

Groton Daily Independent

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

Life is like a Camera..

Focus on what's important,
Capture good times,
Develop from negatives, and
if things don't work out..
Take another shot!



Saturday, Aug. 10

The Missoula Children's Theatre play entitled, "Peter and Wendy" will be held in the GHS Gym today at 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Tickets are free will donation.

Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament in Groton (See schedule on page 6)

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

Sunday, Aug. 11

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 11 a.m.

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

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.

Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament in Groton High School Moonlight Swim, 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., Pool

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1440

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

FDA Approves Neffy

The US Food and Drug Administration yesterday approved the first-ever nasal spray to treat potentially severe allergic reactions. The spray, sold under the brand name Neffy, provides a needle-free alternative to traditional injectable epinephrine products like EpiPen (first introduced in 1987).

Neffy is designed for adults and children weighing at least 66 pounds and is administered as a single spray into one nostril. Studies showed Neffy achieved blood concentrations of epinephrine comparable to those from injections, along with similar physiological effects such as increased blood pressure and heart rate. Epinephrine, also known as adrenaline, is a hormone that helps stimulate the heart, relaxes muscles, and constricts blood vessels to improve breathing. It is used to help treat anaphylaxis, a life-threatening reaction to foreign substances in the body.

Nearly 50 million Americans suffer from allergies. Each year, more than 30,000 Americans visit emergency rooms due to anaphylaxis, with more than 2,000 hospitalizations and over 100 deaths .

Plane crashes in Brazil, killing all 61 people aboard.

The passenger plane, operated by Brazilian airline VoePass, crashed outside its destination of Sao Paulo. Authorities are still investigating the cause of the incident as of this writing. Video footage captured by a bystander shows a plane spiraling toward the ground in the city of Vinhedo.

Sha'Carri Richardson and US women's 4x100 relay team win gold.

The victory is Richardson's first Olympic gold medal and teammate Gabby Thomas's second. The US men's 4x100 relay team was disqualified, extending a 20-year streak without an Olympic medal. Separately, the US women's basketball team beat Australia to advance to the final, marking their eighth consecutive Olympic gold medal game. The US will face France Sunday.

Remnants of Debby pummel Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

Tornado and flood watches are in place through the weekend from the Carolinas to New England, with the weather service warning of up to 25 inches of rain in some areas. The death toll has risen to at least nine people. Debby made landfall in the US as a Category 1 hurricane on Florida's Gulf Coast Monday and as a tropical storm off South Carolina's coast Wednesday. It was downgraded Friday to a post-tropical storm with winds of 30 mph.

Third suspect arrested in alleged terror plot at Taylor Swift concert.

An 18-year-old man was taken into custody a day after two other suspects were arrested for allegedly plotting a terrorist attack near the concert venue in Vienna, Austria. Swift canceled her three upcoming Eras Tour shows in the city, where roughly 195,000 people had been expected. At least one of the suspects is believed to be affiliated with ISIS.

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Microsoft warns Iran hackers appear to target US election.

Iran is ramping up online activity that appears intended to influence the US election, Microsoft announced Friday. Iran's online activity includes propping up US-based news sites to target voters from opposite political parties to sow division and targeting a presidential campaign with a phishing attack. Iranian groups were also found to have impersonated US activists. See Microsoft's findings here.

Study finds serotonin changes how people react to adverse outcomes.

According to the study, people with increased serotonin levels were less sensitive to negative information, such as losing money in a game, and were able to control their behaviors better when encountering such moments. The findings shed light on serotonin's role beyond boosting positive moods.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Pat P. in Orting, Washington.

"Recently my husband and I were at our local grocery store, and I asked at the meat/fish display if they had any catfish. After talking with two separate workers, who pretty much just said 'if you don't see it, it's not here,' an older gentleman approached us and asked if he could help. I explained we were looking for catfish. He took us right over to the frozen fish area, and pulled out a package of prewrapped catfish. It did not say how many pieces were in the bag, but I did mention that I had hoped it was an even number, because there was just the two of us."

"He then proceeded to open the package, and there were only three. Just as we discovered this, the kind gentleman opened a second package and pulled out an extra piece of fish, put it in our bag to make it four pieces and told us that if we had trouble checking out, just tell the cashier to talk to the 'Fish Manager.' An act of kindness that you could tell was his natural treatment of people. A small act, but carried a memorable impression."

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State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament Locke-Karst Field, Groton

Friday, August 9


 Beresford...egion 2024 6

 W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball 4

 Winner/Col...e Jr Legion 9

 Clark Area Jr Legion 17U 2

 Hitmen Jr Legion 2

 Lennox Po...4 Jr Legion 12

 Groton Jr. L...ion Post 39 4


 Martin Post 240 Jr 10

Saturday, August 10

 Clark Area Jr Legion 17U

10:00 AM

 W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball

 Groton Jr. L...ion Post 39

12:30 PM

 Hitmen Jr Legion

 Winner/Colome Jr Legion

3:00 PM

 Beresford P...egion 2024

 Martin Post 240 Jr

5:30 PM

 Lennox Pos...4 Jr Legion



Carter Simon gets ready to swing. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 With Tough Game Against Martin Post 240 Jr

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 couldn't keep up with Martin Post 240 Jr and fell 10-4 on Friday.

Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 got on the board in the first inning after Carter Simon singled, scoring one run.

