion: St. John's at 9 a.m.; Zion at 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship: Conde at 8:30 a.m.; Groton at 10:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.

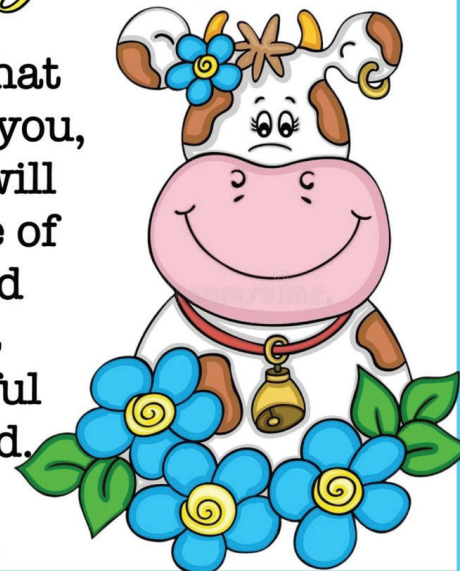
Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

It's Saturday
Good Morning
Family & Friends

Believe that
God loves you,
that He will
take care of
you, and
have a
wonderful
Weekend.



God's Spoken
Word Ministries

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, July 22

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, acini depepi fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Softball hosts Warner: U8 at 5:30 p.m. (1), U10B at 6:30 p.m. (DH), U12 at 6:30 p.m. (DH)

Jr. Legion hosts Selby, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

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

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at Noon.

1440

In partnership with **smartasset**

Global Tech Outage

A faulty software update by global cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike—used by over half of Fortune 500 companies—caused a worldwide outage yesterday, disrupting airlines, government services, hospital systems, and other businesses. A defect in the update crashed Microsoft's Windows, triggering its infamous "blue screen of death" for users relying on the operating system.

Thousands of flights were canceled or delayed yesterday, including those with American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and United Airlines. The outage disrupted emergency services and court systems in some areas, while some healthcare providers postponed nonessential surgeries. The United Parcel Service and FedEx also reported issues. Some billboards in New York City's Times Square went dark, Disneyland guests were locked out of hotels, and Krispy Kreme gave away free doughnuts to cope with the outage.

CrowdStrike's CEO George Kurtz said a security breach or cyberattack did not cause the incident and that a fix was deployed. Shares of the \$74B Austin, Texas-based company closed down 11% Friday.

Evan Gershkovich sentenced to 16 years in Russian prison.

The 32-year-old American journalist was found guilty of espionage charges in Russia, the first such case since the Soviet Era. The Wall Street Journal reporter had been jailed since March 2023 (which will be counted as part of his prison sentence) in what the US deems a wrongful detention. Gershkovich's espionage trial was not made public and has been considered politically motivated. Observers say a prisoner exchange could be possible.

Top UN court says Israel's settlement policies violate international law.

The United Nations' International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion Friday, ruling Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal. The world's top court directed Israel to withdraw the settlements immediately. While the decision is meant to be binding for UN member nations, the world's high court has no means to enforce the order.

Separately, a drone attack struck Tel Aviv early morning Friday, killing at least one person and wounding 10 others. Yemen-based Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for the attack.

Bangladesh imposes nationwide curfew amid deadly protests.

Tens of thousands of students in Bangladesh are seeking an end to quotas that reserve 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans in the country's 1971 war for independence. At least 100 people have been killed and more than 1,000 injured this week in clashes between police and protesters, though the death toll is expected to be higher. The country is also experiencing a nationwide internet shutdown due to the unrest.

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Vietnam's longest-serving Communist Party leader dies at 80.

Nguyen Phu Trong, the hard-line general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, died Friday due to old age and a battle with an unspecified illness. He held the country's most influential role for 13 years, overseeing its economic and geopolitical strategy. Vietnamese President To Lam will temporarily take over Trong's duties.

NASA's Curiosity rover uncovers yellow sulfur crystals on Mars.

Since October 2023, the Curiosity rover has been exploring a region that is rich with sulfates. In May, it accidentally crushed a small rock in Mars' Gediz Vallis channel, a surface feature of the red planet believed to have been an ancient river. The cracked rock revealed never-before-seen crystals made of pure sulfur.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Maurine M. in Safety Harbor, Florida.

"In May, my husband and I traveled to Blue Spring State Park with our 5th wheel camper. It turned out to be a rather long and exhausting travel day. We arrived at our spot and we were having difficulty backing it in. It literally seemed out of nowhere this gentleman arrived and help direct my husband into the spot. Eventually, Harry, our rescuer, was able to get the trailer settled into our spot! Saving my exhausted husband! Harry simply helped us to show kindness. Thank you, Harry!"

Pollock Dairy Plant to Close

The following was posted on the Prairie Pioneer Facebook Page:

URGENT NEWS STATEMENT:

Statement: Pollock, S.D., Plant

Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) announced on Thursday, July 18, that after a careful analysis of new demand and current supply dynamics and as part of a coordinated, Cooperative-wide milk marketing and balancing optimization project, the decision has been made to close our dairy ingredient facility in Pollock, S.D.

Unfortunately, as a result, 33 full-time positions will be eliminated, as well as four parttime roles.

The employees at the facility have done an excellent job producing dairy ingredients, and we appreciate all their hard work and dedication. Any decision impacting people's livelihoods is one not taken lightly, and we will work with employees to help them through this transition.

The raw milk volume currently received at the Pollock plant will continue to have a home at nearby production facilities, and our customers will continue to be served by our network of ingredients facilities. This was a difficult decision, but we have a responsibility to operate financially sound businesses that bring additional returns to our family farmowners' investment in the Cooperative.

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**50th Wedding Celebration
Honoring Neal & Wynella Abeln
Saturday, July 20, 2024
Food & Visiting 6 pm – 8 pm
Barn Dance 8 pm – 11 pm
AT: Tim & Lacey Grabow's
15689 456th Ave
South Shore, SD 57263
FUN FOR ALL
No gifts please**

The Life of Sandra Knudson



A Celebration of Life for Sandra Knudson, 70, of Aberdeen will be held at Sunset Memorial Gardens on Saturday, July 20th at 1:00 p.m. Rev. Rob Moorlach will officiate. Inurnment will follow under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. A time of fellowship will be held at the United Methodist Church in Groton at 2:30 p.m. and all are welcome.

Sandy passed away July 16, 2024 at Aberdeen Health and Rehab.

Sandra Kay was born on May 25, 1954 in Aberdeen to Dayle Keith and Blanche (Bonn) Craig. She attended country school and later graduated from Groton High School. Sandy was united in marriage to Darrel and together they raised two children, LyBeca and Lance. Sandra was employed at the Groton Independent and later worked for many years at Hub City in their purchasing department.

Sandy had an amazing personality and was always quick witted. She cherished time with her family, especially her grandchildren along with her many nieces and nephews. She loved dogs, planting flowers and having coffee with friends.

Sandy will forever be remembered for her infectious smile, gift of gab and her love of baking.

Grateful for having shared in her life are her children, LyBeca Schaunaman of Aberdeen, Lance (Becky) Knudson of Athens, GA, her grandchildren, Zach Kolb, Stephanie Molash, Chase Knudson, Reagan Knudson, Jaiden Knudson, Faith Knudson, siblings, Gary (Terry) Craig of Houston, Roger (Jennifer) Craig of Alexandria, Vicki (Les) Hovrud of Madison, Becky (Todd) Sapp of Alexandria and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her brother, Scott Craig and her grandson, Matthew Knudson. Honorary Urn Bearer will be Challen Knudson.

www.paetznick-garness.com

Service Notice: Clarice Vergene Harrison

Clarice Vergene (Jean) (Moore) Harrison passed away July 17, 2024 at Silver Lace Memory Care by Primrose in Aberdeen, SD. A prayer service will be held on Friday July 26th from 5-8 pm at Spitzers Funeral Home in Aberdeen with the funeral on Saturday July 27 at 10:30 am at Aldergate Church in Aberdeen. The burial will follow Saturday afternoon at Oakes View Cemetary in Oakes, ND under the direction of Dahlstrom Funeral Home in Oakes, ND.

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BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

July 23, 2024 8:45 A.M.

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. Public Hearing for Temporary Alcohol (Malt Beverage) Permit in conjunction with a Special Event for Aberdeen Aqua Addicts
5. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Temporary Alcohol (Malt Beverage) Permit for Aberdeen Hockey Association for August 12-18, 2024 – Clubhouse at Brown County Fair
6. Approve FY2025 Provisional Budget – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Publication
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of July 16, 2024
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Claim Assignments
 - e. Set Hearing Date & Authorize Advertising for Temporary Malt Beverage Permit for SPURS
 - f. Set Hearing Date for Malt Beverage & SD Farm Wine License Transfers & Authorize Advertising
 - g. Set Hearing Date for Package (Off-Sale) Liquor Licenses & Authorize Advertising
 - h. Zoning Ordinance – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Advertising
 - i. Plats:
 - i. Preliminary Plat
 1. Johnson Airport Subdivision
 - ii. Final Plats
 1. Gengerke Richmond Lake Addition
 2. Haugen First Subdivision
 3. Palmyra Farmhouse Second Addition
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

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

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

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

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lincoln County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: 294th Street and 474th Avenue, five miles northeast of Beresford, SD

When: 5:45 a.m., Friday, July 19, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2019 Jeep Cherokee

Driver 1: 28-year-old male, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Vehicle 2: Volvo Semi

Driver 2: 74-year-old male, minor injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Lincoln County, S.D.- A 28-year-old man suffered fatal injuries this morning in a two vehicle crash five miles northeast of Beresford, SD.

The names of the people involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2019 Jeep Cherokee was traveling eastbound on 294th Street near 474th Avenue. At the same time, the driver of a Volvo Semi was traveling westbound on 294th Street. For an unknown reason, the Jeep crossed the center line into the westbound lanes and struck the semi head on.

The driver of the Jeep was not wearing a seatbelt and suffered fatal injuries. The driver of the semi sustained minor 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.

Names Released in Yankton County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 50, mile marker 375, seven miles west of Yankton, SD

When: 5:31 a.m., Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2008 Chevrolet Cobalt

Driver 1: Andrew Lee Kotalik, 30-year-old male from Yankton, SD, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Vehicle 2: 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt

Driver 2: Douglas Allen Zimmerman, 52-year-old male from Tabor, SD, life-threatening injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Yankton County, S.D.- A 30-year-old man suffered fatal injuries Tuesday morning in a two vehicle crash seven miles west of Yankton, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Andrew L. Kotalik, the driver of a 2008 Chevrolet Cobalt, was traveling westbound on SD Highway 50 near mile marker 375. At that location, a deceased deer was laying in the westbound roadway. Kotalik hit the deer, lost control of the vehicle, and entered the eastbound lane. At the same time, Douglas A. Zimmerman, the driver of a 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt, was approaching from the opposite direction and collided with Kotalik. Both vehicles came to rest in the south ditch.

Kotalik sustained fatal injuries from the crash. Zimmerman sustained life-threatening injuries. Both were wearing their seatbelts at the time of the crash.

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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2024 to Date Groton Building Permits Issued

K & K Pharis Real Estate, LLC, Remodeling 4 apartment units, 409 & 410 E 7th Ave, \$20,000.00
Greg Heilman, Office/Studio Apartment, 27 N Main, \$5,000.00
Ron Kroll, Replace Windows, 203 N 4th St, \$7,000.00
Brian Bahr, Drywall, 501 E 2nd Ave, \$8,000.00
Carol McFarland-Kutter, Bathroom remodel; replace doors and trim, 405 E 7th Ave, \$15,000.00
Patrick Foster, New shed, 1301 N 5th St, \$9,950.00
Matthew LaMee, Shed- gifted, 1502 N Broadway #15, \$-
Larry Remington, Shed-gifted, 406 N 5th St, \$300.00
Marc Johnson, Shingles, 503 E 6th Ave, \$18,000.00
Melanie Johnson, Shingles, 604 E 16th Ave, \$30,840.00
Ann Gibbs, Remodel bathroom, 406 E 9th Ave, \$8,000.00
Jay Johnson, Shingles, 504 e 6th ave, \$18,000.00
Ashley Foster, Shingles, 1301 N 5th St, \$15,000.00
Bruce Shilhanek, Shingles, 15 W 3rd Ave, \$11,069.00
Dale Ringgenberg, Move in Shed, 17 N 4th St, \$4,000.00
Open Heaven, Porch remodel, 502 N Broadway, \$4,000.00
Rodney Boehmer, Shingles, 908 N 4th St, \$17,500.00
Tim Berndt, Shingles, 101 W 5th Ave, \$11,700.00
Deb McKiver, Shingles, 1310 N 6th St, \$19,003.67
Doug Sombke, Shingles, siding, kitchen remodel, windows, doors, etc., 1102 N Main St, \$95,000.00
Shane Clark, Shingles, 506 W 3rd Ave, \$25,000.00
Jayme Boerger, Shingles, Siding, repair fence, 606 N 2nd St, \$25,500.00
Sarah Hofer, Shingles, 4 Seasons Room remodel, 911 N 5th St, \$40,000.00
William Gauer, Replacing Shingles and Gutters, 1304 N 5th St, \$15,000.00
Loren Bahr, Shingles, 300 N Broadway, \$13,000.00
Les Hinds, Shingles, 305 E 11th , \$18,000.00
Kasey Kurtz, Fence, replace door, 210 N Garfield, \$3,480.00
Steve Gebur, Shingles, 206 N Broadway, \$15,000.00
Lucas & Trish Pearson, Shingles, flooring, kitchen remodel, concrete, 1404 N 5th St, \$25,000.00
Jason Wambach, Shingles, 405 E 15th, \$14,845.70
Emily Sternhagen, Shingles, 504 E 14th Ave, \$40,000.00
Barry Smith, Shingles, , \$15,000.00
Dale Grenz, Shingles, , \$15,000.00
Brock Sandness, Shingles, , \$18,000.00
Jess Kroll, Chicken Coop, , \$2,000.00
Marie Sternhagen, Shingles, , \$15,011.34
Terry Merkel, Shingles, 9 E 11th Ave, \$15,000.00
Hector Hernandez, Chicken Coop, 1502 N Broadway #7, \$200.00
Pat Krause, Shingles, 505 E 8th Ave, \$14,811.42
Neil Warrington, Garage, 13424 Sunset Drive, \$50,000.00
Dave Blackmun, Shingles, 201 E 11th Ave, \$20,000.00
Dion Bahr, basketball hoop cemented in, 307 n 2nd st, \$360.00
Roger Spanier, Shingles and gutters, 1001 N 5th ST,
Bill Kurtenbach, Shingles, , \$9,600.00
Dan Schinkle, Shingles and door, 229 E 9th Ave, \$15,000.00
Jon Voss, Shingles, sunroom, 1501 N 6th St, \$60,000.00
David Blackmun Sr, Shingles, 402 E 7th Ave, \$25,000.00
Justin Cleveland, replacing garage door, 26 N 4th St, \$958.00

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Seth Erickson, Shingles and Siding, 902 N 3rd St, \$14,700.00
Doug Heinrich, replace bathroom fixtures; bi fold doors, 112 N 1st St, \$1,000.00
Travis Kurth, Shingles, 509 E 9th Ave, \$15,000.00
Neil & Connie Wagner, Raised Garden Bed, 425 E 3rd Ave, \$300.00
Don Kurtz, Repair Roof, 601 E 16th Ave, \$10,000.00
Stan Lietchi, Shingles, 603 E 16th Ave, \$15,000.00
Brad Waage, Shingles, 201 E 9th Ave, \$12,500.00
Ryland Strom, Shingles, 306 E 9th Ave, \$6,500.00
David Rice, Shingles and Gutters, 5 E 11th Ave, \$12,000.00
Lanace Hawkins, Shingles, 504 E 9th Ave, \$11,000.00
Andrew Kappes, Shingles, 304 N State St, \$8,000.00
Caralee Heitmann, Shingles, 1011 N 3rd St, \$21,222.88
Greg Heilman, Remove foundation, 105 N 5th St, \$150.00
Jamie Herron, Shed, 108 N 6th St, \$5,800.00
Kellie Locke, Shed, 208 N 5th St, \$200.00
John Wheeting, Shingles, 505 E 16th St, \$24,000.00
Karla Davidson, kitchen window, counter top, sink, 305 N 1st, \$2,500.00
Deb McKiver, New garage, 1310 N 6th ST, \$38,107.96
Bill Stolle, Shingles, 404 E 6th Ave, \$16,000.00
Craig & Jodi Sternhagen, Shingles, 1002 N Main Street, \$16,000.00
Jerry Peltier, Siding, 127 W 2nd Ave, \$1,161.15
Randy Stanley, Shingles, 403 E 6th Ave, \$15,000.00
Tom Papke, Shingles, 509 N 6th St, \$35,000.00
Jeff & LuAnn Steen, Shingles, concrete slab, 1303 N 5th St, \$11,863.00
Chad Locken, Shingles, 508 N Washington, \$20,000.00
Ella Johnson, Shingles, 903 n 2nd St, \$10,526.40
Robert Daly, Shingles, 405 E 6th Ave, \$7,500.00
Roger Berreth, 3 Seasons Room, 203 North 1st, \$700.00
Amanda Streeter, Deck, 24 n 5th st, \$720.00
Scott Althoff, Shingles and Gutters, 503 E 8th Ave,
Vance McInerney, 9x9 Patio, 113 N 1st St, \$1,000.00
Dale Ringgenberg, Tin Shingles, 17 N 4th St, \$3,500.00
Mitch & Heidi Locke, insulation and vent, 309 N 2nd St, \$1,000.00
Roger Rix, Shingles and patio extension, 1305 N 5th St, \$20,000.00
Jordan & Kayla Hitnz, Shingles, 1302 N 5th St, \$9,500.00
Kieth & Jeanette Hughes, Shingles, 1003 N 2nd St, \$20,000.00
Brad Larson, Shingles and Gutters, 1006 N 1st St, \$20,000.00
Brett Schwan, Porch Repair, 237 E 2nd Ave, \$750.00
Shirlee Frohling, Redo deck, cement work, 207 N Madison, \$4,000.00
Justin Olson, New Roof, 811 N 3rd St, \$13,850.00
Steve O'Neill, Replace deck floor & railer, 203 W 5th Ave, \$11,000.00
Angie Sombke, Shingles and Siding, 10 E 3rd Ave, \$7,000.00
Spencer and Kellie Locke, Entry way remodel, 208 N 5th St, \$200.00
Jarod and Kristie Flihs, Reshingle roof, 1103 n 3rd St, \$13,000.00
Jay Waage, Reshingle house, garage and shed, 1105 N 3rd St, \$15,000.00
Amber Daly, New Shingles, 1106 N Main St, \$14,536.02
Lorin Flihs, Shingles and gutters, 511 N 5th St, \$24,983.50
Kara Pharis, Siding and concrete driveways, 409 & 410 E 7th Ave Apts, \$35,000.00
Rick & Sherry Koehler, Shingles, 801 N 3rd St, \$30,000.00
Rathert Construction- N.Kotzer, Replacing Roof, 9 e 2nd ave, \$9,800.00

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Samantha Weber, New flooring; landscape, 204 N State St, \$15,000.00
Doug Hamilton, Replace siding on west side of porch, 411 N 5th St, \$400.00
Joe Foertsch, Add egress window and bedroom in shop, 602 E Railroad Ave, \$1,000.00
Melinda Eikamp, Shingles, gutters, repair siding, 306 N 1st St, \$25,000.00
Groton Vet Clinic, Replacing Roof, 1503 N Broadway, \$80,000.00
Beth Gustafson, Repair porch, lattice, 400 N Broadway, \$2,000.00
Dave & Mary Blackmun, Repair pavers, 402 E 7th Ave, \$25,000.00
Becky Clocksene, Demo house , 207 N Washington, \$4,500.00
Steven Smith, Remove shower; install tub, 1104 N Main St, \$1,000.00
Alex Hughes, Shingles, 712 N 2nd St, \$16,851.42
Marc Sippel, Shingles, 407 E 14th Ave, \$27,000.00
Groton School, Repair sidewalk, 502 N 2nd St, \$30,772.00
Scott Vedvei, Shingles, 607 N 1st St, \$16,000.00
Les Hinds, Replace front step and patio, 305 E 11th Ave, \$10,000.00
Paul Kosel, Shingles- garage, 110 N Washington, \$1,000.00

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Brand New Program at

15 N Main St. - Ste. 101
Downtown Groton

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



\$20 Monthly Membership

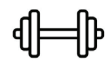
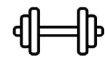
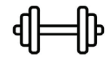
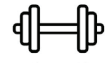
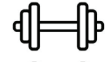
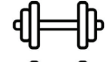
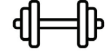
- ☞ for people 60 years of age and older
- ☞ for those who need equipment for physical therapy!



Downtown
Groton

24/7 access to the facility ~ Cancel any time

**Staying fit and practicing healthy nutrition
can be linked to benefits, such as:**

-  Reduced levels of stress and anxiety
-  Improved cognitive function
-  Increased energy levels and productivity
-  Controlled blood pressure
-  Better blood flow circulation
-  Strengthened bones and muscles
-  Reduced risk of heart disease and other illnesses

Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460

Call/Text Tina at 605-397-7285

South Dakota State Fair Announces Trash to Treasure Contest

HURON, S.D – The South Dakota State Fair is excited to invite people to share their creative talents by decorating trash cans at the South Dakota State Fair. Through Aug. 9, participants can pick up trash cans from the South Dakota State Fair office to paint with fair related, 4-H, FFA, or agriculture themes. First, second, and third place will be awarded with cash prizes.

“This is a fun way to brighten up the fairgrounds and keep our trash cans looking great, said State Fair Manager Peggy Besch. “We want people to have fun with it and are looking forward to seeing what participants come up with.”

The trash cans will be judged at the South Dakota State Fair on August 30, based on visual appeal and creativity. The first-place winner will receive \$100, second place will receive \$50, and third place will receive \$25.

Entries can be made as a group or individually. All entries must be entirely paint based. No paper or 3D art will be allowed. The trash cans must be returned to the South Dakota State Fair by August 16.

Official rules and the registration form can be found on the state fair website.

The 2024 South Dakota State Fair will run from Wednesday, Aug. 28, through Monday, Sept. 2. Channel Seeds opening day will be Wednesday, Aug. 28. For more information on State Fair events, contact the Fair office at 800.529.0900, visit www.sdstatefair.com or find them on Facebook, Instagram or X.

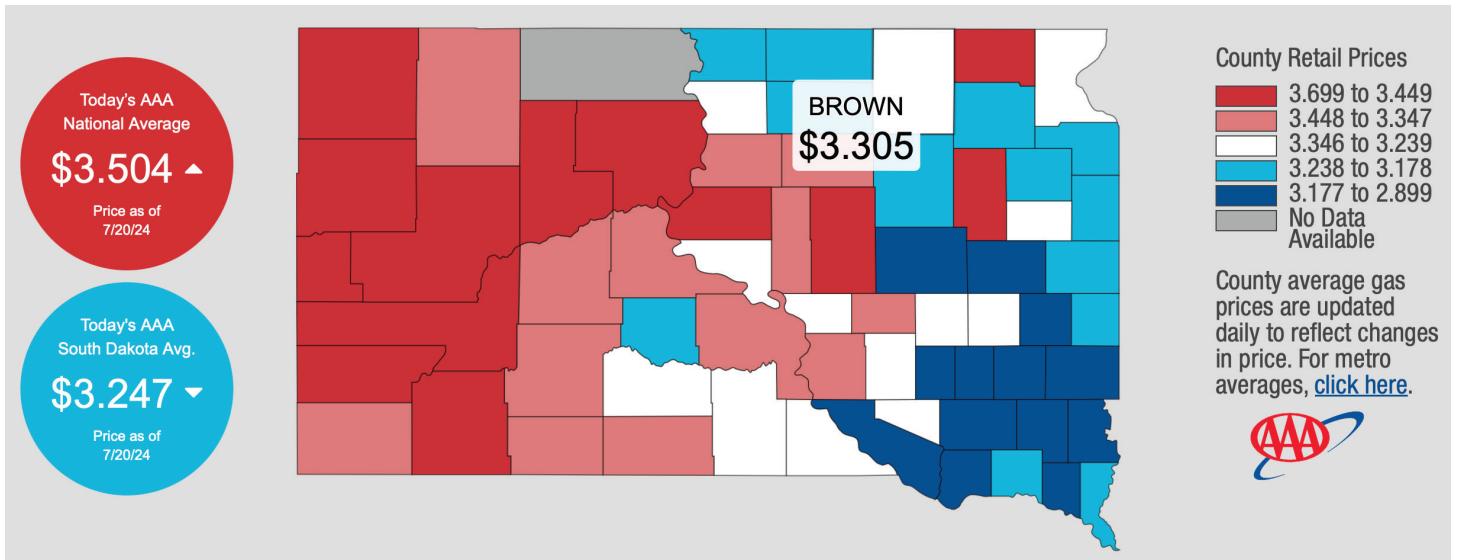
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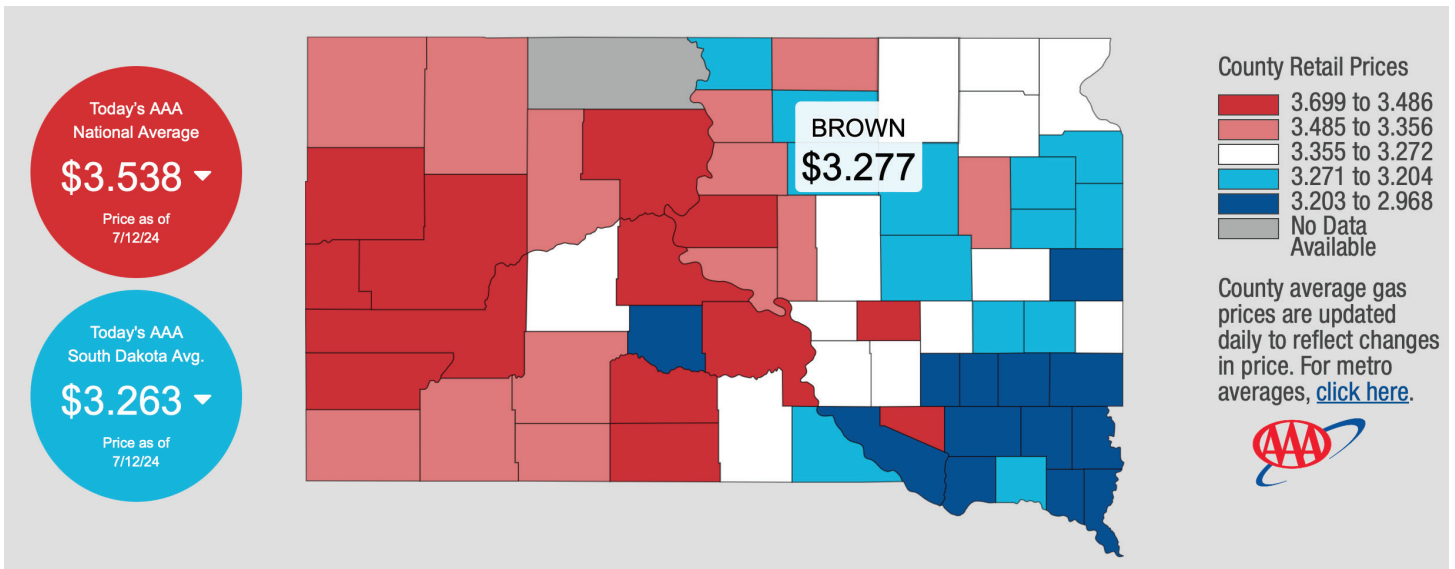
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.247	\$3.461	\$3.878	\$3.471
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.255	\$3.477	\$3.885	\$3.464
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.261	\$3.453	\$3.865	\$3.481
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.264	\$3.434	\$3.868	\$3.398
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.492	\$3.677	\$4.141	\$3.694

This Week



Last Week



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Drought Classification

None

D0 (Abnormally Dry)

D1 (Moderate Drought)

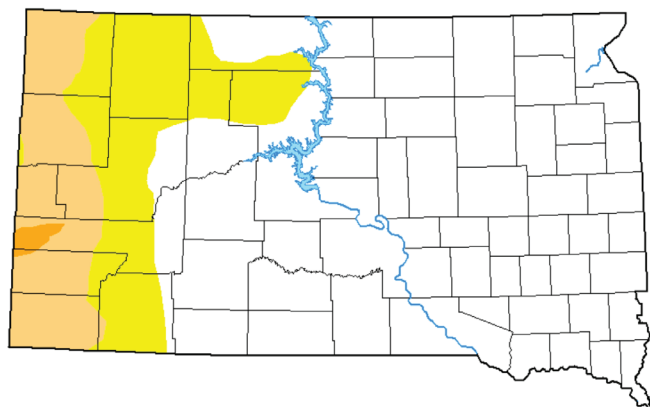
D2 (Severe Drought)

D3 (Extreme Drought)

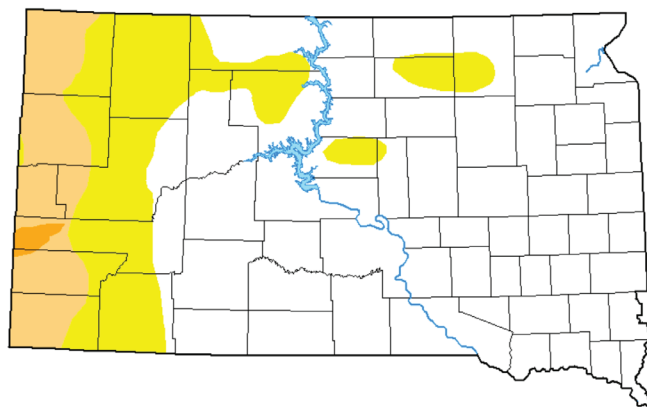
D4 (Exceptional Drought)

No Data

Drought Monitor



July 16



July 9

A few pockets of above-normal precipitation were recorded in northwest South Dakota and north central North Dakota as well as in areas of eastern Kansas at the end of the current period. Much of the rest of the region was dry or received minimal amounts of precipitation. Abnormally dry conditions were expanded in northwest and southeast Kansas as well as in eastern Colorado and western Nebraska. Moderate drought was introduced over eastern Colorado and expanded in northwest Nebraska and southwest South Dakota as well as in eastern portions of Wyoming. Moderate and severe drought expanded in central Colorado as the foothills remained dry. After several weeks of wet weather, some drying out is taking place in portions of the region, which is welcomed in some circumstances.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

McCook Lake catastrophe shatters complacency around old flood plans

Victims, scientists and researchers say changes in climate, land use and other factors need acknowledgment

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - FRIDAY JULY 19, 2024 2:43 PM

When a record-high surge of water flowed down the Big Sioux River toward the southeast corner of South Dakota last month, local and state authorities activated a flood mitigation plan from 1976.

It saved North Sioux City and Dakota Dunes from disaster. But their neighbors in McCook Lake suffered a graphic reminder of how different their community is today than it was 48 years ago.

"Back when there were a few little cabins on the lake that you could replace for \$20 apiece, and now there are little McMansions," said Jay Gilbertson, geologist and manager of the East Dakota Water Development District, based in Brookings.

He said it's time for an update.

"Most definitely. The idea that a plan drawn up back then would still be applied today is kind of silly."

Utilizing the existing plan, local and state authorities plugged the area under an Interstate 29 overpass with a sandbag-and-clay levee, to tie in with permanent levees that protect North Sioux City. The system diverted water toward McCook Lake, as intended.

But there was more water than anybody had ever seen before. Instead of causing a manageable rise in the lake, floodwaters slammed into dozens of homes, destroying around 30 of them and carving giant gouges in the land on the lake's north shore. Fortunately, nobody was killed.

Union County Emergency Management Director Jason Westcott said officials thought the plan would work as it had in the past. Now he says something needs to change.

"We're having a bad flood every four or five years," he said. "Our rivers are changing and us humans are doing something to them."



Damages remain visible in the McCook Lake community on July 3, 2024, after a massive flood hit the area on June 23. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Some researchers and scientists say the changes are due to a greater frequency of severe rainfall and shifts in land use. And they say mitigation plans have not kept up.

"There's no question about it," said Carter Johnson, distinguished professor emeritus of ecology at South Dakota State University. "Mitigation plans, building standards and regulations are based on the 20th century data, which made sense, but we're changing."

Mark Sweeney, an environmental science professor at the University of South Dakota, shares those concerns.

"Flood mitigation plans should never be considered static," Sweeney said. "River channels are in a constant state of change, meaning flood hazards are likely to change, especially over decades."

The recent flooding began when three days of heavy rainfall inundated southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota and northwest Iowa. The McCook Lake community did not anticipate the volume of water that overwhelmed some of their homes on June 23, according to Dirk Lohry, president of the McCook Lake Association.

But in hindsight, the disaster looks like another step in a progression of more frequent, more severe floods affecting the area during the past 15 years.

"I'm 1,000 years old," Lohry said. "I have now lived through two once-every-500-year floods."



Damages remain visible in the McCook Lake community on July 3, 2024, after a massive flood hit the area on June 23. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

A changing environment

Warning signs have been accumulating in recent years about changing river flows in eastern South Dakota. A U.S. Geological Survey report found a 298% increase in streamflow for the James River near Scotland, for example. The report says increases are linked to higher precipitation, urban development, tile drains used under farm fields, and grassland-to-cropland conversion.

The report found "a hydrologically unique trend in the eastern Dakotas that is not being observed anywhere else in the conterminous United States."

"Specifically, streams in the eastern Dakotas have experienced the greatest increases in streamflow during the last 60 years in comparison to any other USGS gaged stream in the United States."

When North Sioux City developed its flood mitigation plan almost five decades ago, the highest recorded flow rate of the Big Sioux River in the city was 77,500 cubic feet per second, according to a North Sioux City official who spoke during a July 1 city council meeting. The flow during the recent flooding overwhelmed stream gauges, reaching what some city officials estimated to be 170,000 cubic feet per second.

Severe floods across the Midwest are becoming more common, mostly due to a greater frequency of severe rainfall, said Jonathan Remo, a geologist at Southern Illinois University. He said the "once-every-500-year" title given to some floods is a probability based on historical data.

"But we're now seeing an unprecedented frequency of major precipitation events," Remo said. "Some-

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thing has fundamentally changed, and it's related, in part, to climate change."

Around the globe, large amounts of heat-trapping greenhouse gases are being emitted into the atmosphere. Warmer air holds more moisture, which, when it condenses, results in more intense precipitation.

The state climatologist at South Dakota State University, Laura Edwards, has been saying for years that South Dakota's climate is becoming wetter during wet cycles and drier during dry cycles, translating to more severe droughts and floods.

Carter Johnson, also of SDSU, has studied climate change for decades and said, "We're seeing changes at rates that have never been observed before."

He said South Dakota can fund better preparation and mitigation for natural disasters, or spend more on recovery.

"Taxpayers are paying for it either way," he said. "Insurance rates will continue to go up, natural disasters will continue to happen, and emergency response and cleanup is not cheap."

Land-use changes

USD's Sweeney said climate change is the biggest concern for the future, but added that changes to the landscape, like urban sprawl, are also contributing to worsening floods. He said water that would normally soak into the ground like a sponge, slowing its flow rate, now hits asphalt and runs right off.

"We have known for a long time that runoff from asphalt is faster than from grassland," Sweeney said.

Drain tile — perforated pipe installed under cropland to drain excess moisture — is another factor. When drain tile systems are installed, water that would otherwise accumulate in a field before absorbing into the ground or evaporating is instead channeled into ditches, creeks and rivers.

"Personally, I think tile drains are a slow-motion experiment we are playing," Sweeney said.

A 2014 study in Ohio found that tile drainage significantly contributed to the amount of water discharged in the watershed. In Iowa, 2016 research indicated that tile drainage significantly alters streamflow, contributing 30% more water to the observed streams during precipitation events.

Converting grasslands to cropland can also make flooding worse.

Meghann Jarchow, a USD professor of sustainability and grassland specialist, referenced a study showing grassland holds more water than cropland, with or without cropland drainage systems. Prairies have a thick layer of plant material that soaks up rain, which leads to less water draining away.

"We've changed so many things in our environment," she said. "Policies need to keep up."

Between 2008 and 2016, nearly 5 million acres of grassland were converted to cropland across 12 Midwestern states — including South Dakota — primarily for corn and soybean production, according to a 2021 study. That's the equivalent of about five Rhode Islands.

Solutions

For the residents of McCook Lake, one priority is clear: They want assurance that their homes will not be "sacrificed" again.

"They've got to change that plan," Dirk Lohry said.

McCook Lake residents called on North Sioux City officials to change the current mitigation plan during a July 1 meeting, suggesting a large ditch be built to direct water to nearby Mud Lake — which does not have a community surrounding it — rather than McCook Lake.

Jay Gilbertson thinks it's time those "once-every-however-many years" estimates get updated, partly because of how those odds drive design standards for infrastructure like waste management systems and dams.

"You might have to make a system able to handle a once every 50-year event based on historical records," Gilbertson said. "But 50 might not be 50, it might be 30."

He said those adjustments could help ensure dams and levees are being built for the environment of the 21st century and beyond, not the 20th.

Federal agencies and state and local governments are all responsible for updating design standards to

reflect current climate data.

Zoning laws could also be updated to illustrate flood zones more accurately, Gilbertson said, restricting development in high-risk areas, and ensuring adequate park and wetland space to help absorb floodwaters.

In 2020, State Climatologist Laura Edwards wrote about increased flood risks in South Dakota, highlighting how many properties are at greater risk than currently indicated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood plain maps. Multiple McCook Lake residents told South Dakota Searchlight they do not have flood insurance, because of the expense and because they're not in an area designated by FEMA as requiring it.

Sweeney said the accuracy of flood plain maps is critical, as are local government decisions about what development, if any, is allowed.

"We will never be able to eliminate flood hazards as long as the government allows people to build in flood plains," Sweeney said.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

'We have nothing': Flood victims say government failures continue after botched flood warning

Some residents lack flood insurance and are waiting for potential FEMA help

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - FRIDAY JULY 19, 2024 2:43 PM

McCOOK LAKE — Neither Morgan Speichinger nor many of her neighbors came away worried on June 23 after listening to Gov. Kristi Noem talk about flooding in the southeastern corner of South Dakota.

"Noem's press conference made it sound like it wasn't going to be bad for us," Speichinger said. "There was no talk of a massive flood coming our way."

Four hours later, Speichinger and her neighbors were fleeing for their lives, while Noem was at a political fundraiser in Tennessee, having flown out after her press conference in North Sioux City.

The floodwaters that slammed into the McCook Lake neighborhood destroyed and badly damaged dozens of homes, temporarily knocked out electricity, gas and water service, and carved deep gouges in the land.

Speichinger and some other McCook Lake residents say the effects of the botched warning have been exacerbated



Morgan Speichinger works to clean up her home near McCook Lake on July 3, 2024, after a June 23 flood. (Joshua

Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

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by a disorganized recovery effort and by Gov. Kristi Noem's decision not to dispatch the National Guard. "We have no idea what's coming next for us," said flood victim Nathaniel Cutsinger.

A press conference and a flight to Memphis

Authorities began expecting flooding as historic amounts of rain fell for three days, June 20-22, in south-east South Dakota, southwest Minnesota and northwest Iowa.

In the southeast tip of South Dakota, McCook Lake, North Sioux City and Dakota Dunes are situated alongside the Big Sioux and Missouri rivers, making the communities especially vulnerable.

At 11 a.m. on Sunday, June 23, the North Sioux City Council held an emergency meeting and activated a 48-year-old flood mitigation plan. The city got the state's blessing to close a section of Interstate 29 and build a temporary levee across it. The temporary levee plugged a gap in permanent levees that protect parts of North Sioux City and Dakota Dunes.

Noem led a press conference later that day in North Sioux City, beginning at 2:30 p.m., that focused on the construction of the temporary levee and a voluntary evacuation order that Dakota Dunes issued for its residents.

"Knowing that's where we're most vulnerable," Noem said at the time.

None of the local, state or federal authorities at the press conference clearly explained that the temporary levee was intended to direct Big Sioux River floodwaters toward McCook Lake, where the overflow would hopefully drain toward the Missouri River while causing minimal damage.

When somebody in the audience asked what McCook Lake residents should do, Noem said they should protect their personal property, "because we do anticipate that they will take in water."

"That's what we're preparing for," she said. "If we don't, then that's wonderful that they don't have an impact, but they could see water flowing into McCook Lake."

Noem shared projections during the press conference indicating the Big Sioux River in North Sioux City would peak at 42 feet by 1 p.m. the following day.

As the press conference concluded around 3 p.m., the crest projection had been updated to 42.3 feet by 7 p.m. that evening, and the projection continued to change as the situation worsened.

Sometime after the press conference, Noem flew to Memphis, Tennessee, where she was the featured speaker that evening at the Shelby County Republican Party's Lincoln Day Gala fundraiser. The event started at 6 p.m. Eastern, 5 p.m. Central.

Phone alerts fail to reach stunned residents

Based on what Speichinger heard from the afternoon press conference, which she'd streamed on her phone, she was comfortable allowing her kids to play at a neighbor's pool while authorities and contractors worked on the temporary interstate levee and after they completed it around 3:30 p.m.

"There were people still out in their boats on the lake as the flood was coming," Speichinger said. "Nobody had any idea. I didn't even know there was this diversion plan."

She had moved into her home on Penrose Drive near the lake in 2019. Some other lake residents also lacked knowledge of the plan to divert water to McCook Lake or were caught off guard by the severity of the flooding, including a few police officers in the neighborhood, according to residents.

Speichinger said a sudden gush of water flowed through her backyard around 7 p.m.

"People were running and screaming, 'Get out! Get out!'" she said.

Union County Emergency Management Director Jason Westcott said first responders, including two emergency rescue boat teams, conservation officers, law enforcement and firefighters were all on standby in case "the worst-case scenario happened."

"And that's what happened," he said.

Those first responders immediately began alerting residents to evacuate and performing rescues, Westcott said. He targeted an alert to the smartphones of residents along the north shore of McCook Lake at 8:21 p.m.

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"We were relying on other people to know about the issues going on," he said. "A lot of stuff was happening very fast."

Speichinger and some others said they didn't receive the phone alert.

"I've only heard of a few people who got that alert," Speichinger said. "It wouldn't have mattered anyway. The flood was here."

Wescott said the alert system has weaknesses. He said the area's poor cell service may have contributed to the problem, and some people may have disabled the location tracking on their phone.

"There are a million different ways you won't get one," he said of the alerts.

At 8:35 p.m., Westcott posted an urgent message to his office's Facebook page.

"EVACUATION NOTICEW NORTH SIOUX CITY / MCOOK LAKE AREA" the message said in bold and all-caps. **"RESIDENTS ON NORTH SHORE FROM EXIT 4 TO DAKOTA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - PLEASE EVACUATE!"**

Speichinger saw that message, although it has since been deleted from the page. Her webcam-enabled Ring Doorbell shows the water was about 3 feet high outside her home at 8:35 p.m.

Nathaniel Cutsinger was finishing up his shift at Dollar General in North Sioux City as water rushed into his home across the street from Speichinger's.

"There was absolutely no notice of anything that was going on," Cutsinger said.

When he got home, he waded into floodwaters to rescue his pets and an elderly neighbor.

"He was waiting at the window for someone to come," Cutsinger said of the neighbor.

They got into Cutsinger's Tahoe and drove down a flooded street until the vehicle stalled. Then they walked a few blocks in knee-high water to safety.

Emergency responders spent the night performing rescues, wading through knee-deep water, knocking on doors and shouting to alert residents, while others used boats to reach stranded families.

The Big Sioux River crested at 10:30 p.m., reaching a new record in North Sioux City of 44.98 feet after a 13.48-foot rise since 9:15 a.m.

Aftermath: 'We have nothing'

An estimated 30 homes at McCook Lake were destroyed and at least 100 damaged, though Wescott said those numbers are preliminary.

Some homes were ripped from their foundations, while others collapsed or suffered severe erosion around their perimeters. Washed-out roads were littered with debris, trees were ripped from the ground, and there were dozen-feet-deep gashes in the land. Electricity, gas and sewer services were disrupted.

"We have nothing," Cutsinger said several days after the flood. "We're not rich people. People on this street have put everything into these houses."

Problems continued after the floodwaters receded.

"The government response immediately after was terrible," Cutsinger said.

At press conferences during the days after the flood, reporters asked Noem why she didn't deploy the National Guard to help flood victims. She said no local officials requested it, and she also cited the expense of activating soldiers.

But during a July 1 public meeting, North Sioux City Mayor Patricia Teel said she did request the National Guard's assistance.

"I asked for them," Teel said. "I was told at first they were gone and 'we are sending extra law enforcement' instead."

The Highway Patrol provided additional security to keep people out of dangerous areas immediately after the flood. Some residents were frustrated that they weren't able to see or evaluate their homes, and authorities made them schedule appointments to be escorted into the neighborhood.

Mayor Teel did not respond to messages from South Dakota Searchlight. Westcott said Teel requested the Guard's help with security, but Westcott agreed with Noem that law enforcement was better suited to keep the area protected. He said a specific request for help with debris cleanup has to be made to get

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that help – something some residents say would have been useful.

North Sioux City hired a contractor, Blue Cell, to “help organize communications and operations,” according to the Governor’s Office. Additional contractors have been hired to help repair roads, electric distribution lines, and water and natural gas pipelines.

The contractors’ work has been limited to fixing public infrastructure, according to multiple lake residents. That has left residents to clean up their homes themselves, hire help, or wait for volunteers.

On July 3, volunteer Mary Lee Lazarowicz was spending the day removing soaked drywall from a basement. She said an apparent lack of organization, beyond the already stretched-thin local lake association, was leading to inefficient aid distribution.

“I have to think that if we had some kind of centralized command center for volunteers, I just wonder if things would be running a lot more smoothly,” she said.

Confronting the ‘harsh truth’

Ten years ago, the same levee plan was utilized in response to flooding. Then-Gov. Dennis Daugaard warned McCook Lake residents at a press conference that the plan meant the homes surrounding the lake would be in danger of flooding. He sent National Guard troops to Union County to assist in preparation and relief.

Gov. Noem’s spokesperson, Ian Fury, has repeatedly defended Noem’s actions in relation to the flood and the aftermath. Fury said in a written statement June 27 that all local emergencies are handled through the county emergency manager, with support and resources provided by the state when requested.

“Since the first forecast of significant rainfall coming to our area, Governor Noem and the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management started communicating with impacted counties to help them prepare,” Fury wrote.

He shared a document showing a series of projections from June 21 to 24. The modeling indicates how high and when the Big Sioux River was expected to crest. With each update, the water was expected to come sooner, and many updates included a higher crest.

One of the most dramatic changes to the projections occurred immediately after Noem’s press conference, Fury highlighted.

“Officials can only use the best, available data in decision making and warning processes,” the document reads. “Due to limited data, modeling showed that this was not going to be a historic flood event that it ended up being.”

But the claim that authorities didn’t foresee a “historic flood event” is contradicted by the data in Fury’s own document, which includes a projection from Friday night, June 21 — two days before the McCook Lake flood — already predicting that the Big Sioux River in Sioux City was headed for a record-high crest.

Westcott initially rejected claims that residents were not adequately warned, but later acknowledged to South Dakota Searchlight that residents were not given enough warning to prepare. He said authorities expected the flood mitigation plan to work as it had in the past, when McCook Lake was spared catastrophic damage.

“We did not know we had a 1,000-year flood coming at us. That was not part of the plan,” Westcott said. “That’s the hardcore truth of it.”

Westcott and Fury each said if the flood mitigation plan had not been utilized and the temporary levee had not been built, the flood would have overwhelmed North Sioux City and Dakota Dunes. They point to modeling showing just that.

Westcott said flood response work began immediately after residents were deemed safe. Those efforts included restoring water, electricity and gas services, working with the Red Cross to help flood victims, organizing volunteer and donation efforts, and bringing in emergency supplies.

During the July 1 public meeting, Mayor Teel read a statement to residents. She said her team was short-staffed and was not equipped to handle such a severe emergency; therefore, it relied on the state for help.

“We trusted the team that was provided by the state. By Thursday,” she said, referring to the fourth day

after the flood, "we knew that the help provided wasn't really helping us."

Teel said she requested more help and was advised to hire a contractor, which she did.

Residents at the meeting also shared frustrations.

"I think we deserve to know why none of you thought it was necessary to tell the residents this flood was coming," one said.

"What I'm disgusted with is the lack of response after it happened," said another, who added that bottled water didn't arrive until June 26.

"We had to run for our actual lives," another resident said. "My kids are having PTSD."

Some residents, including Cutsinger and Speichinger, do not have flood insurance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood maps do not require insurance in the neighborhood, and Cutsinger said the optional insurance would cost his family \$5,000 a year.

Noem is seeking flood recovery assistance from FEMA. Westcott hopes that effort will bring financial help to McCook Lake residents, but he doesn't know when it will happen, and he doesn't expect it to fully replace their losses.

"The program is only designed to get people on their feet again," he said. "That's the harsh truth."

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Democratic calls for a new nominee ramp up as Biden camp pledges to stay the course

BY: JACOB FISCHLER AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 19, 2024 4:21 PM

WASHINGTON — Ten more congressional Democrats called on President Joe Biden to drop his reelection bid Friday, the most in a single day since a poor debate performance shook confidence among his fellow Democrats in his ability to win November's election.

The 10 Democrats on Friday, the day after former President Donald Trump officially accepted his party's nomination at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, brought the total to 31, increasing the pressure on Biden to withdraw from the race.

While no member of congressional Democratic leadership has publicly called for Biden to step down, several top Democrats who were either involved with handling Trump's impeachment trials or with investigations into the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol have raised their concerns, citing the former president's threat to democracy.

California Rep. Adam Schiff, who was the lead impeachment manager in Trump's first impeachment trial, called on Biden to drop out, saying in a statement that he had "seri-



President Joe Biden speaks at the 115th NAACP National Convention at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center on July 16, 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada. It was Biden's last event before he left the campaign trail due to testing positive for COVID-19. (Mario Tama/

Getty Images)

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ous concerns” about the president’s ability to win a second term.

And Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, who was a member of the House Select Committee to Investigate the Jan. 6 Attack on the U.S. Capitol, stopped short of explicitly calling on Biden to step down, but urged the president to reconsider whether he should remain in the presidential race.

Biden remained at home in Delaware with no public events scheduled after testing positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday evening.

In an interview on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” early Friday, Biden campaign co-chair Jen O’Malley Dillon said the president remained “absolutely” in the race, even as a growing number of Democrats voiced unease about his ability to defeat Trump.

“Absolutely the president is in this race, you’ve heard him say that time and time again,” she said. “He is the best person to take on Donald Trump.”

But reports also surfaced Friday that Vice President Kamala Harris, a potential replacement for Biden if he takes the unprecedented step of withdrawing from a race less than four months from Election Day, was scheduled to speak by phone with top Democratic donors in the afternoon.

Harris did not respond to reporters’ questions at an appearance at a Washington ice cream shop Friday, according to a pool report.