Martin Post 240 Jr took the lead in the bottom of the first inning after Caysen Soderlin walked, Gavin Risse hit a sacrifice fly, and Lyle Noel singled, each scoring one run.

A triple by Jordan Risse extended the Martin Post 240 Jr lead to 4-2 in the bottom of the third inning.

Nicholas Morris stepped on the mound first for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39. They gave up three hits and seven runs (two earned) over three and one-third innings, striking out two and walking three. Risse started on the hill for Martin Post 240 Jr. The right-handed pitcher gave up four hits and three runs (two earned) over four and one-third innings, striking out two and walking four.

Lincoln Krause led Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 with two hits in three at bats from the leadoff position. Jarrett Erdmann, Tristin McGannon, and Nick Groeblichhoff each drove in one run for Groton Jr. Legion Post 39.

Risse and Noel were a force together in the lineup, as they each collected two hits for Martin Post 240 Jr while hitting back-to-back. Rush O'neill, Risse, Risse, and Noel each drove in two runs for Martin Post 240 Jr. Soderlin led Martin Post 240 Jr with four walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, amassing six walks for the game. Martin Post 240 Jr turned one double play in the game.

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Talen Eich Leads Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion Past Hitmen Jr Legion

By GameChanger Media

Talen Eich collected four hits in four at bats, as Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion defeated Hitmen Jr Legion 12-2 on Friday. Eich tripled in the third inning, tripled in the fifth inning, singled in the first inning, and singled in the second inning.

Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion got on the board in the bottom of the first inning after Eich singled, Cole Spieler doubled, Sam Bambas was struck by a pitch, Gabe Veurink hit into a fielder's choice, and Jack Aasheim singled, each scoring one run.

Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion added to their early lead in the bottom of the second inning after Bambas hit a sacrifice fly, and Veurink singled, each scoring one run.

Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion added to their early lead in the bottom of the third inning when Eich tripled, scoring two runs, and Mason Reischl singled, scoring one run.

Jackson Anacker started on the mound for Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion. The righty allowed one hit and zero runs over two innings, striking out four and walking two. Landon Coyle began the game for Hitmen Jr Legion. The starting pitcher surrendered five hits and five runs over two-thirds of an inning, striking out none and walking none. Nate Haar, Reischl, and Eich each threw shutout innings for Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion in relief.

Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion piled up 13 hits in the game. Reischl and Spieler each collected multiple hits for Lennox Post 174 Jr Legion.

Cane Hogg and Bradon Hanne were a one-two punch in the lineup, as each drove in one run for Hitmen Jr Legion. Jett Kleinsasser went 1-for-2 at the plate to lead Hitmen Jr Legion in hits. Hanne led Hitmen Jr Legion with two walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, amassing seven walks for the game.

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Clark Area Jr Legion 17U Fall To Winner/Colome Jr Legion After Surrendering Big Fifth Inning

By GameChanger Media

Winner/Colome Jr Legion defeated Clark Area Jr Legion 17U 9-2 on Friday thanks in part to five runs in the fifth inning.

Clark Area Jr Legion 17U got on the board in the first inning after Michael Severson singled, scoring one run.

Dylan Brandis grounded out, which helped Winner/Colome Jr Legion tie the game at one in the top of the third.

An error gave Winner/Colome Jr Legion the lead, 2-1, in the top of the fourth.

Winner/Colome Jr Legion scored five runs on three hits in the top of the fifth inning. Brandis singled, scoring one run, Jaxon Day singled, scoring one run, Carter Craven drew a walk, scoring one run, Carter Foster drew a walk, scoring one run, and Carter McKenzie drew a walk, scoring one run.

Watson Grantham led things off on the mound for Clark Area Jr Legion 17U. They allowed four hits and seven runs (five earned) over four and one-third innings, striking out three and walking six. Aiden Schroeder started on the bump for Winner/Colome Jr Legion. The starting pitcher surrendered three hits and two runs (one earned) over seven innings, striking out four and walking none.

Watson Grantham, Ky Vandersnick, and Michael Severson each collected one hit for Clark Area Jr Legion 17U. Ky Vandersnick and Michael Severson each drove in one run for Clark Area Jr Legion 17U. Clark Area Jr Legion 17U turned one double play in the game.

Brandis drove the middle of the lineup, leading Winner/Colome Jr Legion with two runs batted in. They went 1-for-5 on the day. Camdyn Anderson went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Winner/Colome Jr Legion in hits. Quincy Phillips led Winner/Colome Jr Legion with three walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, accumulating 11 walks for the game. Anderson stole two bases.

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W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball Lose To Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024

By GameChanger Media

W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball lost to Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024 6-4 on Friday.

W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball opened the scoring in the bottom of the third thanks to two singles. W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball first got on the board when Mac Heinz singled, scoring two runs.

A double by Tommy Walth gave Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024 the lead, 4-3, in the top of the sixth.

Logan Fischbach stepped on the mound first for W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball. The right-handed pitcher surrendered six hits and six runs over six innings, striking out three and walking four. Aiden Bobzin started the game for Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024. They surrendered five hits and three runs over five innings, striking out nine and walking five.

Braydon Kroll, the number seven hitter for W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball, led the way with two runs batted in. The second baseman went 1-for-4 on the day. Heinz went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball in hits. W.I.N. Jr Legion Baseball had a strong eye at the plate, collecting eight walks for the game. Noah Bakeberg and Heinz led the team with two free passes each.