And 10 more congressional Democrats, including more senior members than had previously broken ranks with the president, said Friday that Biden should step aside.

U.S. Rep. Sean Casten of Illinois wrote an op-ed in the Chicago Tribune.

Reps. Jared Huffman of California, Marc Veasey of Texas, Jesús “Chuy” Garcia of Illinois and Mark Pocan of Wisconsin wrote a joint open letter to Biden that they posted on social media.

The quartet represents important constituencies in the House Democratic Caucus.

Veasey is the first member of the influential Congressional Black Caucus, which has been among Biden’s staunchest Democratic backers, to join the call for him to step down. He is also a member of the moderate New Democrat Coalition.

Pocan is the co-chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus and a former chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Garcia is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich of New Mexico and Reps. Greg Landsman of Ohio, Zoe Lofgren of California also released their own statements. Betty McCollum of Minnesota told the Star Tribune newspaper she wanted Biden step aside and allow Harris to lead the ticket with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz as her running mate.

Rep. Morgan McGarvey, of Kentucky, posted a statement on X.

The calls came a day after Sen. Jon Tester, in a difficult reelection race in Montana, said in a statement to the Daily Montanan that Biden should withdraw.

Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts, who was one of few Democrats who called on Biden to step down two weeks ago, expanded on his view in an op-ed Friday.

Moulton wrote in the Boston Globe that when he went on a June trip to Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, the president didn’t recognize him, despite their decade-long relationship.

“Of course, that can happen as anyone ages, but as I watched the disastrous debate a few weeks ago, I have to admit that what I saw in Normandy was part of a deeper problem,” Moulton wrote. “It was a crushing realization, and not because a person I care about had a rough night but because everything is riding on Biden’s ability to beat Donald Trump in November.”

Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Ariana covers the nation’s capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

IT glitch causing delays in flights, business operations globally

BY: PAIGE GROSS - JULY 19, 2024 10:55 AM

Air travel, banking, media and hospital systems were just some of the industries affected by a bug in a software update that scrambled business operations for many globally on Friday.

Many of those who use Microsoft Windows are likely experiencing a "blue screen of death" or an error page. The issue is due to a single bug in a software update from cybersecurity company CrowdStrike, which provides antivirus software for Microsoft users.

The company pushed out an update to the software overnight, and at 1:30 a.m. EST, CrowdStrike said its "Falcon Sensor" software was causing Microsoft Windows to crash and display a blue screen, Reuters reported.

CrowdStrike President and CEO George Kurtz released a statement early Friday morning on X, saying that the incident was not a security concern or a cyberattack. He added that the issue has been identified and that the company has been deploying a fix.

"We refer customers to the support portal for the latest updates and will continue to provide complete and continuous updates on our website," Kurtz said.

The bug was causing major delays and cancellations at airports across the globe. Flight tracking data site FlightAware noted nearly 24,000 delays and 2,300 cancellations globally by 9:30 a.m. Friday. While some airlines have been able to resume operation of their digital systems, others are finding analogue solutions in the meantime.

The U.S. Department of Transportation said it was monitoring the situation and suggested those experiencing travel delays and cancellations to use its FlightRights.gov website to help navigate their delays in travel.

Some states' 911 and non-emergency lines were experiencing issues, including Alaska, Virginia and New Jersey.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy released a statement early Friday morning saying that the state had activated its State Emergency Operations Center in response to the disruptions and has provided guidance to other agencies about how to work through the situation.

"We are also engaging county and local governments, 911 call centers, and utilities to assess the impact and offer our assistance," he said.

Microsoft released a trouble shooting guide on X early Friday morning.

By 10 a.m. Friday, some global companies were seeing relief in their outages. Downdetector, which tracks real-time outages, showed companies like Visa, Zoom, UPS and Southwest Airlines gaining more normal operations than they were experiencing in the early morning hours.



Long queues of passengers form at the check-in counters at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, amid a global IT disruption caused by a Microsoft outage and a CrowdStrike IT problem on July 19, 2024, in Manila, Philippines. (Ezra Acayan/Getty Images)

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Speaking to the hosts of Today this morning, Kurtz said he was “deeply sorry for the impact we’ve caused to customers, to travelers, to anyone affected.” He said some customers have been able to reboot and are seeing progress getting online, and that trend will likely continue throughout the day.

Effects from the global IT outage Friday continued to be felt throughout the day, especially by government systems and transportation hubs.

Courts in Massachusetts and New York experienced disrupted service, as court transcription recording systems were not operational in some Massachusetts courthouses, the Associated Press reported.

The Texas Department of Public Safety, which runs its driver’s license offices, also closed their offices for the day, with “no current estimate” on when they will reopen.

Around 4 p.m. EST, Kurtz released more statements on X, reiterating that the outage was not a security breach.

“We understand the gravity of the situation and are deeply sorry for the inconvenience and disruption,” he said. “We are working with all impacted customers to ensure that systems are back up and they can deliver the services their customers are counting on.”

Kurtz said the company is working on a “technical update and root cause analysis” that they will share with customers, and shared a letter that was sent to customers and partners.

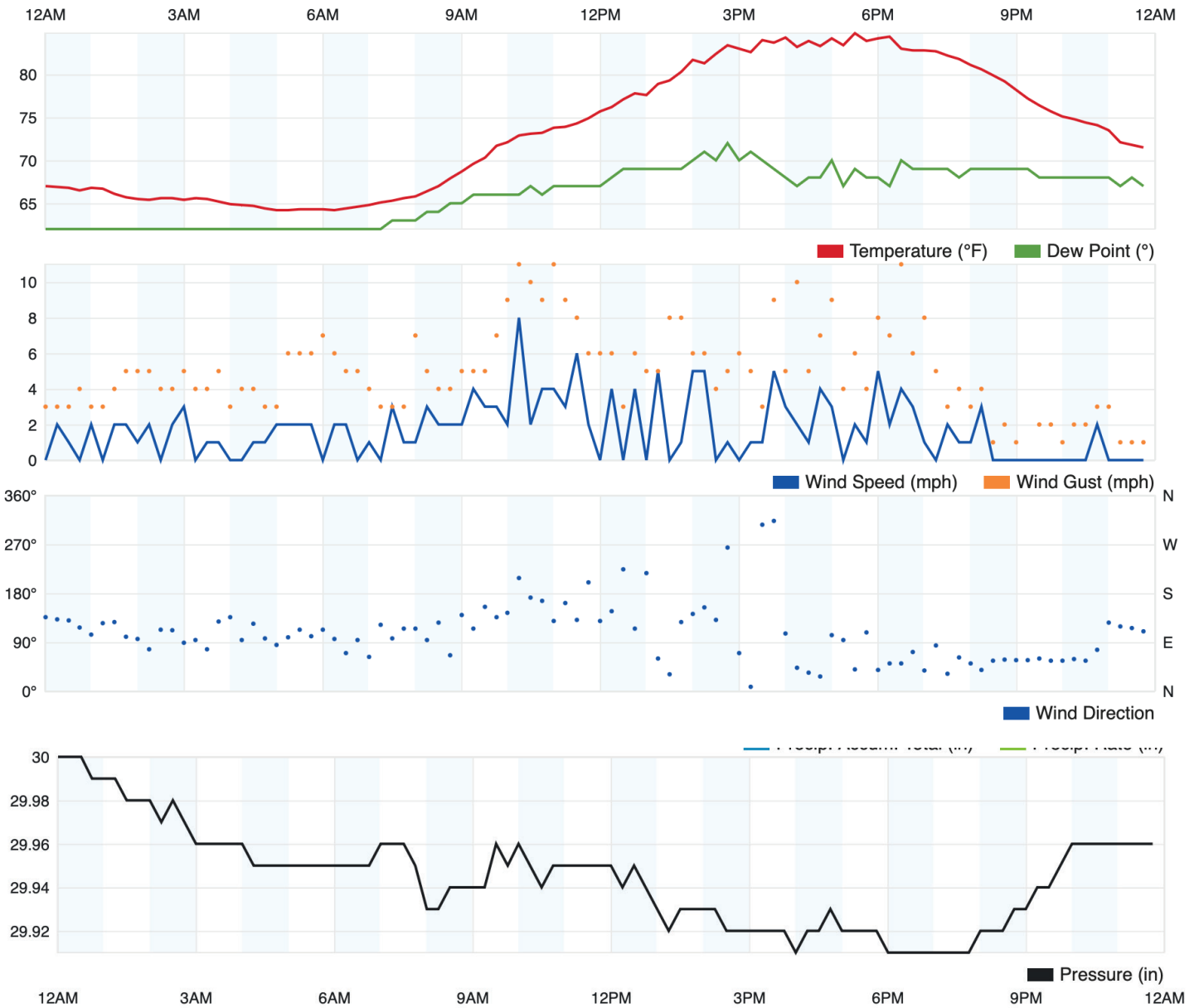
“We know that adversaries and bad actors will try to exploit events like this. I encourage everyone to remain vigilant and ensure that you’re engaging with official CrowdStrike representatives. Our blog and technical support will continue to be the official channels for the latest updates,” it said.

“Nothing is more important to me than the trust and confidence that our customers and partners have put into CrowdStrike. As we resolve this incident, you have my commitment to provide full transparency on how this occurred and steps we’re taking to prevent anything like this from happening again,” it continued.

Paige Gross is a Philadelphia-based reporter covering the evolving technology industry for States Newsroom. Her coverage involves how congress and individual states are regulating new and growing technologies, how technology plays a role in our everyday lives and what people ought to know to interact with technology.

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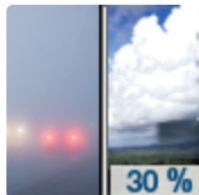
Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday Night

Monday



High: 86 °F

Patchy Fog
then Chance
Showers



Low: 63 °F

Chance
T-storms



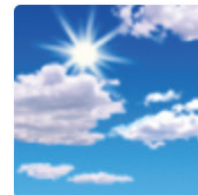
High: 83 °F

Chance
T-storms



Low: 62 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms



High: 84 °F

Mostly Sunny

Today



Small chances (20-30%) for
afternoon thundershowers

High Temperatures:

Low 80s - Upper 80s

Sunday



Scattered afternoon
thundershowers (40-50% chance)

High Temperatures

Low to Mid 80s

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

weather.gov/abr

July 20, 2024 4:47 AM

Warm temperatures can be expected today, with highs rising into the 80s for most locations. There is just a small chance (20-30%) for an afternoon thundershower, with most locations remaining dry. Winds will be light from the northeast. Sunday may bring slightly higher coverage of thundershowers across the region as highs once again rise into the 80s.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 5:30 PM

Low Temp: 64 °F at 5:00 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 11:02 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 12 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 111 in 1934

Record Low: 43 in 1970

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.18

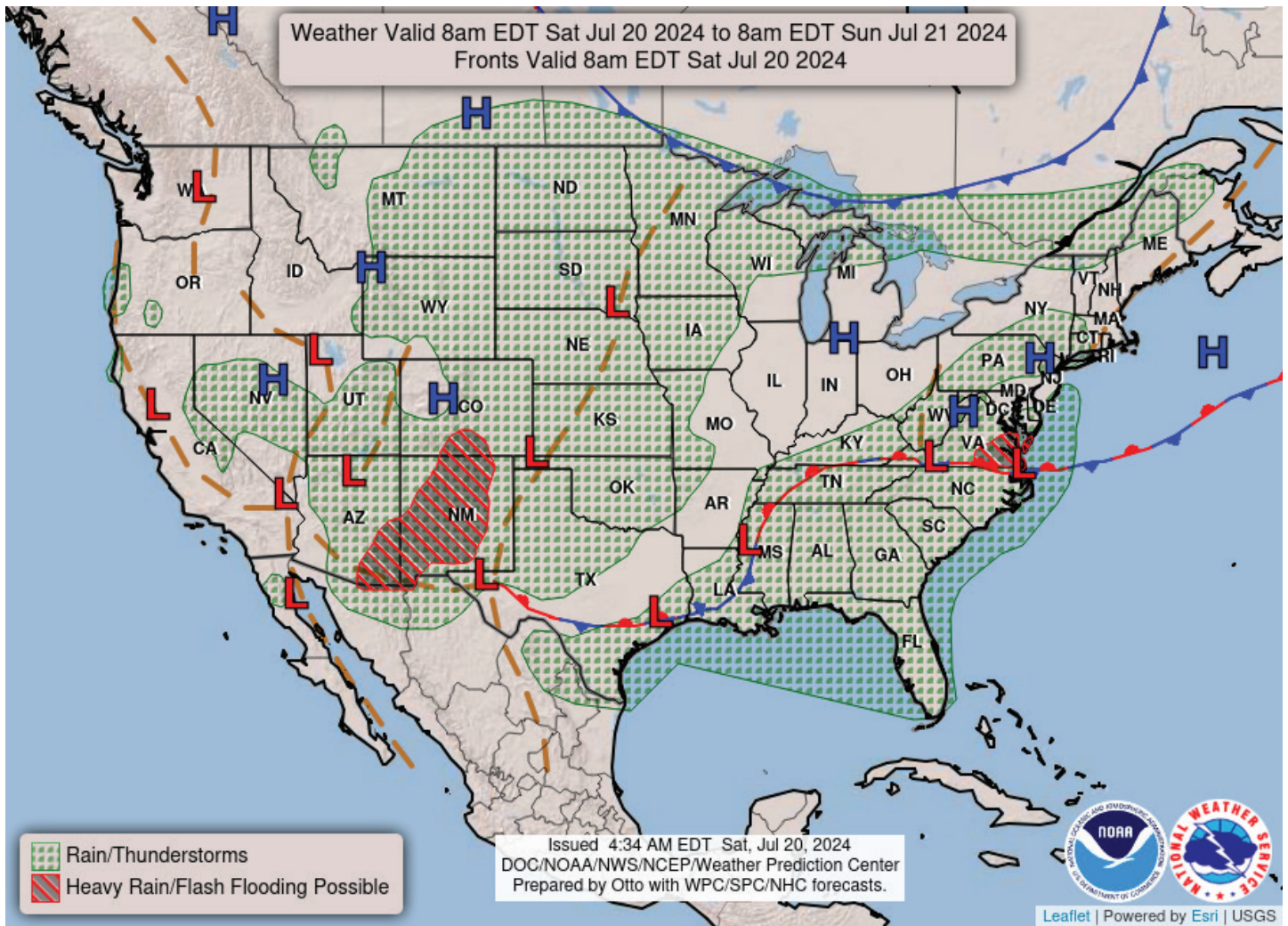
Precip to date in July: 3.56

Average Precip to date: 13.19

Precip Year to Date: 14.51

Sunset Tonight: 9:15:07 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03:35 am



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Today in Weather History

July 20, 1951: From the southeast residential section of Watertown, an estimated F2 tornado moved east, passing near Kranzburg and Goodwin. The storms destroyed one home and several barns.

July 20, 2002: A powerful severe thunderstorm moved over Rapid City and across the adjacent plains east of town. Downburst winds and the associated gust front caused damage along a nearly 30-mile long path. Extensive tree damage occurred throughout the eastern half of the city with countless trees and branches more than 24-inch diameter fell. Two roofs were torn off by the winds. Flying debris damaged numerous cars and buildings. The NWS office in downtown Rapid City measured an 80 mph wind gust, with meteorologists noting winds were sustained at 60 to 70 mph for 5 minutes. Ellsworth AFB wind equipment measured a 106 mph wind gust from the thunderstorm as it passed.

1915: A record high temperature of 115 degrees occurred in Yosemite Valley at the National Park Headquarters, California (around 4,000 feet elevation). This reading was the warmest day in a streak of 7 consecutive days of 110 degrees or higher at Yosemite Valley from the 19th through the 25th.

1930 - The temperature at Washington D.C. soared to an all-time record of 106 degrees. The next day Millsboro reached 110 degrees to set a record for the state of Delaware. July 1930 was one of the hottest and driest summers in the U.S., particularly in the Missouri Valley where severe drought conditions developed. Toward the end of the month state records were set for Kentucky with 114 degrees, and Mississippi with 115 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1934 - The temperature at Keokuk, IA, soared to 118 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1953 - Twenty-two inches of hail reportedly fell northeast of Dickinson, ND. (The Weather Channel)

1977: A flash flood hits Johnstown, Pennsylvania, on this day in 1977, killing 84 people and causing millions of dollars in damages. This flood came 88 years after the infamous Great Flood of 1889 that killed more than 2,000 people in Johnstown. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1986 - The temperature at Charleston, SC, hit 104 degrees for the second day in a row to tie their all-time record high. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 87 mph at Mosinee, WI, and strong thunderstorm winds capsized twenty-six boats on Grand Traverse Bay drowning two women. Thunderstorms produced nine inches of rain at Shakopee, MN, with 7.83 inches reported in six hours at Chaska, MN. Thunderstorms in north central Nebraska produced hail as large as golf balls in southwestern Cherry County, which accumulated to a depth of 12 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - The temperature at Redding, CA, soared to an all-time record high of 118 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms produced much needed rains from New England to southern Texas. Salem, IN, was deluged with 7.2 inches of rain resulting in flash flooding. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region soaked Wilmington, DE, with 2.28 inches of rain, pushing their total for the period May through July past the previous record of 22.43 inches. Heavy rain over that three month period virtually wiped out a 16.82 inch deficit which had been building since drought conditions began in 1985. Thunderstorms in central Indiana deluged Lebanon with 6.50 inches of rain in twelve hours, and thunderstorms over Florida produced wind gusts to 84 mph at Flagler Beach. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005: Hurricane Emily made landfall in northern Mexico. When the central pressure fell to 29.43 inches of mercury, and its sustained winds reached 160 mph on the 16th, Emily became the strongest hurricane ever to form before August, breaking a record set by Hurricane Dennis just six days before. It was also the earliest Category 5 hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic basin, beating Hurricane Allen's old record by nearly three weeks.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE VALUE OF HARD TIMES

My mother was a most wonderful Christian always teaching her children by example. She taught Sunday school, child evangelism classes, ladies Bible study groups and weekly prayer services for missionaries. Each Thursday was a day of fasting and prayer.

I remember overhearing her pray on one occasion. She was praying for her children: "Oh God," she cried, "don't ever let my children have an easy life. Let them experience sorrow and suffering, pain and problems."

That prayer shaped all of us children. It has given us a heart for the broken-in-heart. As a result of her prayers when we see the tears of others we want to dry their eyes because we can understand their pain. When others go through a time of grief, we can identify with them because we've been there. When others are in need, it motivates us to help them because we have been without. When we see the unsaved, we are encouraged to pray: Lord what can I do to win them to Christ.

We must also remember that Jesus went through these very same experiences. He was beaten and spit upon, abandoned and betrayed, went through hours of excruciating pain - even death itself. Now, in heaven He remembers these feelings and through His ever-sufficient grace gives us hope, help and healing.

Prayer: We are grateful, Father, that You know firsthand what we go through in the dark hours of pain and suffering which assures us of Your compassion and care. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields." Matthew 9:36-38



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: 07.19.24

10 17 23 50 67 3

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$279,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.17.24

6 9 15 44 49 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$5,370,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 21 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.24

4 7 20 26 34 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 36 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.17.24

16 20 21 24 25

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$41,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 36 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.17.24

3 24 49 56 60 17

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 5 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.17.24

24 27 32 47 66 26

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$91,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 5 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- 08/02/2024 Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party & Tour of Homes with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

News from the Associated Press

Bangladesh imposes strict curfew with a 'shoot-on-sight-order' following deadly protests

By JULHAS ALAM and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Police imposed a strict curfew with a "shoot-on-sight" order across Bangladesh as military forces patrolled parts of the capital Saturday after scores were killed and hundreds injured in clashes over the allocation of civil service jobs.

The curfew began at midnight and was relaxed from noon to 2 p.m. for people to run essential errands, and is expected to last until 10 a.m. Sunday, allowing officers to fire on mobs in extreme cases, said lawmaker Obaidul Quader, the general secretary of the ruling Awami League party.

The demonstrations — called for mainly by student groups— started weeks ago to protest a quota system that reserves up to 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. Violence erupted Tuesday, with the Daily Prothom Alo newspaper reporting the death of at least 103 people.

Friday was likely to be the deadliest day so far; Somoy TV reported 43 killed, while an Associated Press reporter saw 23 bodies at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, but it was not immediately clear whether they all died on Friday. On Thursday, 22 others were reported dead as protesting students attempted to "completely shut down" the country.

The United States Embassy in Dhaka said Friday that reports indicated "hundreds to possibly thousands" were injured across Bangladesh. It said the situation was "extremely volatile."

Bangladeshi authorities haven't shared any official numbers of those killed and injured.

Officials said the curfew was to quell further violence after police and protesters clashed in the streets and at university campuses in Dhaka and other cities across the South Asian country. Authorities blocked online communications by banning mobile and internet services. Several television news channels also went off the air, and the websites of most local newspapers were down. Meanwhile, some key government websites, including Bangladesh's central bank and the prime minister's office, appeared to have been hacked and defaced.

Local media also reported that some 800 inmates fled from a prison in Narsingdi, a district north of the capital, after protesters stormed the facility and set it on fire Friday.

The chaos highlights cracks in Bangladesh's governance and economy and the frustration of youths who lack good jobs upon graduation. They also represent the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since she won a fourth consecutive term in office after January's elections, boycotted by the main opposition groups.

Protesters argue the quota system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, saying it should be replaced with a merit-based system. Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions in the war against Pakistan, regardless of their political affiliation.

Representatives from both sides met late Friday in an attempt to reach a resolution. At least three student leaders were present and demanded the reform of the current quota system, the reopening of student dormitories shut by the police following the clashes and for some university officials to step down after failing to protect campuses from the violence. Law Minister Anisul Huq said late Friday the government was open to discussing their demands.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has backed the protests, vowing Friday to organize its own demonstrations as many of its supporters joined the students' protests. However, BNP said in a statement its followers were not responsible for the violence and denied the ruling party's accusations of using the protests for political gains.

The Awami League and the BNP have often accused each other of fueling political chaos and violence, most recently ahead of the country's national election, which was marred by a crackdown on several opposition figures. Hasina's government had accused the opposition party of attempting to disrupt the vote.

In 2018, the government halted the job quotas following mass student protests. But in June, Bangladesh's High Court nullified that decision and reinstated the quotas after relatives of 1971 veterans filed petitions. The Supreme Court suspended the ruling, pending an appeal hearing, and said in a statement it will take the issue up Sunday.

Hasina has called on protesters to wait for the court's verdict.

11 dead and dozens missing after a highway bridge in China crumbles in flooding and heavy storms

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Chinese authorities say at least 11 people have died and 30 are missing in the partial collapse of a highway bridge in the northwest of the country following heavy storms and flooding. A similar number are missing in the southwest after dozens of houses were destroyed by storms.

The official Xinhua News Agency said five vehicles that fell off the bridge have been recovered after the structure in Shaanxi province crumbled at around 8:40 p.m. Friday. A photo released by Xinhua showed a section of the bridge snapped and folded down at almost a 90-degree angle into the rushing brown water below.

It said rescue operations were still underway Saturday in the province's Zhashui county, with some 20 cars and 30 people still missing.

In Sichuan province to the southwest, an estimated 30 people were missing and around 40 houses wrecked in flooding and storms, Xinhua reported. It said roads, bridges and communication networks in hardest hit Hanyuan county had been damaged or knocked out and that rescue teams had been working since before dawn to restore communications and transport connections.

As its economy boomed over recent decades, China built a huge network of highways, high-speed railways and airports, most of which have helped fuel further growth.

However, a dramatic decline in that economic expansion, the poor-quality infrastructure, poor safety supervision and a desire to cut corners by industries looking to save money have led to a steady stream of deadly accidents.

China's western and southwestern provinces are particularly prone to flooding and landslides due to their mountainous landscapes and the powerful rivers that run through them. Mining, tourism and rising urbanization have also disturbed a precarious balance with the natural environment that had been sustained over thousands of years.

Shaanxi is best known as one of the fulcrums of Chinese civilization, from which emerged the first emperor, Qinshi Huangdi, who left the famed terracotta army as his legacy outside the capital Xi'an as part of a vast tomb complex that attracts massive numbers of visitors each year.

Longtime US Rep Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, who had pancreatic cancer, has died

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

Longtime U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, who helped lead federal efforts to protect women from domestic violence and recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday, has died. She was 74.

Lillie Conley, her chief of staff, confirmed that Jackson Lee, who had pancreatic cancer, died in Houston Friday night with her family around her.

The Democrat had represented her Houston-based district and the nation's fourth-largest city since 1995. She had previously had breast cancer and announced the pancreatic cancer diagnosis on June 2.

"The road ahead will not be easy, but I stand in faith that God will strengthen me," Jackson Lee said in a statement then.

Bishop James Dixon, a longtime friend in Houston who visited Jackson Lee earlier this week, said he will remember her as a fighter.

"She was just a rare, rare jewel of a person who relentlessly gave everything she had to make sure others had what they needed. That was Sheila," he said.

Jackson Lee had just been elected to the Houston district once represented by Barbara Jordan, the first

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Black woman elected to Congress from a Southern state since Reconstruction, when she was immediately placed on the high-profile House Judiciary Committee in 1995.

"They just saw me, I guess through my profile, through Barbara Jordan's work," Jackson Lee told the Houston Chronicle in 2022. "I thought it was an honor because they assumed I was going to be the person they needed."

Jackson Lee quickly established herself as fierce advocate for women and minorities, and a leader for House Democrats on many social justice issues, from policing reform to reparations for descendants of enslaved people. She led the first rewrite of the Violence Against Women Act in nearly a decade, which included protections for Native American, transgender and immigrant women.

Jackson Lee was also among the lead lawmakers behind the effort in 2021 to have Juneteenth recognized as the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established in 1986. The holiday marks the day in 1865 that the last enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas, finally learned of their freedom.

A native of Queens, New York, Jackson Lee graduated from Yale and earned her law degree at the University of Virginia. She was a judge in Houston before she was elected to Houston City Council in 1989, then ran for Congress in 1994. She was an advocate for gay rights and an early opponent of the Iraq War in 2003.

Top congressional Democrats reacted quickly to the news Friday night, praising her commitment and work ethic.

Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina called her "a tenacious advocate for civil rights and a tireless fighter, improving the lives of her constituents."

Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland said he had never known a harder-working lawmaker than Jackson Lee, saying she "studied every bill and every amendment with exactitude and then told Texas and America exactly where she stood."

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California cited Jackson Lee's "relentless determination" in getting Juneteenth declared a national holiday.

"As a powerful voice in the Congress for our Constitution and human rights, she fought tirelessly to advance fairness, equity and justice for all," Pelosi said.

Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said he and his wife Cecilia will always remember Jackson Lee, calling her a "tireless advocate for the people of Houston."

"Her legacy of public service and dedication to Texas will live on," he said.

Jackson Lee routinely won reelection to Congress with ease. The few times she faced a challenger, she never carried less than two-thirds of the vote. Jackson Lee considered leaving Congress in 2023 in a bid to become Houston's first female Black mayor but was defeated in a runoff. She then easily won the Democratic nomination for the 2024 general election.

During the mayoral campaign, Jackson Lee expressed regret and said "everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect" following the release of an unverified audio recording purported to be of the lawmaker berating staff members.

In 2019, Jackson Lee stepped down from two leadership positions on the House Judiciary Committee and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the fundraising of the Congressional Black Caucus, following a lawsuit from a former employee who said her sexual assault complaint was mishandled.

In a statement, Jackson Lee's family said she had been a beloved wife, sister, mother and grandmother known as Bebe.

"She will be dearly missed, but her legacy will continue to inspire all who believe in freedom, justice, and democracy," the statement said. "God bless you Congresswoman and God bless the United States of America."

Indonesian women assert themselves with martial arts as gender-based violence remains a challenge

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An emotionally and physically abusive marriage of 11 years led Rani Miranti to join a fight club that has trained her in martial arts, enabling her to stand up against violence.

Miranti is one of the growing number of Indonesian women who are taking self-defense classes as gender-based violence remains a challenge in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

"Government protection usually comes after violence has happened, while we never know when it will come," said the 38-year-old single parent of three children. "Unfortunately, when it suddenly comes, no one can help. So, we need to have self-defense capabilities."

The National Commission on Violence Against Women, known as Komnas Perempuan, recorded 289,111 cases last year, a decrease of around 12% from 339,782 in 2022, the year when a law on sexual violence was enacted.

However, the commission suggested the latest data represents "a tip of the iceberg" in gender-based violence. The true number of cases is suspected to be significantly higher, it said in the 2023 Komnas Perempuan annual report released in March.

A large number of cases went unreported because of several factors: limited access for victims to complaint services, a weak case documentation system, and a high level of social stigma toward victims of violence, the report said.

Indonesia's Parliament approved a far-reaching law in 2022 that sets punishment for sexual violence and guarantees provisions, restitution or other remedies for victims and survivors.

The law was passed a week after an Indonesian high court sentenced an Islamic boarding school principal to death for raping at least 13 students over five years and impregnating some of them. The girls were between 11 and 14 years old and were raped over several years, drawing public outcry over why he wasn't caught earlier.

In July, Indonesia's electoral commission fired its chair after finding him guilty of sexual assault following a complaint by an employee. It was the latest in a series of the country's high-profile cases of violence against women in a vast archipelago nation of more than 277 million people.

With cases growing, more Indonesian women and girls who feared physical violence turned to alternative ways of ensuring their safety, including self-defense classes and clubs.

For Miranti, whose husband repeatedly attacked and physically abused her, Muay Thai is the most suitable self-defense, as it helps her gain more skills, self-confidence and prevention techniques.

Wearing a red hijab and boxing gloves, the teacher in a Jakarta Islamic primary school demonstrated her skill in pounding a heavy bag and kicking toward her sparring partner. It's part of her training routine in a mixed martial arts course in eastern Jakarta, where she enrolled almost two years ago after she decided to get out of her abusive marriage in 2018.

With origins in Thailand, Muay Thai is a form of kickboxing that includes knee and elbow strikes, kicks and punches.

"Now, I have a way. ... I have the skill to fight back," Miranti said. "But even more importantly, I have learned to avoid situations by being more aware of my surroundings."

Miranti's female coach, Rahimatul Hasanah, said she was overwhelmed by the increasing demand of women who want to learn martial arts, especially in private training, as female Muay Thai instructors are hard to find.

"Many aren't going to feel comfortable to be coached by male instructors, or need a private class at home," she added.

She said that most of the women who have attended her self-defense classes are timid, with some experiencing abuse in the past.

"Learning physical self-defense not only gives the tools to control their reactions to negative situations, but also can build the confidence for mental defense too," Hasanah said.

Her husband, professional MMA fighter Rizal Zulmi, said the rising trend of women who are learning martial arts shows abusers and criminals that "not all women are easy prey."

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The pair of martial arts coaches opened BKT Fight Club three years ago with around 40 students. "Combat sports have recently become popular among women," said Zulmi, who won at least 30 medals at regional, national and international levels. "They need this kind of martial arts for self-defense amid rampant crimes that happened to women."

Rangi Wirantika Sudrajat, another Indonesian woman who was taking the MMA class, said physical training in martial arts has contributed most to her duties as a general practitioner at the Medecins Sans Frontières, widely known as Doctors Without Borders.

The 31-year-old doctor has been deployed to several refugee camps in Pakistan, Yemen, South Sudan, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone. She said that martial arts not only builds her self-confidence and physical strength, but also serves as stress management.

"I can channel all my pent-up emotions, anger and sadness in healthy way through Muay Thai," she said. Andy Yentriyani, the chief commissioner of the National Commission on Violence Against Women, welcomed the phenomenon of more women participating in self-defense classes.

"This is of course very important, because sometimes there are many victims who are so shocked that they cannot have any response to what happened to them," Yentriyani said. "And when they realize, it can be too late or can be a very long process."

Among the recorded types of violence that occurred in private spaces are attempted rape, marital rape, forced abortion and incest. The majority of victims were students between the ages of 18 and 24 years, while the majority of reported perpetrators were their former or current male partners.

Almost all the victims were younger and had a lower level of education than their perpetrators, indicating that violence against women often involved a power imbalance, Yentriyani said.

She said that more people had reported sexual harassment in 2023, a year after the sexual violence law was enacted. Her commission received almost 800 reports on online and physical sexual harassment last year, around four times the 200 reported rape cases it received over the same period.

"Many in our society still consider sexual violence cases to be something disgraceful and embarrassing for female victims," Yentriyani said, and many families then decide not to report it. "We still often see situations of silencing victims, including violence against wives."

Trump returns to the campaign trail in Michigan with new running mate by his side

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Republican Donald Trump on Saturday will hold his first public campaign rally since he was injured in an assassination attempt, with an event in the battleground state of Michigan alongside his new running mate.

The joint rally with Ohio Sen. JD Vance is the first for the pair since they officially became the GOP's nominees at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. Trump kicked off the gathering of Republicans by naming Vance his vice presidential pick, and concluded it with a speech urging unity following a July 13 shooting in Pennsylvania that left Trump with a bloodied ear and resulted in one fatality.

"I am running to be president for all of America, not half of America, because there is no victory in winning for half of America," Trump said Thursday night in what was the longest convention speech in modern history at just under 93 minutes.

Michigan is one of the crucial swing states expected to determine the outcome of the presidential election. Trump narrowly won the state by just over 10,000 votes in 2016, but Democrat Joe Biden flipped it back in 2020, winning by a margin of 154,000 votes on his way to the presidency. With Vance by his side, Trump will deliver remarks in Grand Rapids, a historically Republican stronghold that has trended increasingly blue in recent elections.

Trump's choice of Vance was seen as a move to gain support among so-called Rust Belt voters in places like Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio who helped Trump notch his surprise 2016 victory. Vance specifically mentioned those places during his acceptance speech at the RNC, stressing his roots growing up poor in small-town Ohio and pledging not to forget working-class people whose "jobs were sent

overseas and children were sent to war.”

Democrats have dominated recent elections in Michigan, but Republicans now see an opening in the state as Democrats are increasingly divided about whether Biden should drop out of the race. Biden has insisted he is not dropping out, and has attempted to turn the focus back towards Trump, saying Friday that Trump’s acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention showcased a “dark vision for the future.”

The 81-year-old Democratic incumbent, who appeared in Detroit last week, is currently isolating at his beach home in Delaware after being diagnosed with COVID-19.

Grand Rapids is the largest city in Kent County, one of three Michigan counties that Trump won in 2016 but Biden flipped in 2020. It’s also an area where Nikki Haley secured a substantial number of votes in the Republican primary in February, a group of voters that both presidential campaigns are now hoping to pick up.

U.S. Rep. Hillary Scholten, a Democrat representing Grand Rapids, is among the growing number of lawmakers calling on Biden to step aside after a disastrous debate performance.

In a California gold rush town, some Black families are fighting for land taken from their ancestors

By SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press/Report for America

COLOMA, Calif. (AP) — In a tiny town where the California gold rush began, Black families are seeking restitution for land that was taken from their ancestors to make way for a state park now frequented by fourth graders learning about the state’s history.

Their efforts in Coloma, a town of around 300 people that’s located about 36 miles (58 kilometers) northeast of Sacramento, are one of the latest examples of Black Americans urging the government to atone for practices that have kept them from thriving long after chattel slavery was abolished.

Debates over reparations for African Americans often come back to land. That was at the center of a promise originally made — and later broken — by the U.S. government to formerly enslaved Black people in the mid-1800s: Give them up to 40 acres (16 hectares) of land as restitution for their time enslaved. For some, the promise of reparations has been nothing more than Fool’s gold, epitomized by a bill in Congress that’s stalled since it was first introduced in the 1980s, even though it’s aimed at studying reparations and named after the original promise.

The fight in Coloma is taking place in a state where the governor signed a first-in-the-nation law to study reparations. But advocates are pushing for the state to go further.

Gold was found near Coloma in 1848 by James W. Marshall, a white carpenter, setting off the California gold rush that saw hundreds of thousands of people from across the nation and outside of the U.S. come — or be brought — to the state. Those who migrated included white, Asian, and free and enslaved Black people.

Decades later, Black and white families had their land taken by the government in the town before it was turned into the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, which opened in 1942. The park today is home to a museum, churches and cemeteries where residents were buried. A nearly 42-foot (13-meter) monument of Marshall stands on its grounds.

But the history of Black families who settled in Coloma only recently started getting increased recognition. California State Parks launched an initiative in 2020 to reexamine its past and to tell “a more thorough, inclusive, and complete history” of California, department spokesperson Adeline Yee said in an email to The Associated Press. The department created a webpage with information about properties owned by Black families at the park in Coloma.

Elmer Fonza, a retiree who worked at a brewery in California before eventually relocating to Nevada, said he is the third-great grandson of Nelson Bell, a formerly enslaved Black man from Virginia who became a property owner in Coloma.

After Bell’s death in 1869, a judge determined he had no heirs in the state, and his estate was sold at an auction, according to a probate document shared by the El Dorado County Historical Museum.

It is unclear what happened to Bell’s property in the years that followed, Fonza said, adding that the

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land should be returned to his family.

"We rightfully believe that we have been denied the generational wealth that our family may have been entitled to if given our rightful inheritance — the land once owned by Nelson Bell," he said at the final meeting of a first-in-the-nation state reparations task force.

Nancy Gooch, a Black woman, was brought to Coloma from the South in 1849 by a white man who enslaved her and her husband. Gooch was soon freed when California became a state and worked as a cook and cleaned laundry for miners. She later brought her son, Andrew Monroe, from Missouri to join them in the town. The Monroe-Gooch family would become one of the most prosperous Black landowners in California.

"We have to bring forth the truth, because that's reconciliation," said Jonathan Burgess, a Sacramento resident who co-owns a barbecue catering business, and who also is claiming land in Coloma was that of his descendants. "And then once we bring forth the truth, which I've been doing in speaking the whole time, we've got to make it right."

Making it right would mean compensating families for land that can't be returned or returning property where possible, Burgess said in an interview at the park. He said he is descended from Rufus Morgan Burgess, a Black writer who was brought to Coloma with his father, who was enslaved.

Jonathan Burgess also said his family is descended from Bell, but the Fonza and Burgess families say they are not related to each other. The discrepancy highlights the difficult work that could be ahead for Black residents if California ever passes reparations legislation requiring families to document their lineage.

Cheryl Austin, a retiree living in Sacramento, said she is an heir of John A. Wilson and Phoebe Wilson, a free, married Black couple who came to Coloma during the late 1850s. After John and Phoebe Wilson died, their property was sold through probate, Austin said. The state must somehow repair harm done to families whose property was seized, she said.

The restitution fight in California comes as lawmakers are weighing reparations proposals in the state Legislature. That includes a bill to create the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency, which would help Black residents research their family lineage. Another proposal would make any families whose land was seized unjustly by the government due to racially discriminatory motives entitled to the return of the property or compensation.

The legislation, which is expected to be voted on this summer, reflects a growing push for restitution by Black families targeting the misuse of a practice known as eminent domain, where the government must pay people fairly for property it plans to make available for public use. The issue garnered attention across the state when local officials in Los Angeles County returned a beachfront property in 2022 to a Black couple, nearly a century after it was taken by the government from their ancestors.

Earlier this month, California marked a milestone when Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom included \$12 million in the state's 2024 budget to spend on reparations legislation. But the budget does not specify what the money would be used for, and estimates from the state say the bills could cost millions of dollars annually.

State Sen. Steven Bradford, a Los Angeles-area Democrat who authored the proposals, said they will help the state atone for taken land, adding that land ownership is critical to building general wealth.

"Reparations was never about a check," Bradford said. "It was about land."

Biden's ability to win back skeptical Democrats tested at a perilous moment for his campaign

By LISA MASCARO and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite a week of campaign stops, interviews and a determined insistence he is the best candidate to confront Republican Donald Trump, President Joe Biden's efforts to revive his reelection bid and win over skeptical Democrats have done little to soften the push for him to exit the 2024 race.

Biden has weighty options before him this weekend that could set the direction of the country and his party as the nation heads toward the November election with an energized GOP after the Republican nominating convention to send Trump back to the White House.

Almost 35 Democrats in Congress say it's time for Biden to step aside — 12 coming forward on Friday

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alone — with more lawmakers expected to speak out in the days ahead. Donors have raised concerns. And an organization called Pass the Torch, Biden is planning a rally Saturday at the White House.

"There is no joy in the recognition he should not be our nominee in November," said Democratic Rep. Morgan McGarvey of Kentucky, one of the Democrats urging his exit from the race. "But the stakes of this election are too high and we can't risk the focus of the campaign being anything other than Donald Trump."

The standoff has become increasingly untenable for the party and its leaders, a month from the Democratic National Convention that should be a unifying moment to nominate their incumbent president to confront Trump. Instead the party is at a crossroads unseen in generations.

It's creating a stark juxtaposition with Republicans who, after years of bitter and chaotic infighting over Trump, have essentially embraced the former president's far-right takeover of the GOP, despite his criminal conviction in the hush money case and pending federal criminal indictment for trying to overturn the 2020 election ahead of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

From his beach home in Delaware, Biden, 81, is isolating with a COVID infection, but also politically with a small circle of family and close advisers. White House doctor Kevin O'Connor said Friday that the president still had a dry cough and hoarseness, but his COVID symptoms had improved.

The president's team insisted he's ready to return to the campaign trail next week to counter what he called a "dark vision" laid out by Trump.

"Together, as a party and as a country, we can and will defeat him at the ballot box," Biden said in a statement Friday. "The stakes are high, and the choice is clear. Together, we will win."

But outside the Rehoboth enclave the debate and passions are intensifying.

A donor call with some 300 people Friday was described as a waste of time by one participant, who was granted anonymity to discuss the private conversation. While the person was complimentary of Vice President Kamala Harris, who spoke for five minutes, the rest of the time was filled by others who brushed aside donor concerns, according to the participant.

Not only are the Democrats split over whether Biden should stay in the race or step aside, they also lack consensus about how to choose a successor.

Democrats who are agitating for Biden to leave do not appear to have coalesced around a plan for what would happen next, for now. Very few of the lawmakers have mentioned Harris in their statements, and some have said they favor an open nominating process that would throw the party's endorsement behind a new candidate.

Democratic Sens. Jon Tester of Montana and Peter Welch of Vermont have both called for Biden to exit the race and said they would favor an open nominating process at the convention.

"Having it be open would strengthen whoever is the ultimate nominee," Welch said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Other Democrats say it would be politically unthinkable to move past Harris, the nation's first woman vice president, who is Black and Southeast Asian, and logistically unworkable with a virtual nominating vote being planned for early next month, ahead of the Aug. 19 Democratic convention in Chicago.

Minnesota Rep. Betty McCollum who is among those who called on Biden to step aside explicitly endorsed Harris as a replacement.

"To give Democrats a strong, viable path to winning the White House, I am calling upon President Biden to release his delegates and empower Vice-President Harris to step forward to become the Democratic nominee for President," McCollum said in her statement.

It's unclear what else, if anything, the president could do to reverse course and win back lawmakers and Democratic voters, who are wary of his ability to beat back Trump and serve another term after his halting debate performance last month.

Nearly two-thirds of Democrats say Biden should withdraw from the presidential race and let his party nominate a different candidate, according to a new AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll, sharply undercutting his post-debate claim that "average Democrats" are still with him even if some "big names" are turning on him.

At the same time, a majority of Democrats believe Kamala Harris would do a good job in the top slot, according to a separate AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll.

Biden, who sent a defiant letter to Democrats in Congress in the initial aftermath of his debate perfor-

mance vowing to stay in the race, has yet to personally visit Capitol Hill to shore up support, an absence noticed by senators and representatives.

The president did conduct a round of virtual conversations with various caucuses in the past week — some of which ended poorly.

During a call with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, one Democrat, Rep. Mike Levin of California, told Biden he should step aside. During another with the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Biden became defensive when Rep. Jared Huffman of California asked him to consider meeting with top party leaders about the path forward.

Huffman was among a group of four Democratic lawmakers who called Friday for Biden to end his reelection bid.

At the same time, Biden still has strong backers. He picked up support Friday from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' campaign arm and has backing from leaders of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Top UN court says Israel's presence in occupied Palestinian territories is illegal and should end

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The top United Nations court said Friday that Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is unlawful and called on it to end, and for settlement construction to stop immediately, issuing an unprecedented, sweeping condemnation of Israel's rule over the lands it captured 57 years ago.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly denounced the nonbinding opinion issued by the 15-judge panel of the International Court of Justice, saying the territories are part of the Jewish people's historic homeland. But the resounding breadth of the decision could impact international opinion and fuel moves for unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state.

The judges pointed to a wide list of policies, including the building and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, use of the area's natural resources, the annexation and imposition of permanent control over lands and discriminatory policies against Palestinians, all of which it said violated international law.

The court said Israel had no right to sovereignty in the territories, was violating international laws against acquiring territory by force and was impeding Palestinians' right to self-determination. It said other nations were obliged not to "render aid or assistance in maintaining" Israel's presence in the territories. It said Israel must end settlement construction immediately and that existing settlements must be removed, according to a summary of the more than 80-page opinion read out by court President Nawaf Salam.

Israel's "abuse of its status as the occupying power" renders its "presence in the occupied Palestinian territory unlawful," the court said, saying its presence must be ended as "rapidly as possible."

The court's opinion, sought by the U.N. General Assembly after a Palestinian request, came against the backdrop of Israel's devastating military assault on Gaza, which was triggered by the Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7. In a separate case, the International Court of Justice is considering a South African claim that Israel's campaign in Gaza amounts to genocide, a claim that Israel vehemently denies.

The court said the General Assembly and Security Council — where staunch Israeli ally the United States holds a veto — should consider "the precise modalities" to end Israel's presence in the territories.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will promptly transmit the advisory opinion to the 193-member world body and "it is for the General Assembly to decide how to proceed in the matter," U.N. deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq said.

The secretary-general reiterates his call for Israel and the Palestinians to engage "on the long-delayed political path towards ending the occupation and resolving the conflict in line with international law, relevant U.N. resolutions and bilateral agreements," the spokesperson said.

Guterres also stressed that a two-state solution is "the only viable path" to seeing Israel and "a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian state" living side by side in peace

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and security, Haq said.

Israel, which normally considers the United Nations and international tribunals as unfair and biased, didn't send a legal team to the hearings. Instead, it submitted written comments, saying that the questions put to the court are prejudiced and fail to address Israeli security concerns. Israeli officials have said the court's intervention could undermine the peace process, which has been stagnant for more than a decade.

"The Jewish people are not conquerors in their own land — not in our eternal capital Jerusalem and not in the land of our ancestors in Judea and Samaria," Netanyahu said in a statement issued by his office, using the biblical terms for the West Bank. "No false decision in The Hague will distort this historical truth and likewise the legality of Israeli settlement in all the territories of our homeland cannot be contested."

Speaking outside the court, Riad Malki, an adviser to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, called the opinion "a watershed moment for Palestine, for justice and for international law."

He said other nations must now "uphold the clear obligations" outlined by the court. "No actions of any kind ... to support Israel's illegal occupation."

Hamas welcomed the court's decision and said in a statement that "serious steps on the ground" need to be taken in response.

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek all three areas for an independent state.

Israel considers the West Bank to be disputed territory, the future of which should be decided in negotiations, while it has moved populations there in settlements to solidify its hold. It has annexed east Jerusalem in a move that isn't internationally recognized, while it withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but maintained a blockade of the territory after Hamas took power in 2007. The international community generally considers all three areas to be occupied territory.

The court's decision strikes at the heart of the ambiguity of Israel's administration of the territories. Israel hasn't annexed the West Bank — though settler groups have pressed it to do so — but it calls it part of its homeland and has effectively treated it as an extension of the nation. Along with the settlements, it has appropriated large swaths of the territory as "state lands." At the same time, Netanyahu's government has repeatedly rejected the creation of any Palestinian state. Abbas' Palestinian Authority has been restricted to control over divided enclaves scattered around the West Bank.

The Palestinians presented arguments at hearings in February, along with 49 other nations and three international organizations. In the hearings, Malki accused Israel of apartheid and urged the United Nations' top court to declare that Israel's occupation of lands sought by the Palestinians is illegal and must end immediately and unconditionally for any hope for a two-state future to survive.

Erwin van Veen, a senior research fellow at the Clingendael think tank in The Hague, said before the decision that a ruling that Israel's policies breach international law would "isolate Israel further internationally, at least from a legal point of view."

He said such a ruling would remove "any kind of legal, political, philosophical underpinning of the Israeli expansion project." It could also increase the number of countries that recognize a Palestinian state, in particular in the Western world, following the recent example of Spain, Norway and Ireland, he said.

It's not the first time the ICJ has been asked to give its legal opinion on Israeli policies. Two decades ago, the court ruled that Israel's West Bank separation barrier was "contrary to international law." Israel boycotted those proceedings, saying they were politically motivated.

Israel says the barrier is a security measure. Palestinians say the structure amounts to a massive land grab, because it frequently dips into the West Bank.

The court said that Israel's construction of settlements in the West Bank violated international laws prohibiting countries from moving their population into territories they occupy.

Israel has built well over 100 settlements, according to the anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now. The West Bank settler population has grown by more than 15% in the past five years to more than 500,000 Israelis, according to a pro-settler group. Their residents are Israeli citizens governed by domestic law and served by government ministries, services, banks and other businesses — effectively integrating them into Israel.

Israel also has annexed east Jerusalem and considers the entire city to be its capital. An additional 200,000 Israelis live in settlements built in east Jerusalem that Israel considers to be neighborhoods of its

capital. Palestinian residents of the city face systematic discrimination, making it difficult for them to build new homes or expand existing ones.

The international community considers all settlements to be illegal or obstacles to peace since they are built on lands sought by the Palestinians for their state.

Netanyahu's hard-line government is dominated by settlers and their political supporters. Netanyahu has given his Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich, a former settler leader, unprecedented authority over settlement policy. Smotrich has used this position to cement Israel's control over the West Bank by pushing forward plans to build more settlement homes and to legalize outposts.

Missouri woman who served 43 years in prison is free after her murder conviction was overturned

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and JIM SALTER Associated Press

CHILLICOTHE, Mo. (AP) — A woman whose murder conviction was overturned after she served 43 years of a life sentence was released Friday, despite attempts in the last month by Missouri's attorney general to keep her behind bars.

Sandra Hemme, 64, left a prison in Chillicothe, hours after a judge threatened to hold the attorney general's office in contempt if they continued to fight against her release. She reunited with her family at a nearby park, where she hugged her sister, daughter and granddaughter.

"You were just a baby when your mom sent me a picture of you," she said. "You looked just like your mamma when you were little and you still look like her."

Her granddaughter laughed. "I get that a lot."

Hemme had been the longest-held wrongly incarcerated woman known in the U.S., according to her legal team at the Innocence Project. The judge originally ruled on June 14 that Hemme's attorneys had established "clear and convincing evidence" of "actual innocence" and he overturned her conviction. But Republican Attorney General Andrew Bailey fought her release in the courts.

"It was too easy to convict an innocent person and way harder than it should have been to get her out, even to the point of court orders being ignored," her attorney Sean O'Brien said. "It shouldn't be this hard to free an innocent person."