Walth and Bobzin each collected two hits for Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024. Walth and Miles Eide each drove in two runs for Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024. Jax Fickbohm and Bobzin each stole multiple bases for Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024. Beresford Post 72 Jr. Legion 2024 turned one double play in the game.

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Groton Jr. Legion Post 39 4 - 10 Martin Post 240 Jr

📍 Away 📅 Friday August 09, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	4	5	6
MRTN	3	0	1	4	0	2	X	10	6	4

BATTING

Groton Jr. Legion Post	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
L Krause #2 (RF)	3	1	2	0	1	0
C Simon #4 (SS)	2	1	1	0	2	0
G Englund #18 (3B)	2	0	0	0	1	0
Jordan Sch... #20	0	1	0	0	0	0
N Morris #17 (P)	3	0	0	0	0	0
J Erdmann #1 (CF)	3	0	1	1	1	0
N Groebl... #12 (1B)	3	0	0	1	0	1
A Abeln #5 (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
K Antonsen #7 (P)	1	0	0	0	0	1
K Flihs #10 (C)	3	1	0	0	0	1
T McGann... #9 (LF)	3	0	1	1	0	1
Totals	25	4	5	3	5	4

TB: L Krause 2, T McGannon, J Erdmann, C Simon,
HBP: G Englund, N Morris, N Groeblinghoff, **SB:** L Krause, Jordan Schwan, N Morris, **LOB:** 8

PITCHING

Groton Jr. Legion Post	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
N Morris #17	3.1	3	7	2	3	2	0
K Antons... #7	2.2	3	3	1	3	3	0
Totals	6.0	6	10	2	6	5	0

L: N Morris, **P-S:** K Antonsen 52-26, N Morris 77-46,
HBP: N Morris, **BF:** K Antonsen 15, N Morris 21

Martin Post 240 Jr	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
H Risse #3 (CF)	3	2	0	0	1	0
M Risse #1 (SS)	4	1	0	0	0	0
R O'Neill #2 (3B)	3	3	1	2	0	0
C Soderlin #24 (1B)	0	2	0	1	4	0
G Risse #8 (P)	2	1	1	2	1	0
J Risse #4 (LF)	4	0	2	2	0	2
L Noel #10 (C)	4	0	2	2	0	0
E Harris #00 (RF)	4	0	0	1	0	2
R Heath #6 (2B)	4	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	28	10	6	10	6	5

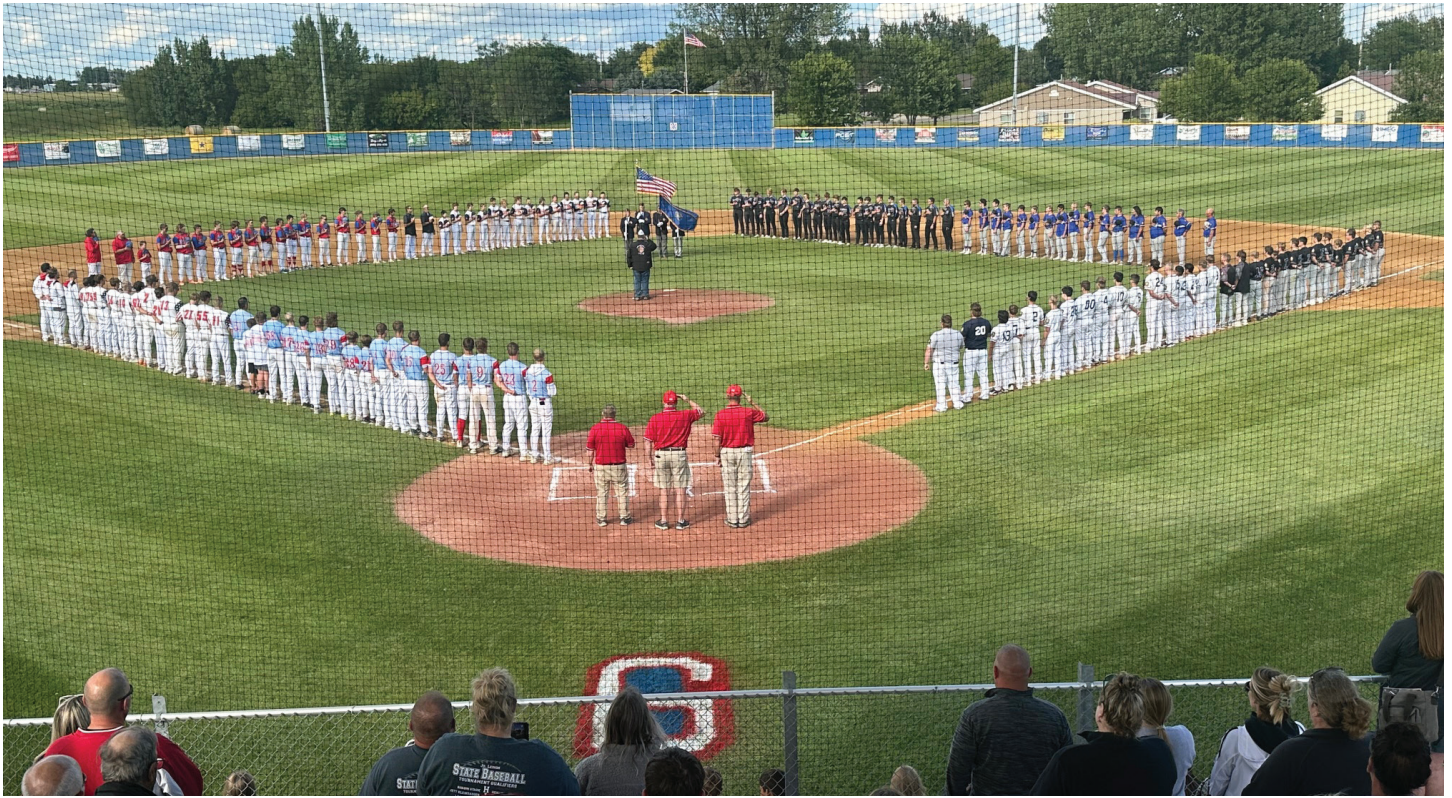
2B: R O'Neill, G Risse, **3B:** J Risse, **TB:** J Risse 4, R O'Neill 2, G Risse 2, L Noel 2, **SF:** G Risse, **HBP:** R O'Neill, **SB:** J Risse, R O'Neill, G Risse, **LOB:** 8