During a court hearing Friday, Judge Ryan Horsman said that if Hemme wasn't released within hours, Bailey himself would have to appear in court Tuesday morning. He threatened to hold the attorney general's office in contempt.

He also scolded Bailey's office for calling the warden and telling prison officials not to release Hemme after he ordered her to be freed in her own recognizance. "I would suggest you never do that," Horsman said, adding: "To call someone and tell them to disregard a court order is wrong."

Hemme declined to address reporters after she was released. O'Brien said she was going straight to the side of her father, who was hospitalized with kidney failure and recently moved to palliative care. "This has been a long time coming," he said of her release.

O'Brien said previously that delays had caused their family "irreparable harm and emotional distress."

There are still struggles ahead.

"She's going to need help," he said, noting she won't be eligible for social security because she has been incarcerated for so long.

Over the last month, a circuit judge, an appellate court and the Missouri Supreme Court all agreed Hemme should be released, but she was still held behind bars, leaving her lawyers and legal experts puzzled.

"I've never seen it," said Michael Wolff, a former Missouri Supreme Court judge and professor and dean emeritus of Saint Louis University Law School. "Once the courts have spoken, the courts should be obeyed."

The lone holdup to freedom came from the attorney general, who filed court motions seeking to force her to serve additional years for decades-old prison assault cases. The warden at the Chillicothe Correctional Center initially declined to let Hemme go, based on Bailey's actions.

Horsman ruled on June 14 that "the totality of the evidence supports a finding of actual innocence." A state appeals court ruled on July 8 that Hemme should be set free while it continued to review the case.

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The next day, July 9, Horsman ruled Hemme should be released to go home with her sister. The Missouri Supreme Court on Thursday declined to undo the lower court rulings that allowed her to be released on her own recognizance and placed with her sister and brother-in-law.

Bailey, a Republican facing opposition in the Aug. 6 primary election, responded with another request late Thursday, asking the Circuit Court to reconsider.

Hemme was serving a life sentence at the Chillicothe Correctional Center for the 1980 stabbing death of library worker Patricia Jeschke in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Hemme's immediate freedom was complicated by sentences she received for crimes committed while behind bars. She received a 10-year sentence in 1996 for attacking a prison worker with a razor blade, and a two-year sentence in 1984 for "offering to commit violence." Bailey had argued that Hemme represents a safety risk to herself and others and that she should start serving those sentences now.

Her attorneys countered that keeping her incarcerated any longer would be a "draconian outcome." Some legal experts agreed.

Peter Joy, a law professor at the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, said the effort to keep Hemme in prison was "a shock to the conscience of any decent human being," since evidence strongly suggests she didn't commit the crime.

Bailey's office did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment Friday.

Bailey, who was appointed attorney general after Eric Schmitt was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2022, has a history of opposing overturning convictions, even when local prosecutors cite evidence of actual innocence.

Horsman, after an extensive review, concluded in June that Hemme was heavily sedated and in a "mal-leable mental state" when investigators repeatedly questioned her in a psychiatric hospital after the killing. Her attorneys described her ultimate confession as "often monosyllabic responses to leading questions." Other than the confession, no evidence linked her to the crime, her trial prosecutor said.

The St. Joseph Police Department, meanwhile, ignored evidence pointing to Michael Holman — a fellow officer, who died in 2015 — and the prosecution wasn't told about FBI results that could have cleared Hemme, so it was never disclosed before her trials, the judge found.

Evidence presented to Horsman showed that Holman's pickup truck was seen outside Jeschke's apartment, that he tried to use her credit card, and that her earrings were found in his home.

Horsman, in his report, called Hemme "the victim of a manifest injustice."

Biden pushes party unity as he resists calls to step aside, says he'll return to campaign next week

By ZEKE MILLER, LISA MASCARO, MICHAEL BALSAMO and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — A rapidly growing chorus of Democratic lawmakers called Friday for President Joe Biden to drop his reelection bid, even as the president insisted he's ready to return to the campaign trail next week to counter what he called a "dark vision" laid out by Republican Donald Trump.

As more Democratic members of Congress urged him to drop out — bringing the total since his disastrous debate against Trump to nearly three dozen — Biden remained isolated at his beach house in Delaware after being diagnosed with COVID-19. The president, who has insisted he can beat Trump, was huddling with family and relying on a few longtime aides as he resisted efforts to shove him aside.

Late Friday, Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, a Democrat who is in a tough race for reelection, called for Biden to step aside.

Brown said in a statement that he agrees with "the many Ohioans" who have reached out to him. "I think the president should end his campaign," he said.

And in a statement later Friday, Rep. Morgan McGarvey, D-Ky., also called on Biden to drop out while saying, "there is no joy in the recognition he should not be our nominee in November. But the stakes of this election are too high."

Biden said Trump's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention showcased a "dark vision for the future." The president, seeking to move the political conversation away from his fate and onto his

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rival's agenda, said Friday he was planning to return to the campaign trail next week and insisted he has a path to victory over Trump, despite the worries of some of his party's most eminent members.

"Together, as a party and as a country, we can and will defeat him at the ballot box," Biden said. "The stakes are high, and the choice is clear. Together, we will win."

Earlier in the day, his campaign chair, Jen O'Malley Dillion, acknowledged "slippage" in support for the president but insisted he's "absolutely" remaining in the race and the campaign sees "multiple paths" to beating Trump.

"We have a lot of work to do to reassure the American people that, yes, he's old, but he can win," she told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" show. She said voters concerned about Biden's fitness to lead aren't switching to vote for Trump.

Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee's rulemaking arm held a meeting Friday, pressing ahead with plans for a virtual roll call before Aug. 7 to nominate the presidential pick, ahead of the party's convention later in the month in Chicago.

"President Biden deserves the respect to have important family conversations with members of the caucus and colleagues in the House and Senate and Democratic leadership and not be battling leaks and press statements," Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, Biden's closest friend in Congress and his campaign co-chair, told The Associated Press.

It's a pivotal few days for the president and his party: Trump has wrapped up an enthusiastic Republican National Convention in Milwaukee on Thursday. And Democrats, racing time, are considering the extraordinary possibility of Biden stepping aside for a new presidential nominee before their own convention.

Among the democrats expressing worries to allies about Biden's chances were former President Barack Obama and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, who has privately told Biden the party could lose the ability to seize control of the House if he doesn't step aside.

New Mexico Sen. Martin Heinrich called on Biden to exit the race, making him the third Senate Democrat to do so.

"By passing the torch, he would secure his legacy as one of our nation's greatest leaders and allow us to unite behind a candidate who can best defeat Donald Trump and safeguard the future of our democracy," said Heinrich, who's up for reelection.

And Reps. Jared Huffman, Mark Veasey, Chuy Garcia and Mark Pocan, representing a wide swath of the caucus, together called on Biden to step aside.

"We must defeat Donald Trump to save our democracy," they wrote.

Separately, Rep. Sean Casten of Illinois wrote in an op-ed that with "a heavy heart and much personal reflection" he, too, was calling on Biden to "pass the torch to a new generation."

Campaign officials said Biden was even more committed to staying in the race. And senior West Wing aides have had no internal discussions or conversations with the president about dropping out.

On Friday, Biden picked up a key endorsement from the political arm of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. CHC BOLD PAC said the Biden administration has shown "unwavering commitment" to Latinos and "the stakes couldn't be higher" in this election.

But there is also time to reconsider. Biden has been told the campaign is having trouble raising money, and key Democrats see an opportunity as he is away from the campaign for a few days to encourage his exit. Among his Cabinet, some are resigned to the likelihood of him losing in November.

The reporting in this story is based in part on information from almost a dozen people who insisted on anonymity to discuss sensitive private deliberations. The Washington Post first reported on Obama's involvement.

Biden, 81, tested positive for COVID-19 while traveling in Las Vegas earlier this week and experienced "mild symptoms" including "general malaise" from the infection, the White House said.

White House doctor Kevin O'Connor said Friday that the president still had a dry cough and hoarseness, but that his COVID symptoms had improved.

Biden noted his illness while making a joke about Trump on social media Friday night, posting: "I'm stuck at home with COVID, so I had the distinct misfortune of watching Donald Trump's speech to the RNC. What the hell was he talking about?"

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In Congress, Democratic lawmakers have begun having private conversations about lining up behind Harris as an alternative. One lawmaker said Biden's own advisers are unable to reach a unanimous recommendation about what he should do. More in Congress are considering joining the others who have called for Biden to drop out. Some prefer an open process for choosing a new presidential nominee.

"It's clear the issue won't go away," said Vermont Sen. Peter Welch, the other Senate Democrat who has publicly said Biden should exit the race. Welch said the current state of party angst — with lawmakers panicking and donors revolting — was "not sustainable."

However, influential Democrats including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries are sending signals of concern.

"There is of course work to be done, and that in fact is the case because we are an evenly divided country," Jeffries said in an interview on WNYC radio Friday.

But he also said, "The ticket that exists right now is the ticket that we can win on. ... It's his decision to make."

To be sure, many want Biden to stay in the race. But among Democrats nationwide, nearly two-thirds say Biden should step aside and let his party nominate a different candidate, according to an AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll. That sharply undercuts Biden's post-debate claim that "average Democrats" are still with him.

Amid the turmoil, a majority of Democrats think Vice President Kamala Harris would make a good president herself.

A poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 6 in 10 Democrats believe Harris would do a good job in the top slot. About 2 in 10 Democrats don't believe she would, and another 2 in 10 say they don't know enough to say.

A faulty software update causes havoc worldwide for airlines, hospitals and governments

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY, ELAINE KURTENBACH, DAVID McHUGH, HALELUYA HADERO and BARBARA ORTUTAY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A faulty software update caused technological havoc worldwide on Friday, grounding flights, knocking down some financial companies and news outlets, and disrupting hospitals, small businesses and government offices.

The breadth of the outages highlighted the fragility of a digitized world dependent on just a few providers for key computing services.

The trouble was sparked by an update issued by cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike and only affected its customers running Microsoft Windows, the world's most popular operating system for personal computers. It was not the result of hacking or a cyberattack, according to CrowdStrike, which apologized and said a fix was on the way.

Businesses and governments worldwide experienced hourslong disruptions — their computer monitors glowing blue with error messages — and they scrambled to deal with the fallout. CrowdStrike's CEO said some of their systems will require time-consuming manual fixes.

Thousands of flights were canceled and tens of thousands were delayed, leading to long lines at airports in the U.S., Europe, Asia and Latin America. Airlines lost access to check-in and booking services in the heart of the summer travel season. By late afternoon Eastern time, the worst appeared to be over, though there were still lingering cancellations and delays do to the cascading effect of the disruption.

Several local TV stations in the U.S. were prevented from airing the news early Friday, and some state and local governments reported problems at courts, motor vehicles departments, unemployment agencies, emergency call centers and other offices, but as the day progressed many of the systems were getting back to normal.

Affected hospitals had problems with appointment systems, forcing them to suspend patient visits and cancel some surgeries.

Alison Baulos said her 73-year-old father's heart surgery in Paducah, Kentucky, was canceled Friday

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morning because of the tech outage, leaving her family scared and worried.

"It does really make you just realize how much we rely on technology and how scary it is," Baulos said in an interview. She said her father was waiting at Baptist Hospital to find out what will happen next. A phone message left with the hospital was not immediately returned.

American Express said it temporarily had some difficulties processing transactions, while TD Bank responded to online complaints by saying it was working to restore customers' ability to access their accounts.

Elsewhere, people experienced minor inconveniences, including trouble ordering ahead at Starbucks, causing long lines to form at some of the coffee chain's stores.

In New York City's Times Square, right before 12:30 a.m., the blue "recovery" screens popping up on laptops appeared on several giant electronic billboards. A few were dark Friday afternoon.

A disturbing reminder of vulnerability

Cyber expert James Bore said real harm would be caused. "All of these systems are running the same software," Bore said. "We've made all of these tools so widespread that when things inevitably go wrong — and they will, as we've seen — they go wrong at a huge scale."

The head of Germany's IT security agency, Claudia Plattner, said "we can't expect a very quick solution." A forecast for when exactly all systems will be up and running is difficult, but "it won't be hours," she added.

CrowdStrike said in a recording on its customer service line that the problem was related to "the Falcon sensor," referring to one of its products used to block online attacks. The company says it has 29,000 customers.

In an interview on NBC's "Today Show," CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz apologized, saying the company was "deeply sorry for the impact that we've caused to customers, to travelers, to anyone affected by this, including our companies."

"We know what the issue is" and are working to fix it, Kurtz said. However, he noted it could take "some time" for certain customers, especially those lacking in-house expertise.

While CrowdStrike's update was automated, the fix requires hands-on work such as deleting corrupted files, which could take some customers days or longer, said Forrester analyst Allie Mellen.

"Given that CrowdStrike has a ton of customers, a ton of Fortune 500 customers, and they have likely millions of (computers) under management, this causes a bigger issue," Mellen said. "It is going to be a long and arduous process."

Ann Johnson, corporate vice president and deputy chief information security officer at Microsoft, said late Friday afternoon that "at this point in time, I would say that customers are receiving or have received the necessary information they need and are getting the support they need — understanding it's a very major issue."

She said Microsoft's primary focus is getting customers back online, but could not estimate how long this might take.

In Alaska, the state's court system returned to functionality after repairs that took 12 hours to complete, according to spokesperson Rebecca Koford. In Iowa, Gov. Kim Reynolds said the state's critical technology systems were up and running again by mid-afternoon.

Shares of CrowdStrike, which is based in Austin, Texas, ended Friday trading down more than 11%. Microsoft's stock price fell less than 1%.

Though the outage's impact could be felt far and wide, the forecasting firm Capital Economics said it was likely to have little impact on the world economy.

Cybersecurity experts said those affected by the outage also needed to be wary of bad actors reaching out claiming they can help. "Attackers will definitely prey on organizations as a result of this," said Gartner analyst Eric Grenier.

In a letter to customers posted on CrowdStrike's website, Kurtz said the outage did not affect its Falcon systems or its security scanning.

Air travel delayed everywhere

Most airlines attributed the problems to their booking systems. Thousands of flights were affected in the U.S. alone, though by late morning on the East Coast airlines said they were beginning to mitigate problems and resume some service. Unclogging the system takes time, though.

At Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, Sarah Schafer was delayed getting to her cousin's 50th

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birthday party in Florida. She had been waiting for almost three hours with no indication of when her flight would be rebooked.

"I seem calm," said Schafer, who was using a cane because of ankle injury. "But my angry side might come out."

Airlines and railways in the U.K. experienced long wait times. And airports across Europe suspended landings or halted takeoffs for several hours due to difficulties in checking in passengers.

Saskia Oettinghaus, a member of the German Olympic diving team, was among those stuck at the Berlin Airport.

"We are on our way to Paris for the Olympic Games and now we are at a standstill here for the time being," Oettinghaus said.

In Cancun, Mexico, the main tourist destination in the Caribbean coast, the state government said there were 24 cancellations and 100 delayed flights. Some travelers tried to liven up the long waits by singing the traditional Mexican song, "Cielito Lindo," while a band that was also stranded was playing in the Cancun airport.

Broadcasters go dark, surgeries delayed, 'blue screens of death'

In Australia, national news outlets — including ABC and Sky News Australia — were unable to broadcast for hours. Some news anchors went on-air from dark offices, in front of computers showing blue error screens.

In the U.S., KSHB-TV in Kansas City, Missouri, aired Scripps News instead of local news until about 5:35 a.m., the stations said on its website. Other local stations owned by Scripps reported similar problems, though Scripps spokesman Michael Perry said early Friday that 90% of stations were able to air local news.

Hospitals in different countries also reported problems.

Britain's National Health Service said the outage caused problems at most doctors' offices because appointment and patient-record systems were affected.

At Mass General Brigham, the largest health care system in Massachusetts, all scheduled non-urgent surgeries, procedures, and medical visits were canceled Friday because of the outage, according to a spokesperson.

Some international shipping was disrupted, too.

A major container hub in the Baltic port of Gdansk, Poland, said it was battling problems. And at the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, marine terminals were affected, although the outage didn't cause significant disruptions.

Largest housing provider for migrant children engaged in pervasive sexual abuse, US says

By PAUL J. WEBER and VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Employees of the largest housing provider for unaccompanied migrant children in the U.S. repeatedly sexually abused and harassed children in their care for at least eight years, the Justice Department said Thursday, alleging a shocking litany of offenses that took place as the company amassed billions of dollars in government contracts.

Southwest Key Programs Inc. employees, including supervisors, raped, touched or solicited sex and nude images of children beginning in 2015 and possibly earlier, the Justice Department said in a lawsuit filed this week. At least two employees have been indicted on criminal charges related to the allegations since 2020.

It was not immediately clear how many children are currently in Southwest Key's vast network of shelters across three states, which have room for more than 6,300 children. A Justice Department spokesperson declined to comment beyond the lawsuit announcement when asked whether the department recommended that children be removed from the shelters or that the nonprofit's contracts be terminated.

"In some cases, Southwest Key employees threatened children to maintain their silence," the lawsuit states. "In harassing these children, these Southwest Key employees exploited the children's vulnerabilities, language barriers, and distance from family and loved ones."

In a statement, Southwest Key said it was reviewing the complaint and disputed the portrayal of its care for children.

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The nonprofit organization is the largest provider of housing for unaccompanied migrant children, operating under grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It has 29 child migrant shelters — 17 in Texas, 10 in Arizona and two in California. The company's largest shelter in Brownsville, Texas, is at a converted Walmart with a capacity for 1,200.

The provider has been a major but somewhat low-profile player in the government's response to the arrival of hundreds of thousands of migrant children traveling alone in recent years and during the separation of thousands of families in 2017 and 2018 under President Donald Trump's administration. The government awarded the provider more than \$3 billion in contracts from 2015 to 2023.

The Border Patrol must transfer custody of unaccompanied children within 72 hours of arrest to Health and Human Services, which releases most to parents or close relatives after short stays at Southwest Key or shelters operated by other contracted providers.

Health and Human Services reported 6,228 children at all of its facilities on June 17, according to the most recent data on its website, which does not break numbers down by shelter or provider. The department declined to say how many children are currently in Southwest Key's care or if the agency continues to assign children to its facilities.

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday in Austin, where Southwest Key is based, provides extensive details, saying authorities received more than 100 reports of sexual abuse or harassment at the provider's shelters since 2015.

Among the lawsuit's allegations: An employee "repeatedly sexually abused" three girls ages 5, 8 and 11 at the Casa Franklin shelter in El Paso, Texas. The 8-year-old told investigators that the worker "repeatedly entered their bedrooms in the middle of the night to touch their 'private area,' and he threatened to kill their families if they disclosed the abuse."

The lawsuit also alleges that an employee of the provider's shelter in Mesa, Arizona, took a 15-year-old boy to a hotel and paid him to perform sexual acts for several days in 2020.

Children were threatened with violence against themselves or family if they reported abuse, according to the lawsuit. It added that testimony from the victims revealed staff in some instances knew about the ongoing abuse and failed to report it or concealed it.

Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said Thursday that the complaint "raises serious pattern or practice concerns" about Southwest Key. "HHS has a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behavior, and discrimination," he said in a statement.

Southwest spokesperson Anais Bierla Miracle said Thursday that the provider is still reviewing the complaint, which she said "does not present the accurate picture of the care and commitment our employees provide to the youth and children."

Texas, like Florida, revoked the licenses of facilities that house migrant children in 2021 in response to an extraordinary influx of people across its border from Mexico, creating what some critics said was an oversight void.

The lawsuit comes less than three weeks after a federal judge granted the Justice Department's request to lift special court oversight of HHS' care of unaccompanied migrant children. President Joe Biden's administration argued that new federal safeguards rendered special oversight unnecessary 27 years after it began.

Special court oversight remains in place at the Department of Homeland Security, which includes the Border Patrol.

Leecia Welch, an attorney for unaccompanied children in the case for court oversight, said the allegations against Southwest Key are "absolutely disgusting" and blamed Texas' revocation of licenses for "a powder keg waiting to explode."

"While I applaud the efforts to right the grievous wrongs these children have experienced, I hope the federal government will also take some responsibility for the role it played," said Welch, deputy legal director of Children's Rights.

Neha Desai, another attorney involved in court oversight, called the allegations "profoundly disturbing and shocking."

"I hope that the government takes the most aggressive measures possible to ensure that children cur-

rently placed at Southwest Key facilities are not in harm's way," said Desai, senior director for immigration at the National Center for Youth Law.

The Associated Press left email messages Thursday with the offices of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton. The attorneys general of Arizona and California declined to comment on the litigation.

Southwest grew as unaccompanied children began crossing the border in large numbers in 2014, overwhelming U.S. authorities.

The company has found itself in the middle of controversies over immigration and has steadfastly maintained that its mission was to provide quality care for children. It names its facilities "casas," Spanish for home.

"A typical day for children in a Southwest Key Casa includes breakfast, school, lunch, dinner, homework, snacks, and bedtime," the Justice Department said in its complaint.

Vietnam Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong, the country's most powerful leader, dies at age 80

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party and the country's most powerful politician, has died following months of ill health, official media said Friday. He was 80.

"General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party Nguyen Phu Trong passed away at 13:38 on July 19, 2024, at the 108 Central Military Hospital due to old age and serious illness," the Nhan Dan newspaper said.

Official media said a state funeral would be held.

Trong had dominated Vietnamese politics since 2011, when he was elected party chief. During his tenure, he worked to consolidate the Communist Party's power in Vietnam's single-party political system. In the decade before he took the top role in Vietnamese politics, the balance of power had shifted more toward the governmental wing led by then-Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

Born in 1944 in Hanoi, Trong was a Marxist-Leninist ideologue who earned a degree in philosophy before becoming a member of the Communist Party at the age of 22. He viewed corruption as the single gravest threat in maintaining the party's legitimacy.

"A country without discipline would be chaotic and unstable," Trong said in 2016 after being reelected to the party's helm. Officially, Vietnam has no top leader, but the Communist Party chief is traditionally seen as the most powerful.

He launched a sweeping anti-corruption campaign known as the "blazing furnace" that singled both business and political elites. Since 2016, thousands of party officials have been disciplined. They included former presidents Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Vo Van Thuong and the former head of parliament, Vuong Dinh Hue. In all, eight members of the powerful Politburo were ousted on corruption allegations, compared to none between 1986 and 2016.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "saddened" by Trong's death and called him "a pivotal figure in Vietnam's recent history," U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

During Trong's tenure as president and Communist Party chief, Guterres said, "Vietnam continued its remarkable development journey to emerge as one of the world's fastest-growing economies and an important partner for the United Nations," the spokesman said.

Trong studied in the Soviet Union from 1981 to 1983, and there was speculation that under his leadership, Vietnam would move closer to Russia and China. However, the Southeast Asian nation followed a pragmatic policy of "bamboo diplomacy," a phrase he coined that referred to the plant's flexibility, bending but not breaking in the shifting headwinds of geopolitics.

Vietnam maintained its traditional ties with its much larger neighbor, China, dispute differences over sovereignty in the South China Sea. But it also drew closer to the United States, elevating its ties with its former Vietnam War foe to its highest diplomatic status, a comprehensive strategic partnership.

The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party offered its condolences to the Vietnamese people. It said that "Trong was a close comrade and sincere friend" of China's ruling party and called him "a

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staunch Marxist and a great leader," the state news agency Xinhua reported

U.S. President Joe Biden issued a statement mourning Trong's death.

He called Trong "a champion of the deep ties between the American and Vietnamese people whose leadership helped nurture the friendship and partnership our countries enjoy today."

Trong's legacy is mixed, with the unintended consequence of the anti-graft campaign being an erosion of institutions within the Communist Party, said Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow in the Vietnam Studies Program at Singapore's ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. The party institutions were the bedrock ensuring that a balance of power remained among its different factions, he said.

"Vietnam has become more and more like China, where institutions and norms doesn't really matter as much as personal power," Giang said.

Vietnamese President To Lam was appointed the party caretaker on July 18 while Trong received treatment for his ill health. As Vietnam's top security official, Lam had led the anti-graft campaign until becoming president in May, when his predecessor resigned after being caught up in it.

The party's Politburo asked Lam to "preside over the work of the Party Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Secretariat," according to a statement from its central office which was the first official confirmation of Trong's poor health.

Rumors about his health have swirled in Vietnamese politics since he was first hospitalized in 2019, and more recently when he appeared extremely frail while meeting visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trong's death leaves behind a yawning political vacuum in Vietnam. Although Lam is widely viewed as the likely next party chief, Giang predicted "a very uncertain time" in Vietnamese politics because the norms and institutions governing the country are "very shaky."

"Now it isn't only about the rules or norms, but it is also about who holds the most power," Giang said.

Churchill Downs lifts suspension of trainer Bob Baffert following Medina Spirit's failed drug test

By GARY B. GRAVES AP Sports Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Churchill Downs has rescinded its extended suspension of Bob Baffert, allowing the Hall of Fame trainer to resume racing his horses at the historic track and partner facilities after more than three years of banishment for a failed drug test of ultimately disqualified 2021 Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit.

The stunning announcement came Friday after Baffert issued a statement in which he took responsibility for now-deceased colt Medina Spirit's failed drug test after crossing the finish line in the 147th Kentucky Derby in May 2021. Kentucky racing stewards disqualified Medina Spirit the following winter, and Churchill Downs elevated runner-up Mandaloun to Derby winner.

Churchill Downs said in a release that it was satisfied for Baffert taking responsibility while completing the penalty and committing to compliance.

"All parties agree that it is time to bring this chapter to a close and focus on the future. Baffert is welcome to return to any of CDI's racetracks, including our flagship Churchill Downs Racetrack, and we wish him and his connections good luck in their future competitive endeavors," Churchill Downs Inc. CEO Bill Carstanjen said in the statement.

The two-time Triple Crown winning trainer frequently criticized the ban and had unsuccessfully sued Churchill Downs, which last year extended the ban to the end of 2024 for subsequent criticism. Medina Spirit's owner, Zedan Racing Stables, had sued for the trainer's discipline to end this spring in an effort to get his Baffert-trained Arkansas Derby winner Muth into the 150th Derby.

In accepting responsibility, the 71-year-old Baffert acknowledged that he had paid a "very steep price" with the suspension and disqualification while assuming responsibility for substances in any horses that he trains. He also said he appreciated that the track and the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission enforcing the rules believed necessary to protect the safety and integrity of horse racing and the reputation of the Kentucky Derby.

"My family and I want to put this behind us and get back to doing what we love to do without anymore distraction or negativity," Baffert added. "I very much look forward to returning to Churchill Downs and

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getting back to the Winner's Circle."

The suspension ultimately denied Baffert a record-breaking seventh Kentucky Derby victory and tarnished the reputation of a trainer considered the face of horse racing.

More importantly, it left Baffert outside of the race he cherishes most, at the track where his former Barn 33 on the back side was a required stop for fellow horsemen, media and countless tourists. Not to mention, a fractured relationship between the sides.

Baffert's absence was especially palpable at this year's milestone 150th Derby -- an epic race that Mystik Dan won by a nose over Sierra Leone and Forever Young in a three-wide photo finish.

But while Churchill Downs' ban denied Baffert from competing in horse racing's marquee event, his horses were able to compete in other legs of the Triple Crown. His colt, National Treasure, won last year's Preakness in Baltimore.

The announcement on Friday brought settlement and closure, opening the door for Baffert to again race his horses beneath the Twin Spires on racing's biggest day on the first Saturday next May.

Internet outage latest | Airlines, businesses, border crossings hit by global tech disruption

By The Associated Press undefined

Businesses and governments worldwide experienced hours-long disruptions Friday as a widespread technology outage affected services across industries. Flights were grounded and numerous hospitals, small businesses and government offices were disrupted.

At the heart of the massive disruption is CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm that provides software to scores of companies worldwide. The company says the problem occurred when it deployed a faulty update to computers running Microsoft Windows, noting that the issue behind the outage was not a security incident or cyberattack.

Here's the Latest:

Hundreds stranded at Mexican airports, but band keeps Cancún travelers entertained

MEXICO CITY — Long lines of people were waiting for information in several international airports in Mexico as hundreds of people had their travel plans interrupted by delayed and canceled flights Friday.

In Cancún, the main tourist destination on the Caribbean coast, a band was stranded and was playing at the airport, while some travelers livened up their long waits by singing a popular Mexican song, "Cielito Lindo," with a chorus urging people to sing instead of cry. The title translates roughly to "Lovely Sweet One" or "Sweetheart," and the song embodies a national sentiment of remaining happy even in the worst moments.

The airport there had 24 canceled and 100 delayed flights.

At the main Mexico City airport, 22 flights were canceled and another 250 were delayed, affecting some 2,000 passengers, especially those traveling to or arriving from the United States, said Rear Admiral José Ramón Rivera, its general director.

Viva Aerobus, a low-cost airline, announced the cancellation of all its international flights scheduled for Friday. Volaris was another of the most affected companies.

In some cities in the north of the country, such as Tijuana, there were delays and long lines at several border crossings. But the Mexican government did not report any damage to its computer systems.

Delta Air Lines and its regional affiliates have canceled hundreds of flights

DALLAS — Delta Air Lines and its regional affiliates canceled more than a quarter of their schedule on the East Coast by midafternoon Friday, aviation data provider Cirium said.

More than 1,100 flights for Delta and its affiliates have been canceled.

United and United Express had canceled more than 500 flights, or 12% of their schedule, and American Airlines' network had canceled 450 flights, 7.5% of its schedule.

Southwest and Alaska do not use the CrowdStrike software that led to the global internet outages and had canceled fewer than a half-dozen flights each.

Portland, Oregon, mayor declares an emergency over the outage

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PORTLAND, Ore. — Mayor Ted Wheeler declared an emergency Friday after more than half of the city's computer systems were affected by the global internet outage.

Wheeler said during a news conference that while emergency services calls weren't interrupted, dispatchers were having to manually track 911 calls with pen and paper for a few hours. He said 266 of the city's 487 computer systems were affected.

State and local governments in the US work on recovering from the internet outage

States and local governments across the U.S. worked to resolve problems caused by the global internet outage.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds said critical state IT systems that had suffered from the outage were fully operational by midafternoon.

In Alaska, the state court system repaired every computer workstation and server, completing the task within 12 hours.

"Thankfully, our Information Services team worked overnight repairing as much as possible to ensure that essential functions are operational and that hearings are able to go forward today," Koford said in an email.

In Kansas, the outage temporarily blocked the public's online access to court records because it affected servers for the judicial branch's case management system, according to spokesperson Lisa Taylor. Servers were back up quickly by Friday afternoon — in sharp contrast to the weeks it took to resume online access to court records after a cyberattack in October.

But in other places, the recovery was slower.

Anthony Lewis, of New Bedford, Massachusetts, came to Norfolk County Superior Court outside Boston for a case, only to learn all cases on Friday were rescheduled.

"I drove all the way out here for nothing," he said.

The White House is in contact with CrowdStrike executives

The White House says it is in regular contact with executives at CrowdStrike, which makes the software tied to the global internet outage. President Joe Biden is continuing to receive updates, officials said.

Federal agencies also are assessing the effects of the CrowdStrike outage on U.S. government operations, the White House said.

Border crossings into the US are delayed

SAN DIEGO — People seeking to enter the U.S. from both the north and the south found that the border crossings were delayed by the internet outage.

The San Ysidro Port of Entry was gridlocked Friday morning with pedestrians waiting three hours to cross, according to the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Even cars with people approved for a U.S. Customs and Border Protection "Trusted Traveler" program for low-risk passengers waited up to 90 minutes. The program, known as SENTRI, moves passengers more quickly through customs and passport control if they make an appointment for an interview and submit to a background check to travel through customs and passport control more quickly when they arrive in the U.S.

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System posted on X that some of its employees who live in Tijuana, Mexico, were unable to get to work Friday. The agency said the disruption may affect its service and encouraged riders to check for delays or detours.

Meanwhile, at the U.S.-Canada border, Windsor Police reported long delays at the crossings at the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor tunnel.

The dateline has been corrected to San Diego.

Air travel has been disrupted around the globe

BERLIN — Airlines across the world reported disruptions to check-in systems and other issues that caused flights to be grounded or delayed.

German-based airline Eurowings, a budget subsidiary of Lufthansa, called on customers who were traveling inside Germany to book train tickets instead and submit them for reimbursement after it canceled German domestic flights and services to and from the United Kingdom.

At least 100 flights to and from Switzerland's Zurich Airport were canceled Friday. Berlin's Brandenburg

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Airport also saw flights canceled after being hit with the outage. Issues were also reported in the busy European hubs of Amsterdam and Rome.

France's airport authority reported that some flights were temporarily suspended and there were check-in delays at Paris' Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports.

Thailand's two largest airports reported being forced to check in passengers manually.

In South Korea, several low-cost airlines reported problems, triggering delays in passenger boardings at Incheon international Airport, the country's biggest airport, airport officials said.

In Canada, Porter Airlines said it was canceling its flights for several hours because of the outage. Azul Airlines, a Brazilian low-cost airline, said its check-in systems were affected, causing occasional flight delays.

Some U.S. air passengers were stranded or waited for hours to board

MINNEAPOLIS — Passengers across the U.S. found themselves facing a miserable experience Friday at some of the nation's airports.

The FAA said the airlines United, American, Delta and Allegiant had all been grounded.

At the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, Sarah Schafer was headed to Florida for her cousin's 50th birthday party, an event that had been scheduled around her availability.

She had been waiting for almost three hours Friday with no indication of when and where her flight would be rebooked. With lines stretched back the entire of length of her terminal, she stood in line with an injured ankle and used a cane to prop herself up.

"I seem calm," Schafer said. "But my angry side might come out."

More than 70 flights were canceled by 7 a.m. at Los Angeles International Airport and passengers were stuck in hours-long waits to get through security or to try to rebook their flights, the Los Angeles Times reported.

At Chicago's O'Hare Airport, many information screens, including those at boarding gates, continued to be stuck on the blue Windows "recovery" screen on Friday afternoon.

Outages affect hospitals, doctor's offices in US, Canada, England

Health care providers across the U.S. and in Canada and England had their services disrupted by the global internet outage, though some systems saw little or no effect.

Harris Health System, which runs public hospitals and clinics in the Houston area, said it had to suspend hospital visits "until further notice" due to the outage. Elective hospital procedures were being canceled and rescheduled.

The outage affected records systems for Providence, a health system with 51 hospitals in Alaska, California, Montana, Oregon and Washington state.

The New York-based Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center said it was pausing the start of any procedures that require anesthesia.

In New England, the outage led some hospitals to cancel appointments.

A spokesperson at Mass General Brigham, the largest health care system in Massachusetts, said the outage had resulted in all scheduled nonurgent surgeries, procedures and medical visits being canceled for Friday. Emergency departments remained open.

The 188-hospital HCA Healthcare system said it didn't expect its ability to provide care to be affected, and in Los Angeles, the Cedars-Sinai Health System remained open and continued to provide care. The Cleveland Clinic also said patient care was not affected.

In Canada, University Health Network, one of that nation's largest hospital networks, said clinical activity was continuing as scheduled, but some patients may experience delays.

Across the Atlantic, Britain's National Health Service said there were problems at most doctors' offices across England as the outage hit the appointment and patient record system used across the health service. The state-funded NHS treats the vast majority of people in the U.K.

The NHS said the 999 number used to call for emergency ambulances wasn't affected.

If you want a Starbucks coffee, you can't order ahead

People pining for a venti caramel macchiato or a grande frozen mango dragonfruit lemonade found Friday that they couldn't order ahead from Starbucks online or with their cellphones Friday.

The coffee shop chain apologized for the problem and said it was serving customers in "a vast majority"

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of its stores and drive-thrus.

Courts in several U.S. states are disrupted by the outage

BOSTON — Courts in Massachusetts and New York saw their operations disrupted Friday by the global internet outage.

A spokesperson for the Massachusetts judiciary said about half of its workstations were down while court transcription recording systems were not operating in a number of courthouses, resulting in delays in some court sessions.

Some court proceedings were also delayed in New York because of computer problems.

In Manhattan, a criminal court proceeding for Harvey Weinstein, who is charged with rape, started 90 minutes late because of disruptions to court and corrections computer systems.

In Southern California, Orange County Superior Court also reported technical issues.

Outage forces several US states to close driver's license offices

AUSTIN, Texas — The internet outages forced Texas to close all of its driver's license offices across the state, and New York's Department of Motor Vehicles couldn't process transactions online and in its offices Friday morning.

The Texas Department of Public Safety operates driver's license offices in most of the state's 254 counties. The agency issues, renews and updates driver licenses or state ID cards and provides driver education courses.

The department said in a statement that "there is no current estimate" on when the offices will reopen.

In New York, the DMV said that by Friday afternoon, some systems had been restored and that it could begin performing online transactions. However, some in-person services were still offline.

At least three of its DMV offices closed for the day because of the outage, according to the agency's website.

Zackary Blaine, a 28-year-old living in the New York City suburbs, said he took Friday off work expecting to spend a chunk of the day at the DMV only to find security guards turning people away at the door of his local office.

"I'm not too stressed, but it's kind of wild to think how much something like this impacts things," Blaine said by phone later.

Internet Society leader says outages 'will happen in the future'

SAN FRANCISCO — The head of a nonprofit group that promotes building the internet says outages like the major one affecting Microsoft and causing problems across the globe will happen in the future because of "our world of complex, interconnected systems."

"The important part is how we learn from them and how we improve the resilience of our systems, so that similar issues do not happen again," Andrew Sullivan, CEO of the nonprofit Internet Society said Friday.

The outages disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies across the world, but Sullivan said there was no loss of connectivity and data continued to flow.

"This was a failure of some systems using a specific operating system and a specific vendor's management tools," he said. "Unfortunately, those systems were used widely and for many functions critical to people's daily lives."

Meanwhile, some cybersecurity experts are warning that organizations affected by the internet outage should be alert for scammers.

"Organizations should be aware and wary of that and making sure that when they're talking about getting this problem remediated, that they're talking to trusted organizations," said Gartner analyst Eric Grenier. "Attackers will definitely prey on organizations as a result of this."

The spelling of Andrew Sullivan's last name has been corrected.

Disruptions in Southern California didn't close ports

SANTA ANA — Ports in Southern California saw some disruptions from the internet outage but still were operating.

Mario Cordero, chief executive of the Port of Long Beach, said four marine terminals experienced computer issues but resolved them with minimal disruption.

One of the Port of Los Angeles' seven terminals had limited operations overnight, said spokesperson

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Phillip Sanfield.

"Basically, it's been minimal impact overnight and we're going to have to wait and see how these terminals come up over the next several hours," Sanfield said.

In Brazil and South Africa, banks report service disruptions

SAO PAULO — Bradesco, one of the main banks in Brazil, notified its users via its app that digital services were unstable due to a global cyber outage, but its ATMs were working normally. Bradesco has over 100 million clients.

In South Africa, at least two major banks said they experienced service disruptions as customers complained they weren't able to make payments using their bank cards at grocery stores and gas stations or use ATMs. Both said they were able to restore services hours later.

Ticket sales for Universal Studios Japan affected by global system outage

TOKYO — Universal Studios Japan in Osaka, western Japan, said the global system outage that started Friday will continue to affect ticket sales at the park over the weekend.

The park said its ticket booths sales will not be available Saturday and Sunday and asked visitors to purchase their tickets on the USJ official website or via designated ticket sales site Lawson Ticket. Park attractions aren't affected.

Emergency call centers in some US states report outages

Officials in some U.S. states, including Alaska, Virginia and Iowa, warned of problems to 911 emergency call centers in their areas. Alaska State Troopers warned that many 911 and nonemergency call centers across the state weren't working correctly and shared alternate numbers.

In Virginia, the City of Fairfax Police Department said on social media that it was experiencing technical difficulties with its phone systems, including 911. The department shared a nonemergency number for callers and said 911 could still be used, but calls wouldn't go directly to the dispatch center.

The New Hampshire Emergency Services and Communications reported a temporary interruption to 911 calls early Friday, with the system fully restored several hours later, officials said. In Iowa, the Marion County Sheriff's Office warned on social media that phone lines were down and 911 calls might be routed to neighboring counties, but emergency calls would be promptly redirected to the sheriff's office.

In communities across California, police said they used cellphones to pull up maps and went back to "old-school" methods such as dispatching calls over radio and writing out police reports by hand.

"We just go back to people writing it down," San Diego Sheriff's Lt. Gavin Lanning told the San Diego Union-Tribune. "It wasn't as easy as normal."

IT companies in Sri Lanka affected by global outage

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — The National Center for Cyber Security in Sri Lanka says four information technology companies in Sri Lanka have been affected because of the global outage.

Sri Lanka Computer Emergency Readiness Team, which is known as Sri Lanka CERT, says that so far only four companies have informed them of being affected and the center attributed them to a problem with the cybersecurity platform CrowdStrike.

Charuka Damunupola, lead information security engineer at Sri Lanka CERT, says those companies were using CrowdStrike software and their systems "are in failure mode."

German regional grocery chain temporarily shut hundreds of stores

BERLIN — A German regional grocery chain, Tegut, temporarily shut its 340 stores in the country Friday morning as the computer outage affected cash register systems.

By early afternoon, more than half of the stores were open again.

London Stock Exchange experiencing disruptions, but trading not affected

LONDON — The London Stock Exchange says it is experiencing disruptions from the technology outage that has created chaos around the globe.

The LSE says its regulatory news service was not working Friday morning, but the outage hadn't affected trading.

"We are currently experiencing a third party technical issue which is impacting some of our services," a London Stock Exchange Group spokesperson said in a statement.

The exchange says it's trying to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

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Cybersecurity company at heart of IT outage says the issue isn't a cyberattack or security incident
LONDON — The chief executive of the cybersecurity company at the heart of a worldwide Microsoft outage says it is working to fix a defect sent out in a Windows update.

"This is not a security incident or cyberattack," CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz posted on X. "The issue has been identified, isolated and a fix has been deployed."

Kurtz said there was a defect in a "single content update for Windows hosts." Mac and Linux hosts weren't affected.

The company referred customers to its support portal for updates.

Pharmacy chains in Norway report problems with providing prescription medication

HELSINKI — Two pharmacy chains in Norway said they are having problems providing customers with their prescription medicine and are facing substantial connection delays because of the global network problems.

Several branches of the Apotek1 pharmacy have closed across Norway after being affected by IT issues, which also shut down the chain's online sales, the Norwegian news agency NTB reported.

The Boots drugstore and pharmacy chain also ran into problems delivering products to clients in Norway. Boots said that "due to global network problems, you may experience challenges with ordering and possible delays in dispatches," NTB reported.

Paris Olympics organizers say some Olympic delegations' arrivals have been delayed

PARIS — Paris Olympics organizers say some Olympic delegations' arrivals, as well as the delivery of some uniforms and accreditations, have been delayed because of the outage.

The organizers said in a statement that ticketing and the torch relay haven't been affected.

"Our teams have been fully mobilized to ensure the continuity of operations at optimum levels," organizers said.

Baltic container hub in Poland suspends business

WARSAW — Baltic Hub, a major container hub in the Baltic port of Gdansk, Poland, says it's battling problems resulting from the global system outage.

Their entry gates are temporarily closed and they have suspended business, the Baltic Hub said in a statement.

Ten Commandments won't go in some Louisiana classrooms until at least November as lawsuit plays out

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana won't take official steps to implement a law requiring the Ten Commandments be placed in all of the state's public school classrooms until at least November as a lawsuit makes its way through the courts, according to an agreement approved by a federal judge Friday.

The suit was filed in June by parents of Louisiana public school children with various religious backgrounds, who said the law violates First Amendment language forbidding government establishment of religion and guaranteeing religious liberty. Backers of the law argue that the Ten Commandments belong in classrooms because the commandments are historical and are part of the foundation of U.S. law.

The Louisiana law requires the commandments be posted no later than Jan. 1, a deadline unaffected by Friday's agreement. The deal assures that the defendants in the lawsuit — state education officials and several local school boards — will not post the commandments in classrooms before Nov. 15, and won't make rules governing the law's implementation before then.

Lester Duhe, a spokesman for Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill, said the defendants "agreed to not take public-facing compliance measures until November 15" to provide time for briefs, arguments and a ruling.

In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a similar Kentucky law violated the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution, which says Congress can "make no law respecting an establishment of religion." The high court found that the law had no secular purpose but rather served a plainly religious purpose.

In 2005, the Supreme Court held that such displays in a pair of Kentucky courthouses violated the Con-

stitution. At the same time, the court upheld a Ten Commandments marker on the grounds of the Texas state Capitol in Austin.

Louisiana's new law does not require school systems to spend public money on Ten Commandments posters. It allows the systems to accept donated posters or money to pay for the displays.

The law also specifically authorizes but does not require other postings in public schools, including: The Mayflower Compact, which was signed by religious pilgrims aboard the Mayflower in 1620 and is often referred to as America's "First Constitution"; the Declaration of Independence; and the Northwest Ordinance, which established a government in the Northwest Territory — in the present day Midwest — and created a pathway for admitting new states to the Union.

The legal challenge to the law came soon after it was signed by Republican Gov. Jeff Landry, a Republican who succeeded two-term Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards in January. Landry's inauguration marked a full takeover of state government by the GOP in a Bible Belt state where the party already held other every statewide elected position and a supermajority in the Legislature.

Firefighter killed at Trump rally honored with bagpipes, gun salute and a bugle sounding taps

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, MARYCLAIRE DALE, GARY FIELDS and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press CABOT, Pa. (AP) — The keens of bagpipes, a three-volley gun salute and a bugle sounding taps pierced the air of a small Pennsylvania town on Friday as hundreds gathered to honor an ex-fire chief who was shot and killed at a rally for former President Donald Trump.

Following funeral services for Corey Comperatore, large crowds of mourners waiting outside fell silent as his American flag-draped casket emerged from Cabot Methodist Church. Firefighters ceremoniously removed the flag and presented it to his wife, Helen, before loading the casket onto a fire truck adorned with black bunting.

Three firefighters stood sentry on the back of the truck, trailed by more than 100 other emergency vehicles from fire departments across the region as it rolled slowly toward Comperatore's hometown of Freeport, where he was to be laid to rest.

A sharpshooter team mounted on a nearby rooftop served as a reminder of last weekend's bloodshed. Officials have said that Comperatore spent his final moments shielding his wife and daughter from gunfire at Trump's rally last Saturday in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Trump, who suffered an ear injury in the shooting but was not seriously hurt, did not attend the funeral because of Secret Service concerns, according to a person familiar with the situation who was not authorized to speak publicly.

Annette Locke, a member of the West Deer Township Volunteer Fire Department, stood across the road from the church and lightly touched her heart as she spoke about the horrific toll from the "totally senseless" shooting.

"He was with his family on a beautiful sunny day, and now he's gone," Locke said.

Joe and Jen Brose stood at the edge of their driveway with their three young boys, all dressed in T-shirts celebrating the USA, watching the long procession, which took a full half-hour to pass.

"The community comes together at times like this," Joe Brose said.

"I thought it was very heartwarming, it was very humbling to see it," said Jen Brose, whose sister had attended the Trump rally.

Trump honored Comperatore during his speech Thursday night at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. He displayed Comperatore's firefighting gear on the convention stage, kissing his helmet and heralding the ex-chief as "an unbelievable person."

Mike Drane, who lives near the church where the funeral was held, said he was overwhelmed by Trump's tribute.

"Trump knew that that bullet was for him, not for Corey," Drane said.

Nancy Macurdy, who lives across the street from the church, was away camping when the shooting happened but wanted to be back home for the funeral.

"We're a very close community here," she said.

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A woman who was inside the church for the funeral service said Comperatore's wife and daughters delivered testimonies, and the church's pastor read a eulogy written by one of Comperatore's siblings. The woman, who declined to be quoted by name, said she did not recognize any politicians or Trump representatives among the crowd, which included country singer Billy Ray Cyrus. The service was closed to the news media.

In nearby Sarver, the town where Comperatore lived, families took the day off from work or changed other plans to gather along the community's main artery. Bands of young boys stood by the roadway, signaling for trucks to honk their horns. Five-year-old Ryder Presutti, dressed in a red firefighter's outfit, waved a small American flag as the fire trucks passed by.

Others congregated at Andy's House of Cars or Cabot Archery to await the funeral procession. Outside the Dollar General store, at least a dozen SUVs were lined up tailgate style, with their trunks open. One resident expressed her feelings with a front yard sign made of giant black letters that read, "American Hero Corey Comperatore."

"It's a very heartbreaking situation," said Daneene Wimer, 44, of Evans City, near where the shooting took place. She and her sisters came with their families to honor "somebody who put their life in their hands for their family."

"I will definitely be shedding tears (when the procession passes)," she said.

Comperatore, 50, worked as a project and tooling engineer, was an Army reservist and spent many years as a volunteer firefighter after serving as chief, according to his obituary. He and his family attended the Cabot Methodist Church, where their pastor, Jonathan Fehl, presided over the funeral.

On Thursday, thousands of mourners filed into a banquet hall to pay their respects to Comperatore and his family. Hundreds of people gathered Wednesday at a vigil for him at an auto racing track.

Guests at Thursday's visitation for Comperatore saw a slideshow of photos from his life — his wedding, a recent 50th birthday party, time with his daughters, firefighting, fishing, and palling around with his Dobermans. Also on display was a framed copy of a note to Comperatore's wife signed by Trump and former first lady Melania Trump.

"Corey will forever be remembered as a True American Hero," the Trumps wrote.

A statement issued Thursday by Comperatore's family described him as a "beloved father and husband, and a friend to so many throughout the Butler region."

"Our family is finding comfort and peace through the heartfelt messages of encouragement from people around the world, through the support of our church and community, and most of all through the strength of God," the statement said.

Two other people were wounded at Trump's rally: David Dutch, 57, of New Kensington, and James Copenhaver, 74, of Moon Township. As of Wednesday night, both had been upgraded to serious but stable condition, according to a spokesperson with Allegheny Health Network.

From a media perspective, it was a tale of two Trump speeches — and long enough for both

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

From a media perspective, Donald Trump failed to stick the landing at the Republican convention that nominated him as its presidential candidate for a third time.

His acceptance speech, which exceeded 90 minutes and stretched past midnight Eastern time into Friday, won him wide praise for its vivid recounting of last weekend's assassination attempt yet switched gears into something resembling what most of his supporters see regularly on the campaign trail.

"The 'new' Donald Trump soothed and silenced the nation for 28 minutes last night," Axios' Zachary Basu wrote on Friday. "Then the old Trump returned and bellowed, barked and bored America for 64 minutes more."

The convention was received as a well-run display of unity surrounding the Republican ticket of Trump and vice presidential candidate JD Vance. Conservative media figure Tucker Carlson may be biased — he spoke from the convention stage on Thursday — but he was giddy and giggly about what he had seen.

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"I've never been to a more fun convention or a convention with better vibes," he said.

A speech that pivoted

Trump began in subdued tones as he talked about a bullet slamming into his ear at a political rally in Pennsylvania. He indulged in dramatic political theater: walking over to kiss the helmet on a displayed uniform of retired firefighter Corey Comperatore, who was killed by the assassin's bullet intended for the former president.