Martin Post 240 Jr	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
G Risse #8	4.1	4	3	2	4	2	0
R O'Neill #2	2.2	1	1	1	1	2	0
Totals	7.0	5	4	3	5	4	0

W: G Risse, **P-S:** R O'Neill 42-24, G Risse 89-48, **HBP:** R O'Neill 2, G Risse, **BF:** R O'Neill 12, G Risse 21

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The opening ceremony of the State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament was held Friday at Locke-Karst Field in Groton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Groton workers were busy bees as they quickly prep the field for the next game on Locke-Karst Field. Aaron Severson is running the groomer in the photo below. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



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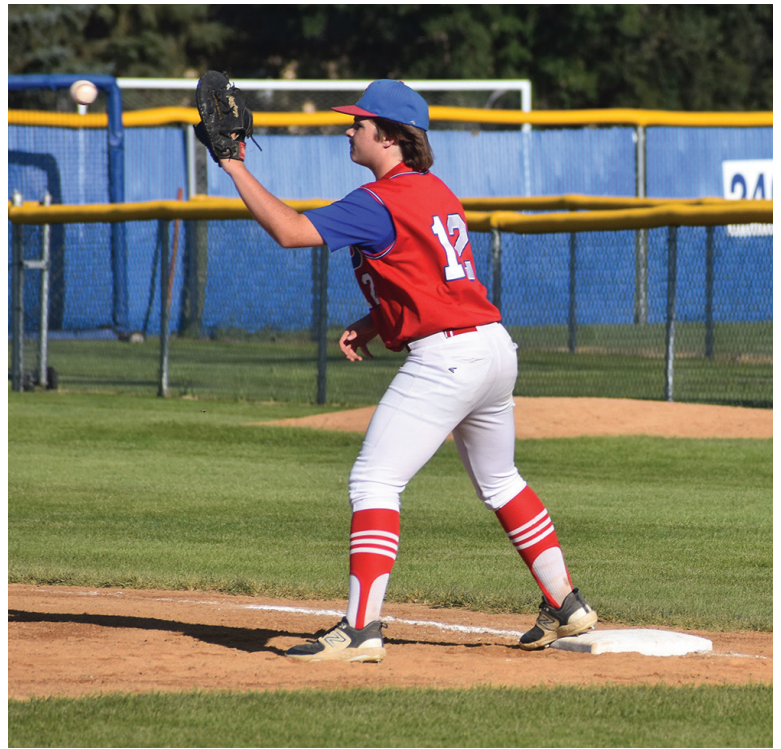
Peggy Locke and Wanda Hamilton greet Joni Groeblichhoff at the ticket table for the State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



People were using the newly installed shelter on Locke-Karst Field. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Alex Abeln (left) picks up the ball and gets ready to throw to Nick Groeblinghoff for the out at first base. (Photos by Paul Kosel)

Coach Aaron Severson calls a time out as he talks with pitcher Nicholas Morris.
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



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Nicholas Morris gets ready to throw the pitch in the left photo with Karsten Flihs (right photo) doing the catching for the Groton Jr. Legion team. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Tristin McGannon makes the catch in left field. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Gavin Englund hits a foul ball on this swing. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

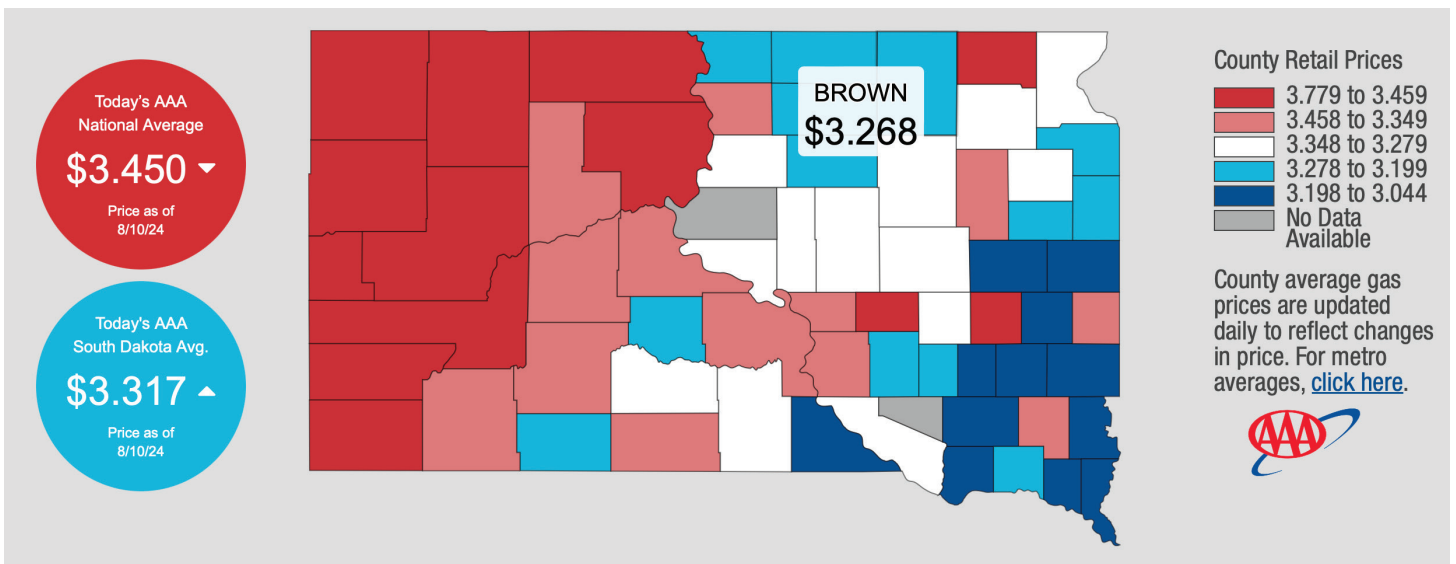
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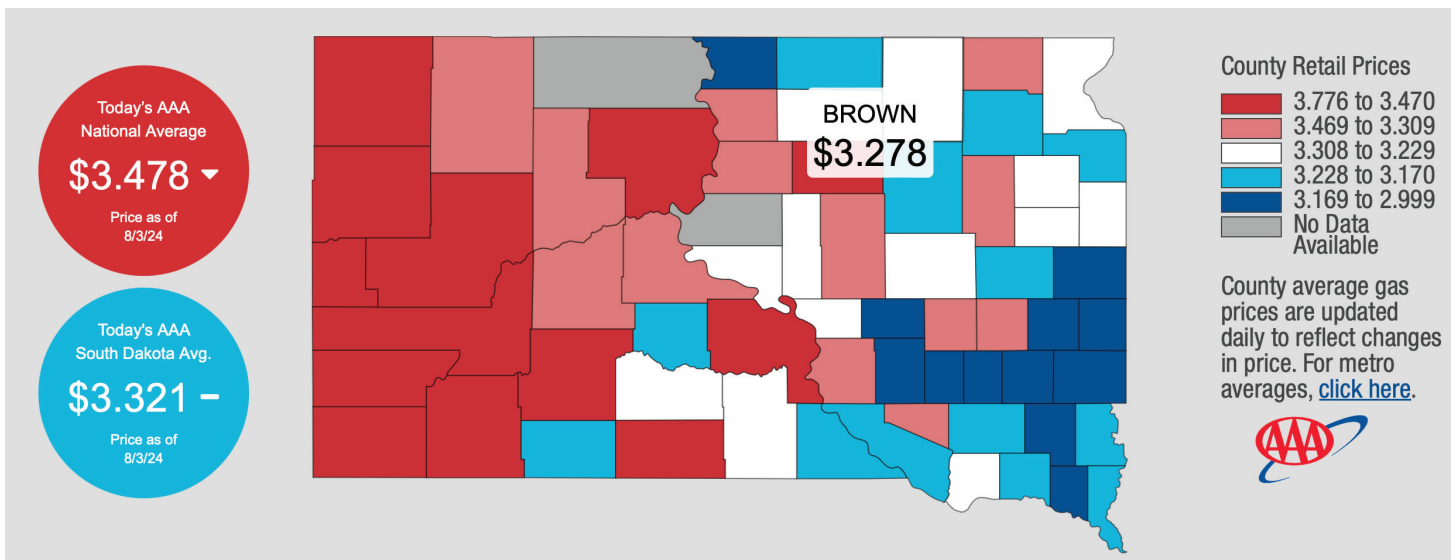
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

Current Avg.	\$3.317	\$3.512	\$3.958	\$3.440
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.312	\$3.521	\$3.957	\$3.447
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.321	\$3.519	\$3.970	\$3.457
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.269	\$3.455	\$3.873	\$3.471
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.793	\$3.954	\$4.402	\$4.027