Trump's speech had been billed as a call to unity where President Joe Biden's name wasn't going to be mentioned, but instead the Democrat's name came up twice after Trump switched gears. Vanity Fair said the address "gave America whiplash."

NBC News reporter Garrett Haake, stationed on the convention floor, reported that "in the first half I saw a lot of wet eyes. In the second half I saw a lot of closed eyes."

The New York Times said in a headline Friday that Trump had struggled to turn the page on "American carnage," the attention-getting phrase from his 2017 inaugural as president. "On the last night of the GOP convention on Thursday, Donald J. Trump promised to bridge political divides, and then returned to delighting in deepening them."

Similarly, the Washington Post's Isaac Arnsdorf and Josh Dawsey wrote that Trump had wrapped "a fresh gesture toward unity around the same dark view of American decline and loathing for political opponents and immigrants that have defined his nine-year political career and transformed the GOP."

The "Fox & Friends" morning show on Friday opened with a lengthy clip of Trump, who wore a bandage on his right ear, speaking about the shooting.

"I thought it was a magical moment ... it was a great speech," said "Fox & Friends" host Lawrence Jones. Yet Fox News analyst Karl Rove, while praising how the convention was run, said shortly after Trump had left the stage that there was "weakness" during the middle of a speech that began and ended well.

Comments about how long it went on

On other networks, commentators took note of its length and rambling nature. Jen Psaki, Biden's former press secretary and now an MSNBC analyst, said it was "longer than most American baseball games."

Others sensed an opening for Democrats, who have been bathed in pessimism about Biden's hopes — if he even remains a candidate. Trump "dodged a bullet last Saturday and Democrats dodged a bullet tonight," said CNN's Van Jones.

"They still have to figure out what to do about Joe Biden," said ABC News' Jonathan Karl. "There's still that movement to replace Joe Biden. But they believe, looking at this, this is the candidate that (they feel) they can beat."

While the portion that resembled Trump's stump speech was familiar to his fans, those are rarely seen at length outside of networks like Fox and Newsmax that appeal to conservative viewers. An estimated 25.4 million people watched convention coverage Thursday, the largest audience of the four nights, the Nielsen company said. The audience peaked at 28.4 million between 10:45 and 11 p.m. Eastern, at the beginning of Trump's speech.

With the balloons being cleared from the convention hall in Milwaukee, the attention of the political press will quickly turn to who Democrats nominate to oppose Trump. The subject line in Friday morning's influential Politico Playbook? "Biden world seethes as Dems move to dump him."

Tech disruptions sparked by software update highlight the fragility of globally connected technology

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Airlines, banks, hospitals and other risk-averse organizations around the world chose cybersecurity company CrowdStrike to protect their computer systems from hackers and data breaches.

But all it took was one faulty CrowdStrike software update to cause global disruptions Friday that grounded flights, knocked banks and media outlets offline, and disrupted hospitals, retailers and other services.

"This is a function of the very homogenous technology that goes into the backbone of all of our IT infrastructure," said Gregory Falco, an assistant professor of engineering at Cornell University. "What really causes this mess is that we rely on very few companies, and everybody uses the same folks, so everyone

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goes down at the same time.”

The trouble with the update issued by CrowdStrike and affecting computers running Microsoft’s Windows operating system was not a hacking incident or cyberattack, according to CrowdStrike, which apologized and said a fix was on the way.

But it wasn’t an easy fix. It required “boots on the ground” to remediate, said Gartner analyst Eric Grenier. “The fix is working, it’s just a very manual process and there’s no magic key to unlock it,” Grenier said. “I think that is probably what companies are struggling with the most here.”

While not everyone is a client of CrowdStrike and its platform known as Falcon, it is one of the leading cybersecurity providers, particularly in transportation, healthcare, banking and other sectors that have a lot at stake in keeping their computer systems working.

“They’re usually risk-averse organizations that don’t want something that’s crazy innovative, but that can work and also cover their butts when something goes wrong. That’s what CrowdStrike is,” Falco said. “And they’re looking around at their colleagues in other sectors and saying, ‘Oh, you know, this company also uses that, so I’m gonna need them, too.’”

Worrying about the fragility of a globally connected technology ecosystem is nothing new. It’s what drove fears in the 1990s of a technical glitch that could cause chaos at the turn of the millennium.

“This is basically what we were all worried about with Y2K, except it’s actually happened this time,” wrote Australian cybersecurity consultant Troy Hunt on the social platform X.

Across the world Friday, affected computers were showing the “blue screen of death” — a sign that something went wrong with Microsoft’s Windows operating system.

But what’s different now is “that these companies are even more entrenched,” Falco said. “We like to think that we have a lot of players available. But at the end of the day, the biggest companies use all the same stuff.”

Founded in 2011 and publicly traded since 2019, CrowdStrike describes itself in its annual report to financial regulators as having “reinvented cybersecurity for the cloud era and transformed the way cybersecurity is delivered and experienced by customers.” It emphasizes its use of artificial intelligence in helping to keep pace with adversaries. It reported having 29,000 subscribing customers at the start of the year.

The Austin, Texas-based firm is one of the more visible cybersecurity companies in the world and spends heavily on marketing, including Super Bowl ads. At cybersecurity conferences, it’s known for large booths displaying massive action-figure statues representing different state-sponsored hacking groups that CrowdStrike technology promises to defend against.

CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz is among the most highly compensated in the world, recording more than \$230 million in total compensation in the last three years. Kurtz is also a driver for a CrowdStrike-sponsored car racing team.

After his initial statement about the problem was criticized for lack of contrition, Kurtz apologized in a later social media post Friday and on NBC’s “Today Show.”

“We understand the gravity of the situation and are deeply sorry for the inconvenience and disruption,” he said on X.

Richard Stiennon, a cybersecurity industry analyst, said this was a historic mistake by CrowdStrike. “This is easily the worst faux pas, technical faux pas or glitch of any security software provider ever,” said Stiennon, who has tracked the cybersecurity industry for 24 years.

While the problem is an easy technical fix, he said, its impact could be long-lasting for some organizations because of the hands-on work needed to fix each affected computer. “It’s really, really difficult to touch millions of machines. And people are on vacation right now, so, you know, the CEO will be coming back from his trip to the Bahamas in a couple of weeks and he won’t be able to use his computers.”

Stiennon said he did not think the outage revealed a bigger problem with the cybersecurity industry or CrowdStrike as a company.

“The markets are going to forgive them, the customers are going to forgive them, and this will blow over,” he said.

Forrester analyst Allie Mellen credited CrowdStrike for clearly telling customers what they need to do to fix the problem. But to restore trust, she said there will need to be a deeper look at what occurred and

what changes can be made to prevent it from happening again.

"A lot of this is likely to come down to the testing and software development process and the work that they've put into testing these kinds of updates before deployment," Mellen said. "But until we see the complete retrospective, we won't know for sure what the failure was."

A massive tech outage is causing worldwide disruptions. Here's what we know

NEW YORK (AP) — Much of the world faced online disarray Friday as a widespread technology outage affected companies and services across industries — grounding flights, knocking banks and hospital systems offline and media outlets off air.

At the heart of the massive disruption is CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm that provides software to scores of companies worldwide. The company says the problem occurred when it deployed a faulty update to computers running Microsoft Windows, noting that the issue behind the outage was not a security incident or cyberattack.

CrowdStrike has said a fix is on the way. Still, chaos deepened hours after the problem was first detected. Here's what you need to know.

How did Friday's 'blue screen' outage emerge?

Friday's disruptions began when a faulty update was pushed out from CrowdStrike for one of its tools, "Falcon." In a statement about the ongoing situation, the company said the defect was found "in a single content update for Windows hosts" — noting that Mac and Linux systems were not impacted.

But, because scores of companies rely on CrowdStrike for their security needs with Windows as their operating system, the consequences of this kind of technical problem have been far-reaching. As a result, affected computer after computer showed the "blue screen of death" error message.

Long lines formed at airports in the U.S., Europe and Asia as airlines lost access to check-in and booking services during peak summer travel — disrupting thousands of flights. Banks in South Africa and New Zealand reported outages impacting payments. Some news stations, particularly in Australia, were unable to broadcast for hours. And hospitals had problems with their appointment systems, leading to delays and sometimes cancelations for critical care, while officials in some U.S. states warned of 911 problems in their areas.

Elsewhere, people experienced more minor inconveniences, including trouble ordering ahead at Starbucks, causing long lines at some of the coffee chain's stores. Some billboards in New York City's famous Times Square also went dark.

Experts stress that Friday's disruptions underscore the vulnerability of worldwide dependence on software that comes from only a handful of providers.

"It is an 'all our eggs are in one basket' situation," Craig Shue, professor and computer science department head at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, said in emailed commentary. "This lets us make sure our 'basket' is high quality: the software provider tries to identify threats and respond to them quickly. But at the same time, if anything goes wrong and the basket fails, we have a lot of broken eggs."

What is CrowdStrike?

CrowdStrike is a U.S. cybersecurity company that provides software to companies around the world and across industries. It bills itself as being the globe's most advanced cloud-based security technology provider.

"We stop breaches," the cybersecurity company says on its website.

According to its website, CrowdStrike was founded in 2011 and launched in early 2012. It listed on the Nasdaq exchange five years ago. Last month, the Austin, Texas, company reported that its revenue rose 33% in the latest quarter from the same quarter a year earlier — logging a net profit of \$42.8 million, up from \$491,000 in the first quarter of last year. It reported having 29,000 subscribing customers.

CrowdStrike has a partnership with Amazon Web Services and its "Falcon for Defender" security technology is designed to supplement Microsoft Defender to prevent attacks.

Is there a fix?

Disruptions on Friday continued hours after CrowdStrike first identified the issue. But both the company and Microsoft said that they're working to get systems back online.

In an emailed statement, CrowdStrike said that it was “actively working with customers impacted by a defect found in a single content update for Windows hosts” — adding that a fix “had been deployed” for the identified issue.

CrowdStrike President and CEO George Kurtz later apologized. “We understand the gravity of the situation and are deeply sorry for the inconvenience and disruption,” he wrote on social media platform X.

Microsoft spokesperson Frank X. Shaw said that the company was “actively supporting customers to assist in their recovery.” Both CrowdStrike and Microsoft are also appearing to engage IT personnel on official online channels, such as Reddit.

While the problem is fixable, it requires some expertise — and its impacts could last long past Friday, with Kurtz noting earlier that some customers may need a “manual” fix. Cybersecurity experts also warn of bad actors who may reach out claiming they can help. Smaller companies or organizations with less IT resources are particularly at risk.

Gartner analyst Eric Grenier noted that those affected should make sure they’re talking to trusted organizations as they work towards recovery. “Attackers will definitely prey on organizations as a result of this,” he said.

Joe Biden faces increasing pressure to quit the race, but has spent a lifetime overcoming the odds

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — To borrow a favorite phrase from the man himself, President Joe Biden is at an inflection point.

Is his on-the-ropes reelection campaign about public service or his ego? About securing his legacy or shaping the future? Such opposing forces of American politics have been clashing with each other since his awful debate with Donald Trump.

Biden now is weighing whether to bow to the mounting pressure to step aside. His decision will be based not just on this moment but on his long history in public life and the extraordinary personal struggles he has endured since the dawn of his political career.

His party’s swelling crisis of confidence in Biden’s capacity to beat Trump is confronting his legendary self-assuredness. The next days will prove to be critical.

Right now, he’s dug in and he and his campaign have insisted he’s staying in the race.

In the three weeks since the debate, Biden has banked on inertia and the fear of the unknown — and there are a lot of unknowns — to stem the panic in his party. But Democrats are increasingly seeking to push him out because of what they believe they do know: Biden is currently trailing Trump and threatens to bring them all down with him.

First with private signals, and now with coordinated leaks, some of the most influential Democrats in the country — among them Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer — let it be known they had doubts about Biden’s viability. Some told him so directly. All let it be known publicly. The polls — not great before the debate — are worse.

It suddenly looks like the walls are closing in.

The inflection point

Biden’s orbit, already shrinking, has grown smaller in recent days. He’s down to a few longtime aides as he decides what to do.

His loyalists express frustration that the Democratic criticism of the president is harming his ability to beat Trump. Campaign officials have said Biden has grown even more committed to staying in the race as the calls for him to go have mounted.

But there is also time for Biden to reconsider — a brief opening seemingly being exploited by party leaders trying to plot his exit.

Biden has kept a brisk schedule since the June 27 debate catastrophe, working to convince voters he has not gone to seed, that he is up for the task of another four years, that the debate was merely a “bad night.”

After some well-received speeches mixed with so-so TV interviews and a day featuring an extended

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news conference in which he displayed a nuanced grasp of policy but also committed a few gasp-inducing gaffes, he got COVID-19.

Meanwhile in Milwaukee, energized and united Republicans celebrated Trump's nomination at their convention, their adoration stoked by his defiant response in the seconds after a gunman opened fire at his Pennsylvania rally in a failed attempt on his life.

Biden retreated to Delaware to isolate and recover. His biggest supporter and one of his closest advisers, Jill Biden, is with him.

The trajectory of the race

Some Democrats hope Biden, while off the campaign trail for a while, will take a fresh look at the trajectory of the race and how he wants history to remember him over the coming days.

For Biden's team it's whiplash. His aides thought the president had quelled the flaring post-debate concerns about his age and acuity — twice.

First, he made a surprise call into MSNBC's "Morning Joe" to make a flat-out challenge: "Any of these guys that don't think I should run, run against me. Announce for president, challenge me at the convention!"

Then, he held his own for an hour last week at a news conference closing the NATO summit — speaking assuredly in a high-pressure, unscripted setting. Though, he flubbed when he named Trump instead of Kamala Harris as his vice president, after calling Ukraine's president "Putin" and quickly correcting himself.

After a weekend time-out to let the country absorb the shock of the assassination attempt on Trump, calls for Biden to exit the race resurfaced. Even Joe Scarborough of "Morning Joe" added his voice to that chorus.

It sure didn't seem like isolation was changing his mind. On Friday, he bluntly called for restored unity and sought to shift the focus back to Trump's agenda. He said he was looking forward to getting back on the campaign trail next week to challenge the Republican's claims, "while making the case for my own record and the vision that I have for America: one where we save our democracy, protect our rights and freedoms, and create opportunity for everyone."

"The stakes are high, and the choice is clear," he said. Together, we will win."

The president's loyalists are torn. Some believe they can quell the concerns once again, but there's also a new fear that maybe this time it's for real. But Biden's entire life and history are stacked up against calling it quits. For him, giving up has never been the right answer.

This is a man who has been through so many personal trials and rebounded from the brink, dating back to the days after he was first elected to the Senate, when his first wife and baby daughter were killed in a car wreck that seriously injured his two young boys.

He suffered and survived two brain aneurysms. He has weathered the death of son Beau, the one he has often said should have been president some day. He's dealt with his other son's descent into drug addiction and more recently, conviction on gun charges.

Biden's been counted out politically many times, only to defy the conventional wisdom. He lost the first two presidential primaries in 2020 only to recover and win the election. Pundits predicted the midterm elections in 2022 would be a massive sweep by Republicans, but they were not.

Can he balance the concerns?

So, how does Biden balance these very real concerns — about protecting the institutions he loves in a risky election where he says the bedrock of the nation is at stake, with a stubborn streak built by decades of experience that tells him to press forward through headwinds of doubt?

There are just a few weeks before a self-imposed deadline by Democrats to nominate Biden as their guy for 2024.

It's an effort to restore order — and tamp down any other signs of mutiny. Biden has to decide whether to shut it all out — the polls, the worries, the noise — and wager his public service legacy against Trump. To him, it's a gamble that risks democracy itself, as he's put it, if he should lose.

Influential Democrats from the highest levels of the party apparatus, including congressional leadership headed by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, are sending signals of worry.

Using mountains of data showing Biden's standing could seriously damage the ranks of Democrats in

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Congress, frank conversations in public and private and now the president's own few days off, many Democrats now see an opportunity to encourage a reassessment.

Former President Obama has privately expressed concerns, and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi privately warned Biden that Democrats could lose the ability to seize control of the House if he doesn't step away.

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., who called earlier for Biden to quit the race, said Thursday he has had frequent conversations with Pelosi about this. Asked about reports that Pelosi is working behind the scenes to persuade Biden to step down, Smith said no other Democrat has the party's pulse more than she does.

"We respect Nancy right up to the fact that she stepped aside," he said. "She still was very capable, but she passed the torch to the next generation."

Smith added, "So I think she's a good person to listen to about where we're at right now as a party." Biden is 81; Pelosi, 84.

Nearly two-thirds of Democrats say Biden should withdraw from the presidential race and let his party nominate a different candidate, according to a new survey by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Biden has dismissed the polls as an imperfect measure.

And he really is the only person to have beaten Trump. With 108 days until the election, in a year that has already seen shocking twists and turns, there's time for something else to happen to tip the scales one way or another.

There's also no guarantee that another candidate, such as Vice President Kamala Harris, would fare better, and private squabbles in the party have broken out over who the replacement would be if Biden steps aside.

Delaware Sen. Chris Coons, Biden's closest friend in Congress and the co-chair of his campaign, was asked Thursday about Biden staying in the race.

"I don't have anything to tell," he said, shaking his head. "I don't know."

Injured and locked-out fans file first lawsuits over Copa America stampede and melee

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The first lawsuits have been filed in connection with last weekend's melees that broke out when fans without tickets forced their way into the Copa America soccer tournament final at Hard Rock Stadium, with one person citing serious injuries and some ticket holders saying they were denied entry.

Miami-Dade County and federal court records show that as of Friday morning, at least four lawsuits had been filed against the stadium and CONMEBOL, South American soccer's governing organization, over the chaos that broke out at the admission gates before Sunday's game between Argentina and Colombia.

Attorney Judd Rosen, who represents an injured woman, said stadium and CONMEBOL officials should have hired more police officers and security guards, but they put profits above safety.

"This was a cash grab," Rosen said. "All the money they should have spent on an appropriate safety plan and adequate safety team, they put in their pockets."

Stadium officials declined comment Friday beyond saying they will refund unused tickets bought directly from organizers. They previously said they hired double the security for Sunday's final compared to Miami Dolphins games and had exceeded CONMEBOL's recommendations. The stadium will be hosting several games during the 2026 World Cup.

CONMEBOL, which is based in Paraguay, also did not specifically comment on the lawsuits. In an earlier statement, the tournament organizers put blame for the melees on stadium officials, saying they had not implemented its recommendations.

Rosen's client, Isabel Quintero, was one of several ticket holders injured when they were knocked down or into walls and pillars. Police arrested 27 people — including the president of Colombia's soccer federation and his son for a post-game altercation with a security guard — and ejected 55.

Rosen said his client, who works in finance, had flown her father to Miami from Colombia to see the

game as a belated Father's Day present, spending \$1,500 apiece for the two tickets.

He said Quintero, who is in her 30s, was in line when security closed the admission gates to prevent unticketed fans from entering. As the crowd built up and game time approached, people were being dangerously pushed up against the fences. Security guards opened the gates "just a little bit to let one person in at a time," Rosen said.

That is when some in the crowd pushed the gates completely open, causing a stampede, Rosen said. Quintero got slammed into a pillar, causing soft tissue damage to her knee and shoulder and a chest injury that is making it difficult to breathe, he said. Her father was knocked down, but he wasn't hurt.

"He never once watched the Colombian national team in person because he thought it was too dangerous in Colombia," Rosen said. "So he flew over here as a Father's Day present to watch his national team play and this is the result, something they never thought would happen in the States."

He said he expects to file several more lawsuits, having spoken to one person who had teeth knocked out and another who suffered a broken arm.

Attorney Irwin Ast filed lawsuits in state and federal court for fans who had tickets but weren't admitted because the hundreds of unticketed fans who pushed their way inside filled the stadium past capacity.

He said these fans had come from all over the United States and the Americas, spending thousands for admission, air fare and hotel rooms. They also experienced fear and emotional distress when they were caught up in the stampede and melee, which could have been prevented if the stadium and CONMEBOL had a better security plan, he said.

"People bring their kids — this is a once-in-a-lifetime deal to a lot of people," Ast said. "This was a terrifying situation."

Bangladesh imposes nationwide curfew as deadly protests over government jobs escalate

By AL EMRUN GARJON, JULHAS ALAM and KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government late Friday announced a nationwide curfew across Bangladesh and ordered the deployment of military forces to maintain order following days of deadly clashes over the allocation of government jobs.

The announcement was made by Obaidul Quader, the general secretary of the ruling Awami League party, and came after police and security officials fired on protesters earlier Friday and banned all gatherings in the capital. Several people were killed, media reports said.

Quader said the military was deployed to help the civilian administration keep order.

The protests, which began weeks ago but escalated sharply this week, represent the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since she won a fourth consecutive term in office after elections in January. Main opposition groups boycotted those polls.

There were varying reports of the number of people killed Friday, with Independent Television reporting 17 dead and Somoy TV reporting 30. An Associated Press reporter saw 23 bodies at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, but it was not immediately clear whether they had all died on Friday.

A death toll of 22 people was reported on Thursday, in what had so far been the bloodiest day of demonstrations, according to local media, as protesting students attempted to impose a "complete shutdown" of the country.

Authorities could not be reached immediately to confirm figures for the deaths.

The chaos has highlighted cracks in Bangladesh's governance and economy and the frustration of young graduates who face a lack of good jobs.

The government has deployed police and paramilitary forces across the capital to lock down campuses and break up protests. On Wednesday, universities including the country's largest suspended classes and closed dormitories, and on Friday police in Dhaka said they were banning all gatherings and demonstrations in the capital.

An Associated Press reporter saw border guard officials fire at a crowd of more than 1,000 protesters who had gathered outside the head office of state-run Bangladesh Television, which was attacked and set on fire by protesters the previous day.

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The border guards shot at the crowd with rifles and sound grenades, while police officers fired tear gas and rubber bullets. Bullets littered the streets, which were also marked by smears of blood.

Internet services and mobile data were widely disrupted on Thursday night and remained down on Friday in the capital, Dhaka. Social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp were also not loading. It coincided with a widespread internet outage on Friday that disrupted flights, banks, media outlets and companies around the world, but the disruptions in Bangladesh were substantially greater than seen elsewhere.

A statement from the country's Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said they were unable to ensure service after their data center was attacked Thursday by demonstrators, who set fire to some equipment. The Associated Press was not able to independently verify this.

Student protesters said they will extend their calls to impose a shutdown on Friday as well, and urged mosques across the country to hold funeral prayers for those who have been killed. Major universities have said they will close their doors until tensions ease.

The protesters are demanding an end to a quota system that reserves up to 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971 against Pakistan.

They argue the system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, and they want it replaced with a merit-based system.

But Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions to the war regardless of their political affiliation.

The Bangladeshi leader is credited for bringing stable growth to Bangladesh, but rising inflation — thanks in part to the global upheaval sparked by the war in Ukraine — has triggered labor unrest and dissatisfaction with the government.

Even though job opportunities have grown in some parts of the private sector, many people prefer government jobs because they are seen as more stable and lucrative. But there aren't enough to go around — each year, some 400,000 graduates compete for around 3,000 jobs in the civil service exam.

"What is unfolding in Bangladesh is deeply unsettling for a generation that only asked for a fair opportunity in public service recruitment," said Saad Hammadi, a freedom of speech advocate with the Canada-based Balsillie School of International Affairs. "That a peaceful protest against a state policy would slip into the peak of lawlessness shows the government's lack of farsightedness and inefficient policy governance," Hammadi said.

"The internet shutdown makes matters worse. Local news sites are inaccessible, and people in the country are left incommunicado with the rest of the world all in the pretext of conducting sweeping operations by the state that have often resulted in serious human rights violations," he added in an email.

Bangladesh has previously shut down internet services in areas affected by protests, using it as a measure to suppress dissent by opposition parties. Internet watchdog Access Now said it recorded three shutdowns in the country in 2023 - all of which overlapped with opposition rallies and were limited in scope to one city or district. That came after six shutdowns in 2022.

CIVICUS, a nonprofit that tracks civic freedoms around the world, last year downgraded Bangladesh to "closed," the worst rating that it could assign, along with China and Venezuela, following a crackdown on the country's opposition members and supporters ahead of its national election.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has backed the protesting students and vowed to organize its own demonstrations, and many of their supporters have joined in the students' demonstrations. On Friday, police fired tear gas at a few hundred BNP supporters, and arrested senior BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

The Awami League and the BNP have often accused each other of fueling political chaos and violence, most recently ahead of the country's national election, which was marred by a crackdown on several opposition figures while Hasina's government accused the party of attempting to disrupt the vote.

Hasina's government had earlier halted the job quotas following mass student protests in 2018, but last month, Bangladesh's High Court nullified that decision and reinstated the quotas after relatives of the 1971 veterans filed petitions, triggering the latest demonstrations.

The Supreme Court has suspended that ruling pending an appeal hearing, and said in a statement it will take up the issue on Sunday.

On Wednesday, Hasina urged protesters in a televised address to “wait with patience” for the court verdict, saying that she believes they “will get justice” and “will not be disappointed.”

How Russia’s espionage case against Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich unfolded

By The Associated Press undefined

Here are key developments in Russia’s case against Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who was convicted on Friday of espionage charges in an unusually rapid trial in the country’s highly politicized legal system. He was sentenced to 16 years in a maximum-security prison.

Gershkovich, his employer and the U.S. government have vehemently denied the charges. U.S. officials and The Wall Street Journal have denounced the trial as a sham.

March 29, 2023 – Gershkovich, 31 at the time and on a reporting trip, is arrested in Yekaterinburg, Russia’s fourth-largest city, about 1,670 kilometers (1,035 miles) east of Moscow.