This Week



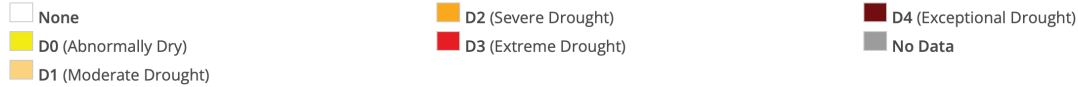
Last Week



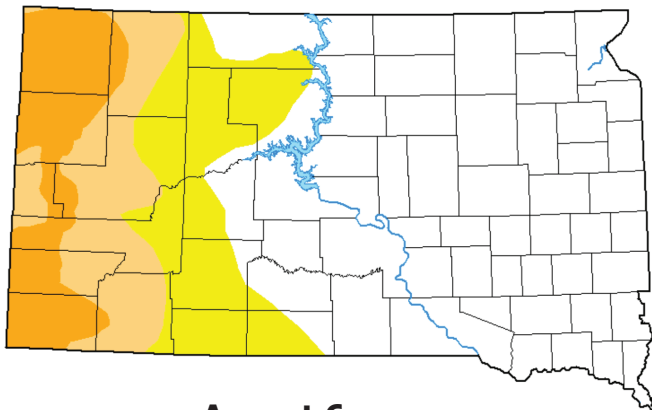
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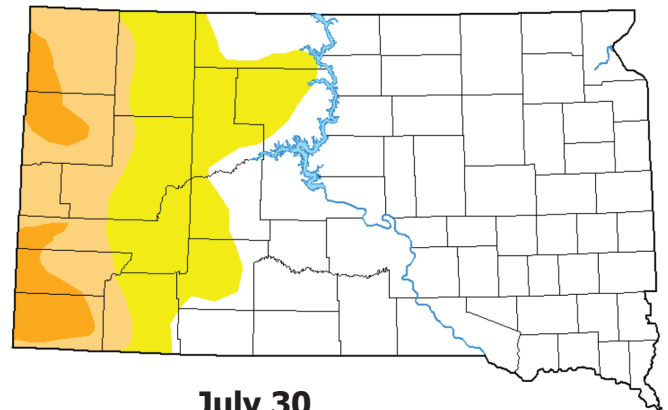
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



August 6



July 30

On this week's map, all states within the High Plains region saw degradations in response to a combination of factors including below-normal precipitation (past 30-60-day period), above-normal temperatures (+4 to 10 degrees F during the past 14 days), high evaporative demand, and intensifying flash drought conditions in recent weeks. Moreover, within the past 30 days, numerous agricultural impacts have been reported by extension agents as well as by local farmers and ranchers to the National Drought Mitigation Center's (NDMC) Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) system. Impact reports include crop stress, critically low soil moisture, water hauling, and reduced forage, with the highest concentration of reports coming in from western portions of the Dakotas, western Nebraska, and eastern portions of Montana and Wyoming. According to the USDA (August 4), statewide topsoil moisture rated by percent short to very short is as follows: Kansas 55%, Nebraska 49%, South Dakota 32%, North Dakota 25%, Montana 68%, Wyoming 83%, and Colorado 58%.

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**BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

August 13, 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 Special Event for SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center
5. Public Hearing for Malt Beverage License Transfers:
 - a. Stacy Gossman DBA: Bergyz to County Line Developers
 - b. Stacy Gossman DBA: Tinkaz to County Line Developers
 - c. Stacy Gossman DBA: Caponez to County Line Developers
6. Public Hearing for Malt Beverage License Transfers & Updating Location:
 - a. Stacy Gossman DBA: BigZ to County Line Developers
 - b. Stacy Gossman DBA: Annie's to County Line Developers
 - c. Stacy Gossman DBA: Ollie's to County Line Developers
7. Public Hearing for Sale of Alcoholic Beverages:
 - a. County Line Developers – Package (Off Sale) Liquor at 2035 8th Ave. NW
 - b. County Line Developers – Package (Off Sale) Liquor at 2520 8th Ave. NE
8. First Reading Ordinance #275 – Rezone
9. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of August 6, 2024
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
 - e. Lease Agreements
 - f. Claim Assignments
10. Other Business
11. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
12. Adjourn

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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/departments/commission>

Names Released in Lawrence County Nemo Road Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: Nemo Road and Pine Cone Avenue, eight miles east of Nemo, SD

When: 11:26 a.m., Monday, August 5, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2003 Harley Davidson Electra Glide

Driver 1: Jeffrey Allan Brookman, 65-year-old male from Fostoria, OH, fatal injuries

Helmet Use: No

Vehicle 2: 2015 Harley Davidson Breakout

Driver 2: Victor Jose Rodriguez, 63-year-old male from San Antonio, TX, Life-threatening injuries

Helmet Use: Yes

Lawrence County, S.D.- One person died and another was seriously injured in a two motorcycle crash Monday morning near Nemo, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Jeffrey A. Brookman, the driver of a 2003 Harley Davidson Electra Glide, was traveling westbound in a group of motorcycles on Nemo Road. A 2015 Harley Davidson Breakout, driven by Victor J. Rodriguez, was traveling eastbound in a group of motorcycles. As the motorcycles entered a curve, Rodriguez failed to negotiate the curve and crossed the centerline. Brookman attempted to avoid crashing but lost control of his motorcycle in the process and overturned. The driver separated from the motorcycle as it slid in the roadway. Rodriguez was unable to avoid the other driver in the roadway and struck him, causing the 2015 Harley Davidson Breakout to overturn. Brookman was not wearing a helmet and received fatal injuries. Rodriguez was wearing a helmet and received life threatening injuries.

Names Released in Lawrence County US 85 Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 85, mile marker 45, Spearfish, SD

When: 10:14 a.m., Monday, August 5, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2023 Harley Davidson FLHXSE

Driver 1: Patti Jo Craig, 69-year-old female from Watertown, WI, fatal injuries

Helmet Use: No

Vehicle 2: 2013 Toyota Tacoma

Driver 2: Jake Maverick Olsen, 23-year-old male from Belle Fourche, SD, no injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Lawrence County, S.D.- One person died and another was uninjured in a two vehicle crash Monday morning in Spearfish, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2013 Toyota Tacoma, driven by Jake Maverick Olsen was turning left onto US 85 from I 90. At that point, it collided with a 2023 Harley Davidson driven by Patti Jo Craig. Craig received fatal injuries. She was not wearing a helmet. Olsen was uninjured and was wearing a seatbelt.

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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Sturgis Rally Friday Report

Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday, Aug 03, 2024, to 6 a.m. Friday August 09, 2024

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	107	17	124	94
Misd Drug Arrests	194	36	230	188
Felony Drug Arrests	108	21	129	133
Total Citations	752	388	1140	1142
Total Warnings	2372	1130	3502	3300
Cash Seized	40,804.00	0.00	40,804.00	\$2005.00
Vehicles Seized	0	0	0	0
For Drug Poss.	0	0	0	0
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Accidents	13	18	31	34
Injury Accidents	12	19	31	41
Fatal Accidents	1	2	3	3
# of Fatalities	1	2	3	3

Fatal Crashes: None

Injury Crashes:

On 08/08/24 at 12:08 p.m. a 1999 Harley Davidson FLHRCI was traveling southbound on SD Highway 87 near mile marker 74. The driver was traveling through a curve as he watched a deer and drifted into the ditch. As the motorcycle entered the ditch the driver lost control and crashed. The driver was not wearing a helmet and sustained minor injuries.

On 08/08/24 at 1:36 p.m. a 2006 Honda VTX1800R2 was traveling eastbound on US 16A when the driver failed to negotiate a curve. The driver separated from the motorcycle as it entered the ditch. The driver was not wearing a helmet and received serious non-life-threatening injuries.

On 08/08/24 at 3:48 p.m. a 2014 Harley Davidson FXDF was traveling westbound on I-90 near mile marker 40 when they encountered a rainstorm. The driver attempted to stop and dress appropriately for the rain. As the driver stopped, he lost control of the motorcycle and overturned. The driver was wearing a helmet and received minor injuries. The passenger was wearing a helmet and received serious non-life-threatening injuries.

On 08/8/24 at 4:29 p.m. a 2001 Harley Davidson ISF was traveling southbound on SD Highway 79 near mile marker 157. The 2001 Harley Davidson drifted off the roadway and struck a delineator post. The driver was not wearing a helmet and received life-threatening injuries.

On 08/08/24 at 8:01 p.m. a 2014 Kawasaki Vulcan was attempting to re-enter Nevada Gulch road near Blue Chair Place when the driver lost control of the motorcycle. The motorcycle overturned and landed on the passenger. The driver was wearing a helmet and was uninjured. The passenger was wearing a helmet and received serious non-life-threatening injuries.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating these crashes. All information released so far is only preliminary. The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

2024 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Vehicle Count – Through Day Seven

STURGIS, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) will provide daily traffic counts at nine locations for vehicles entering Sturgis for the 84th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally which runs from Aug. 2-11, 2024. The traffic counts to date for the nine locations entering Sturgis for the 2024 Rally are as follows:

Friday, Aug. 2, 2024: 51,179 vehicles entered

Down 1.5% from the previous five-year average

Saturday, Aug. 3, 2024: 55,127 vehicles entered

Down 2.3% from the previous five-year average

Sunday, Aug. 4, 2024: 52,182 vehicles entered

Down 12.7% from the previous five-year average

Monday, Aug. 5, 2024: 55,971 vehicles entered

Down 5.1% from the previous five-year average

Tuesday, Aug. 6, 2024: 54,451 vehicles entered

Down 5.2% from the previous five-year average

Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2024: 52,878 vehicles entered

Down 3.6% from the previous five-year average

Thursday, Aug. 8, 2024: 50,053 vehicles entered

Up 1.1% from the previous five-year average

2024 Total to Date: 371,841 Vehicles

Previous Five-Year Average to Date: 388,877 Vehicles



Queen of Hearts

Jake Unzen takes two totes and puts them together to shake up the \$2,885 worth of tickets that were sold during the week. The jackpot for the Queen of Hearts was #37,584. The name of Tyler Sperry was drawn and he picked card number five which was the four of hearts. He won the consolation prize of 10 percent of the ticket sales for the week of \$288.



Flags at Half-Staff Statewide in Honor of U.S. Army Corporal Robert A. Bartlett

PIERRE, S.D. – TGovernor Kristi Noem ordered that flags be flown at half-staff statewide from sunrise until sunset on Saturday, August 10th, 2024, in honor of U.S. Army Corporal Robert A. Bartlett. Corporal Bartlett served during World War II, and after engaging in battle with German forces at Saint-Germain-d'Elle, he was declared missing in action. The remains of Corporal Bartlett were accounted for in May of this year and were recently returned to South Dakota for burial.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 pm CT on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at the Blunt Methodist Church in Blunt, SD. Following the service, U.S. Army Corporal Robert A. Bartlett will be laid to rest at Pleasant Hill Cemetery with full military honors.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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Sales tax ballot measure sparks debate about potential impact on state's bond rating

Opponents say initiative endangers financial gains; proponents disagree

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 9, 2024 4:45 PM

Opponents of a Nov. 5 ballot measure that would reduce state sales tax collections worry it could be the final straw that breaks South Dakota's AAA bond rating — a criticism that the measure's proponents dispute.