March 30, 2023 – Russia’s Federal Security Service, a domestic security agency known by the acronym the FSB, issues a statement accusing Gershkovich of acting on U.S. orders to collect state secrets. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov claims that the journalist was “caught red-handed.” Officials don’t provide any evidence and don’t disclose any further details. The case is classified as secret, as is customary for espionage and treason cases in Russia. The Wall Street Journal and the U.S. government deny the charges. Gershkovich appears in a Moscow court and is ordered into pretrial detention in the notorious Lefortovo Prison.

April 7, 2023 – Russian news agencies report, citing law enforcement officials, that Gershkovich has been formally charged with espionage. The reports say that he categorically denied the charges and said that he was merely working as a journalist.

April 10, 2023 – The U.S. State Department officially designates Gershkovich as wrongfully detained. The designation is applied to only a small subset of Americans jailed by foreign countries who meet a certain criteria, and such cases go to a special State Department envoy, who tries to negotiate their release.

April 13, 2023 – Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov tells state news agency Tass that talks about a possible exchange could take place through a dedicated channel that Russian and U.S. security agencies established for such purposes. He emphasizes that “the issue of exchanging anyone can only be considered after a court delivers its verdict.”

April 17, 2023 – U.S. Ambassador to Russia Lynne Tracy visits Gershkovich in the Lefortovo Prison for the first time. Tracy says that “he is in good health and remains strong.”

October 26, 2023 – Gershkovich turns 32 behind bars.

June 13, 2024 – Russia’s Prosecutor General’s office says an indictment of Gershkovich has been finalized and his case was filed to the Sverdlovsk Regional Court in Yekaterinburg. The statement for the first time details accusations against Gershkovich, claiming without evidence that the reporter is accused of “gathering secret information” about a facility in the Sverdlovsk region that produced and repaired military equipment. The Wall Street Journal and its publisher Dow Jones reject the allegations as “false and baseless” and condemn “Russia’s latest move toward a sham trial.”

June 17, 2024 – The Sverdlovsk Regional Court sets the trial date for June 26.

June 26, 2024 – Gershkovich appears in court for the first hearing in the trial. Proceedings take place behind closed doors, but journalists are allowed in for several minutes before the hearing starts. The reporter is wearing a black-and-blue plaid shirt, and his head is shaved. No explanation is offered as to why. Some inmates in Russia have their heads shaved or their hair cut short for sanitary reasons. The Wall Street Journal and U.S. officials once again denounce the trial as a sham. The next hearing is scheduled for mid-August.

July 16, 2024 – Court records show that the second hearing in the trial has been unexpectedly moved forward to July 18. Court officials tell Russian media that it has been done at the request of Gershkovich’s lawyers.

July 18, 2024 – The second hearing in the trial takes place behind closed doors, and journalists are not

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allowed in the courtroom. After the hearing, court officials announce that closing arguments will take place the next day.

July 19, 2024 – The unusually swift trial wraps up after three hearings. Closing arguments are held behind closed doors, with the media once again barred from the courtroom. The verdict is delivered just several hours after the closing arguments. Gershkovich is convicted of espionage and sentenced to 16 years in a maximum-security prison.

Tiger Woods ends his season by missing the cut in the British Open

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

TROON, Scotland (AP) — Tiger Woods tied a personal record in the British Open on Friday, one he could have done without but perhaps should come to expect.

Woods matched his highest 36-hole score as a professional — 156 — to miss the cut for the third straight time in a major.

He tapped in for a routine par on the 18th hole at Royal Troon and signed for a 6-over 77, a round that got away from him early with a double bogey and never improved during the day.

“It wasn’t very good,” Woods said. “I made a double right out of the hopper when I needed to go the other way. Just was fighting it pretty much all day. I never really hit it close enough to make birdies and consequently made a lot of bogeys.”

That brought a short season to an abrupt end.

Woods said he won’t play again until December, possibly his unofficial Hero World Challenge with a 20-man field in the Bahamas. He specifically referenced what he jokingly calls his fifth major, the PNC Championship, a 36-hole exhibition where he plays alongside his 15-year-old son Charlie.

He played all four majors for the first time since 2019 — the year he won the Masters for his 15th career major — but played only one other tournament, withdrawing after 24 holes in the Genesis Invitational in February because of the flu.

He needs to play more to get sharp. But playing more risks taking a toll on a body that has been battered by back surgeries, knee surgeries and a February 2021 car crash that shattered his right leg and ankle.

It’s the ultimate Catch-22 for a player who turns 49 at the end of the year.

“I’d like to have played more, but I just wanted to make sure that I was able to play the major championships this year,” he said. “I got a lot of time off to get better, to be better physically, which has been the case all year.

“Physically I’ve gotten better, which is great. I just need to keep progressing like that and then eventually start playing more competitively and start getting into kind of the competitive flow again.”

He has never liked the idea of being a ceremonial golfer, but that’s what the scores suggest.

In his 10 rounds at the majors this year, his average score was 75.6. He shot over par in all but one round — an even-par 72 in the first round at the Masters — and has gone 15 consecutive rounds in the majors since he last broke par.

Woods also had a 156 when he missed the cut in the 2015 U.S. Open at Chambers Bay, where he was trying to return from the first of what would be five back surgeries. His only 36-hole score higher was a 157 at Bay Hill in 1994 when he was a high school senior.

There was plenty of ceremony at Royal Troon, and it wasn’t all bad. Shane Lowry, who took the early 36-hole lead, had the loudest gallery. Woods had the biggest one.

They honor their champions at the British Open, and Woods long has been treated like royalty. He hit his approach onto the 18th green and began the slow walk between two large grandstands. Warm applause soon gave way to a roaring ovation as fans young and old rose to their feet the closer he got to the green.

Woods removed his cap and saluted the crowd, and waved to them again as he walked off the green. Every British Open he plays leaves fans wondering if that will be the last they see him.

But he wasn’t ruling out a return. The British Open returns to Royal Portrush in 2025.

“Yeah, definitely,” Woods said when asked if he would be there.

He can only hope he brings a better brand of game, that he can be a little more sharp. That he missed the cut was inevitable the way he started with a 79, his highest start in a major since an 80 in that U.S.

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Open at Chambers Bay.

To make the cut, he would have needed a score he hasn't produced since before his car crash. And those hopes ended quickly.

He went from the left rough to right of the green at the par-4 second hole. He had to pitch over the edge of a pot bunker, and the ball landed on a slope and shot forward just through the green. But he had another slope in his line to the hole, so he had to chip that. It was a little strong, 4 feet by, and his bogey putt didn't even touch the hole.

That's been the most glaring issue for Woods in his return from the car crash. So much attention is on his legs carrying him around the golf course. Little is made of his hands on a putter that used to be the most reliable stroke in golf.

Woods rarely looked like he was going to make anything except on the par-5 sixth hole, his best sequence of the day. Woods went for the right rough to a good lie in the left rough, and he smoked a 3-wood onto the green to 20 feet and poured it in the middle.

He had a few good breaks. On the notorious "Postage Stamp" eighth green, his tee shot was headed for a deep bunker right of the green when it was stopped by landing in a sprinkler head and he made an easy par.

He had some bad breaks, none worse than the par-5 16th. He hit a long iron with the wind at his back, a perfect shot except that it landed on the back side of a hump, shot forward and rolled some 75 yards until it tumbled into the burn.

By then, however, it was too late. He was always double digits over par from his double bogey on No. 2 and never threatened to make a run.

But he sounded as though he would be back for more.

"I've always loved playing major championships. I just wish I was more physically sharp coming into the majors," he said. "It tests you mentally, physically, emotionally, and I just wasn't as sharp as I needed to be. I was hoping that I would find it somehow, just never did."

Russia convicts US journalist of spying in a trial widely seen as politically motivated

By KIRILL ZARUBIN Associated Press

YEKATERINBURG, Russia (AP) — Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was convicted Friday of espionage and sentenced to 16 years in a maximum-security prison on charges that his employer and the U.S. government have rejected as fabricated.

The swift conclusion of the secretive trial in Russia's highly politicized legal system could potentially clear the way for a prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington.

Gershkovich, his head shaved and looking thin in a dark T-shirt, was calm as he stood in a glass defendants' cage in the Sverdlovsk Regional Court. He listened impassively to the verdict but gave an occasional smile. When Judge Andrei Mineyev asked him if he had any questions about the verdict, he replied "No, your honor."

After Mineyev read the verdict, someone in the courtroom shouted, "Evan, we love you!"

Closing arguments took place behind closed doors where Gershkovich did not admit any guilt, according to the court's press service. Prosecutors requested an 18-year sentence, but the judge opted for a shorter term.

U.S. President Joe Biden said after the conviction that Gershkovich "was targeted by the Russian government because he is a journalist and an American."

"We are pushing hard for Evan's release and will continue to do so," he said in a statement. "As I have long said and as the U.N. also concluded, there is no question that Russia is wrongfully detaining Evan. Journalism is not a crime."

Almar Latour, CEO of Dow Jones and publisher of The Wall Street Journal, and Editor in Chief Emma Tucker called it a "disgraceful, sham conviction."

"Evan has spent 478 days in prison, wrongfully detained, away from his family and friends, prevented

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from reporting, all for doing his job as a journalist," they said in a statement. "We will continue to do everything possible to press for Evan's release and to support his family. Journalism is not a crime, and we will not rest until he's released. This must end now."

Latour later told The Associated Press in an interview it was "deeply disconcerting" to see Gershkovich in a defendants' cage with a shaved head "and the more emaciated look," but he added: "We do believe that he's otherwise healthy."

Commenting on the unusually swift trial, he said, "It just goes to show that in an autocracy and a regime like this, trials can move at any speed, with an invisible hand deciding that." It further underscores "the fake nature of these charges," he added.

Gershkovich, 32, was arrested March 29, 2023, while on a reporting trip to the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg. Authorities claimed, without offering any evidence, that he was gathering secret information for the U.S.

He has been behind bars since his arrest, time that will be counted as part of his sentence. Most of that was in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison — a czarist-era lockup used during Josef Stalin's purges, when executions were carried out in its basement. He was transferred to Yekaterinburg for the trial.

Gershkovich was the first U.S. journalist arrested on espionage charges since Nicholas Daniloff in 1986, at the height of the Cold War. Foreign journalists in Russia were shocked by Gershkovich's arrest, even though the country has enacted increasingly repressive laws on freedom of speech after sending troops into Ukraine.

Unlike the trial's opening June 26 in Yekaterinburg and previous hearings in Moscow where reporters could see Gershkovich briefly before proceedings began, there was no access to the courtroom Thursday when the trial resumed. Media were allowed in Friday for the verdict. Espionage and treason cases are typically shrouded in secrecy.

Russian courts convict more than 99% of defendants, and prosecutors can appeal sentences that they regard as too lenient.

The U.S. State Department has declared Gershkovich "wrongfully detained," committing it to assertively seek his release.

Asked Friday about a possible prisoner swap involving Gershkovich, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to comment.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Wednesday that Moscow and Washington's "special services" are discussing an exchange. Russia has previously signaled a possible swap, but said a verdict must come first. Even after a verdict, a deal could take months or years.

U.S. officials offered to swap Gershkovich last year but it was rejected by Russia, and they have not made public any possible deals since then.

State Department deputy spokesman Vedant Patel on Thursday declined to discuss negotiations about an exchange.

President Vladimir Putin hinted earlier this year he would be open to swapping Gershkovich for Vadim Krasikov, a Russian serving a life sentence in Germany for the 2019 killing of a Georgian citizen of Chechen descent.

Speaking to reporters after the verdict, prosecutor Mikael Ozdoyev said Gershkovich was accused of gathering secret information about production and repair of military equipment at Uralvagonzavod, an industrial plant about 150 kilometers (90 miles) north of Yekaterinburg that manufactures tanks. Ozdoyev repeated the claim that Gershkovich was acting on instructions from the CIA.

U.S. officials have dismissed this as bogus. "Evan has never been employed by the United States government. Evan is not a spy," White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said last month.

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.

U.N. human rights experts said this month that Russia violated international law by jailing Gershkovich and should release him immediately.

Arrests of Americans are increasingly common in Russia, with nine U.S. citizens known to be detained there as tensions between the two countries have escalated over fighting in Ukraine.

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U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield accused Moscow of treating "human beings as bargaining chips." She singled out Gershkovich and ex-Marine Paul Whelan, 53, a corporate security director from Michigan, who is serving a 16-year sentence after being convicted on spying charges that he and the U.S. denied.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that when it comes to Gershkovich, Whelan and other Americans wrongfully detained in Russia and elsewhere, we're working "quite literally every day."

"We're working it as we speak, and we're not going to stop until we get Evan home, Paul home, till we get others home," Blinken said at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado.

Since sending troops to Ukraine, Russian authorities have detained several U.S. nationals and other Westerners.

In his statement, Biden said that "since the very first day of my administration, I have had no higher priority than seeking the release and safe return of Evan, Paul Whelan and all Americans wrongfully detained and held hostage abroad."

The son of Soviet emigres who settled in New Jersey, Gershkovich was fluent in Russian and moved to the country in 2017 to work for The Moscow Times newspaper before being hired by the Journal in 2022.

Gershkovich had over a dozen closed hearings on extending his pretrial detention or appeals for his release. He was brought to the courthouse in handcuffs and appeared smiling for the many cameras before the hearings began.

These gave his family, friends and U.S. officials a glimpse of him, and it was a break from his otherwise monotonous prison routine. But his mother, Ella Milman, said they also were a painful reminder that "he is not with us."

Friends say that while he was in Lefortovo, Gershkovich was not allowed phone calls and was allowed out of his cell for only an hour a day to exercise. He usually spent the rest of his time reading books in English and Russian and writing letters to friends and family.

He relied on his sense of humor to get through the days, according to those close to him.

As he marked his second year in captivity in March, Milman said he was "telling people not to freak out," but she admitted the strain for friends and family was "taking a toll."

Drone strike by Yemen's Houthi rebels kills 1 person and wounds at least 10 in Tel Aviv

By MELANIE LIDMAN and SAM METZ Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — An Iranian-made drone sent by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck Tel Aviv on Friday, leaving one person dead and at least 10 wounded in the group's first lethal strike into Israel.

The aerial strike rumbled through the center of the city near the U.S. Embassy, causing shrapnel to rain down and spreading shards of glass over a large radius.

The hit in Israel's biggest city was startling because the drone appeared to have crossed much of the country through the multilayered air defenses that have intercepted almost all of the drones and rockets that Yemen's Houthis have been launching toward Israel since the Gaza war began. Most have failed even to reach Israel's southernmost city, Eilat, on the Red Sea some 270 kilometers (160 miles) south of Tel Aviv.

The Israeli military said it was investigating what went wrong. Chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said the drone was detected by air defenses, but an "error" occurred and "there was no interception."

"We are investigating the entire chain," he said. Another military official blamed "human error." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing.

The spokesman for the Houthis, Yahya Sare'e, claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement published on the social media platform X. He said it was in retaliation for the Israel-Hamas war and had hit one of the group's many targets.

Israel's military identified the drone as an Iranian Samad-3 upgraded to travel long distances and said it was believed to have come from Yemen.

The drone hit at around 3:10 a.m., blowing out windows and damaging cars throughout a coastal neighborhood of Tel Aviv and reverberating as far as nearby cities. The military said it had not determined if it exploded in the air or directly struck buildings.

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Footage verified by the AP shows the low-flying drone arriving at Tel Aviv's shoreline and then heading into the city, moments before an explosion lights up the night sky.

In one building, the Sajiv family swept up the shattered glass of their apartment's balcony door. Limor Sajiv said they were woken by the sound of a blast. "We had no idea what it was. I mean, we heard missiles before we heard things, this was different, really, really loud," he said.

People thronged to the area as police helicopters hovered overhead. For many, it reaffirmed feelings of disillusionment with the military's handling of the war since October.

Yossi Nevi, a retired evacuee from Kiryat Shmona, said he was shaken awake in the hotel he lives in. Hearing it was human error, Nevi said, made him lose "all trust in the army, not that I had much after the past nine months."

Eldad Namdar, who owns a camera store next to the intersection where the drone is believed to have exploded, said he hopes the war ends soon, but he also wants it to be concluded in a way that secures his future.

"I don't want this to happen again in six months, I want them to finish this situation until the end," he said.

The U.S. State Department said there was no damage to the U.S. Embassy or any of its staff members.

The Houthi strike hit hours after Israel's military confirmed one of its airstrikes had killed a Hezbollah commander and other militants in southern Lebanon. Israel has so far not made attacks on the Houthis, allowing its allies instead to take the lead as it focuses its efforts on the war in Gaza and ongoing fighting with Hezbollah.

The attack also comes days before Netanyahu is to travel to Washington and address Congress.

The Houthis have routinely claimed responsibility for hitting targets in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Analysts and Western intelligence services have long accused Iran of arming the group, a claim that Tehran denies. In recent years, U.S. naval forces have intercepted a number of ships packed with rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and missile parts en route from Iran to Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

The Houthis maintain that their attacks target ships linked to Israel, the United States or the United Kingdom. However, many have little or no connection to the war.

Friday's drone strike on Tel Aviv could resurface fears about the war in Gaza becoming a nationwide conflagration.

Such fears run counter to renewed hopes that Israel signaling its operation underway in Rafah is nearing its finish could foster an environment more conducive to negotiations as international mediators continue to push for a cease-fire. The deal under discussion would halt fighting and free about 120 Israeli hostages held by the militant group in Gaza.

Israel remains divided over striking a deal, with some wanting the government to take the necessary steps to free the hostages and others, including far-right national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, disavowing the idea. On Thursday, Ben-Gvir visited Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site to pray for the return of Israeli hostages, he said, "without a reckless deal, without surrendering."

Israel's air defense system has intercepted thousands of projectiles throughout the war, including Hamas rocket fire from Gaza. But officials warn the systems are not 100% effective and appear to have struggled against small and hard-to-detect attack drones.

Like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis are backed by Israel's archenemy, Iran. Israel for the most part also has avoided direct confrontations with Iran throughout the war. Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel during a single incident in April in response to Israel's alleged assassination of a pair of Iranian generals in Syria at the time.

The war in Gaza, which was sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, has killed more than 38,600 people, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. The war has created a humanitarian catastrophe in the coastal Palestinian territory, displaced most of its 2.3 million population and triggered widespread hunger.

Hamas' October attack killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and militants took about 250 hostage. About 120 remain in captivity, with about a third of them believed to be dead, according to Israeli authorities.

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Judge and Ohtani are the MVP favorites, but there's plenty of time left in baseball's award races

By NOAH TRISTER AP Baseball Writer

Aaron Judge and Shohei Ohtani are the front-runners for baseball's MVP awards, according to the oddsmakers.

It's only the All-Star break, but one or two clear favorites have emerged for several of the game's top honors. With play set to resume again Friday, here's a look at what the betting lines have to say, courtesy of BetMGM Sportsbook.

AL MVP

The favorite: Aaron Judge, Yankees (-350)

Top challenger: Gunnar Henderson, Orioles (+240)

Longer shots: Juan Soto, Yankees (+1800), Bobby Witt Jr., Royals (+2000), José Ramírez (+5000)

Judge and Henderson have separated themselves in what once looked like it could be a four-player race, and Judge's odds being shorter than even money may come as a surprise to some. The Yankees (-115) are only a slight favorite to win the AL East, so clearly the market believes Judge has a decent chance to win MVP honors even if New York finishes behind Baltimore.

NL MVP

The favorite: Shohei Ohtani, Dodgers (-375)

Top challenger: Bryce Harper, Phillies (+450)

Longer shots: Freddie Freeman, Dodgers (+2000), Ketel Marte, Diamondbacks (+2500), Marcell Ozuna, Braves (+2500)

Injuries to Ronald Acuña Jr. and Mookie Betts have helped Ohtani's chances. As a full-time designated hitter this year, he may face some resistance from voters, but perhaps what Ohtani does on the basepaths — he's tied for third in the major leagues with 23 steals — can make up for his lack of defensive value.

AL Cy Young

The favorite: Tarik Skubal, Tigers (-150)

Top challenger: Corbin Burnes, Orioles (+325)

Longer shots: Logan Gilbert, Mariners (+1200), Seth Lugo, Royals (+1200), Garrett Crochet, White Sox (+2800), Tanner Houck, Red Sox (+2800)

Burnes was the pick to start the All-Star game, but Skubal (10-3, 2.41 ERA) is the favorite for the Cy Young. Of course, there's at least some possibility the Detroit left-hander could be traded to the National League before the deadline.

NL Cy Young

The favorite: Chris Sale, Braves (+115)

Top challenger: Zack Wheeler, Phillies (+155)

Longer shots: Paul Skenes, Pirates (+400), Ranger Suárez, Phillies (+2800), Logan Webb, Giants (+3000), Tyler Glasnow, Dodgers (+3000)

Sale finished in the top six of the American League Cy Young vote for seven straight years from 2012-18, but he never won. It would be something if he finally captures the award now, on the NL side at age 35.

AL Rookie of the Year

The favorite: Wyatt Langford, Rangers (+120)

The challenger: Luis Gil, Yankees (+200)

Longer shots: Cedanne Rafaela, Red Sox (+1100), Colton Cowser, Orioles (+1200), Wilyer Abreu, Red Sox (+1600), Mason Miller, Athletics (+1600)

Langford is the favorite among hitters and Gil among pitchers. Langford hit for the cycle last month, but Gil is well ahead of him in wins above replacement — both the Baseball Reference and FanGraphs versions.

NL Rookie of the Year

The favorite: Paul Skenes, Pirates (-1200)

The challenger: Jackson Merrill, Padres (+500)

Longer shots: Shota Imanaga, Cubs (+2800), Gavin Stone, Dodgers (+4000), Michael Busch, Cubs (+4000)

The biggest favorite in any of these awards is Skenes for Rookie of the Year. That makes sense, seeing

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as he's also worked his way into the Cy Young conversation — although there's always some injury risk with pitchers, and it's not clear how hard the Pirates will push him if they don't stay in the postseason race.

AL Manager of the Year

The favorite: Stephen Vogt, Guardians (-155)

The challenger: Alex Cora, Red Sox (+230)

Longer shots: Matt Quatraro, Royals (+950), Brandon Hyde, Orioles (+1700), Rocco Baldelli, Twins (+1700)

Vogt had tough shoes to fill taking over for Terry Francona, and Cleveland has the best record in the AL after finishing 10 games under .500 last year. Quatraro's Royals are in contention, but for how much longer?

NL Manager of the Year

The favorite: Pat Murphy, Brewers (+100)

The challenger: Rob Thomson, Phillies (+125)

Longer shots: Oliver Marmol, Cardinals (+1700), Carlos Mendoza, Mets (+1700), Mike Shildt, Padres (+1700)

Murphy is similar to Vogt. He took over for a successful manager — in this case, Craig Counsell — and has his team in first place. Thomson's Phillies have the best record in baseball, however. It feels like just about anyone could end up in the last two wild-card spots in the NL. Perhaps one of those teams will be sufficiently surprising that its manager reaps the reward.

Today in History: July 20, Armstrong and Aldrin walk on the moon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, July 20, the 202nd day of 2024. There are 164 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 20, 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon after reaching its surface in their Apollo 11 lunar module.

Also on this date:

In 1917, America's World War I draft lottery began as Secretary of War Newton Baker, wearing a blindfold, reached into a glass bowl and pulled out a capsule containing the number 258 during a ceremony inside the Senate office building.

In 1944, an attempt by a group of German officials to assassinate Adolf Hitler with a bomb failed as the explosion only wounded the Nazi leader.

In 1951, Jordan's King Abdullah I was assassinated in Jerusalem by a Palestinian gunman who was shot dead on the spot by security.

In 1976, America's Viking 1 robot spacecraft made a successful, first-ever landing on Mars.

In 1977, a flash flood hit Johnstown, Pennsylvania, killing more than 80 people and causing \$350 million worth of damage.

In 1990, Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, one of the court's most liberal voices, announced he was stepping down.

In 1993, White House deputy counsel Vincent Foster Jr., 48, was found shot to death in a park near Washington, D.C.; it was ruled a suicide.

In 2006, the Senate voted 98-0 to renew the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act for another quarter-century.

In 2007, President George W. Bush signed an executive order prohibiting cruel and inhuman treatment, including humiliation or denigration of religious beliefs, in the detention and interrogation of terrorism suspects.

In 2010, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to approve Elena Kagan to be the Supreme Court's fourth female justice.

In 2012, gunman James Holmes opened fire inside a crowded movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises," killing 12 people and wounding 70 others. (Holmes was later convicted of murder and attempted murder, and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

In 2015, the United States and Cuba restored full diplomatic relations after more than five decades of frosty relations rooted in the Cold War.

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Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, D-Md., is 88. Baseball Hall of Famer Tony Oliva is 86. Artist Judy Chicago is 85. Country singer T.G. Sheppard is 80. Singer Kim Carnes is 79. Rock musician Carlos Santana is 77. Author and commentator Thomas Friedman is 71. Rock musician Paul Cook (Sex Pistols) is 68. Actor Frank Whaley is 61. Conservationist and TV personality Terri Irwin is 60. Rock musician Stone Gossard (Pearl Jam) is 58. Actor Josh Holloway (TV: "Lost") is 55. Singer Vitamin C is 55. Actor Sandra Oh is 53. Hockey Hall of Famer Peter Forsberg is 51. Actor Omar Epps is 51. Basketball Hall of Famer Ray Allen is 49. Hockey Hall of Famer Pavel Datsyuk is 46. Supermodel Gisele Bundchen is 44. Actor Percy Daggs III is 42. Actor John Francis Daley is 39. Dancer-singer-actor Julianne Hough is 36.