The measure is intended to repeal state sales taxes on groceries, but opponents say its imprecise language could broaden the impact to other goods and services. That uncertainty led the state's Legislative Research Council to make a broad estimate of potential state government revenue losses from the measure, ranging from \$134 million to \$646 million annually.

That would exacerbate the budget impact of a temporary, across-the-board state sales tax reduction from 4.5% to 4.2% that legislators approved in 2023, with a sunset scheduled for 2027. The cost of that decision has been estimated to be more than \$100 million annually while it's in effect. The state's total budget is about \$7 billion.

Matt Michels, a Republican, helped the state achieve its AAA bond rating while he was Gov. Dennis Daugaard's lieutenant governor from 2011 to 2019. Michels said the budget hole that would be created by the ballot measure and the resulting legislative battle to address it could result in a bond rating reduction.

"Money runs from instability," Michels said.

On the other side of the debate, Augustana University economics professor and Sioux Falls Democratic state Sen. Reynold Nesiba supports the ballot measure and is not worried about its potential impact on the bond rating.

"Democrats care about fiscal responsibility, but we also care about the obligations the state has to South Dakota families," he said. "It's simply wrong to make people pay a tax before eating."

Nesiba said if the measure passes, the Legislature should honor the measure's limited intent to repeal state sales taxes on groceries. He said raising general state sales taxes back to 4.5% would leave little for credit rating agencies to be concerned about.

An independent expert, Donald Boyd, co-director of the State and Local Government Finance Project at the Center for Policy Research at the University at Albany in New York, said in an emailed statement that passing a tax cut with no plan to pay for it could affect ratings agencies' views of the state.

"All else equal, that would be a negative in the eyes of the rating agencies," Boyd said. "Whether it's enough of a negative to affect the bond rating is a different question."

Bond ratings explained

One of the ways governments finance public projects is by selling bonds to investors, and then paying the money back with interest over time.

Agencies such as S&P Global rate bond issuers for their creditworthiness, with the highest rating of AAA going to those with the strongest ability to repay. Governments with better ratings can get lower interest rates on their bonds, resulting in lower debt payments.

South Dakota's ascent from AA+ to AAA happened under Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard in 2015 and 2016, when all three major rating agencies made the change. The agencies attributed the upgrade to the state's healthy savings, conservative fiscal approach, long-term financial planning, and fully funded state employee retirement fund.

"We knew by achieving that, we would save taxpayers a lot of money," Daugaard said.

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The ratings also benefit governmental subdivisions of the state, such as school districts. South Dakota school districts have saved over \$33 million in interest on new construction, land purchases, and debt refinancing since the rating upgrade, according to South Dakota Department of Education spokesperson Nancy Van Der Weide.

Seventeen states have a AAA rating. The ratings are apolitical; South Dakota's neighbor, Minnesota, which leans Democratic, has a AAA rating credited to a large and diverse economy and healthy savings and revenues. Nebraska and Iowa are the other South Dakota neighbors with AAA ratings.

Complicating factors

Rep. Tony Venhuizen, R-Sioux Falls, is Daugaard's son-in-law and served him as chief of staff. He's worried about the sales tax ballot measure's impact on the state's credit rating.

"Cutting out one of our most reliable sources of revenue in a public vote, with no plan to pay for the loss in revenue, does not look great to these credit agencies," he said.

Nathan Sanderson, executive director of the South Dakota Retailers Association, is part of a coalition opposing the ballot measure and served as Daugaard's director of policy and operations when the higher bond rating was achieved.

He said his former boss was able to overcome ratings agencies' skepticism about South Dakota's reliance on a single revenue source, the sales tax, for most of its income.

"What Daugaard did is show, yes, we only have a sales tax, but we're really, really fiscally responsible," Sanderson said. "Someone with limited income can get a large, low-interest-rate loan if they live within their means, build up a solid savings, and pay their bills on time."

Sanderson worries that eliminating another large, reliable chunk of sales taxes could change ratings agencies' views.

If the ballot measure passes, lawmakers could seek to limit its impact by amending the measure to ensure it only addresses state sales taxes on groceries. They could also seek to end the existing across-the-board sales tax reduction early, before its scheduled expiration date in 2027.

But that would be considered a vote to raise or impose a new tax, which requires a two-thirds majority of the Legislature, according to Michels.

"I think it would be pretty difficult to get the two-thirds," he said.

If the ballot measure passes and lawmakers don't immediately raise state sales taxes back to 4.5%, Michels said they would likely have to cut the budget or dip into the state's reserve funds to meet the state constitutional requirement that they balance the annual budget.

Sanderson said the need for budget cuts or reserve spending would strain the state budget while it's being weaned from several years of federal COVID-19 pandemic funding. The state's most recently adopted budget was \$7.3 billion. Of that, \$3.2 billion was federal funding. Comparatively, he said, the state budget was \$4.3 billion in 2019 and \$1.4 billion was federal funding.

"This is happening as we're already anticipating a decline in the budget," Sanderson said.

In 2023, lawmakers decided to pass the temporary sales tax reduction instead of Gov. Kristi Noem's proposal to reduce the state sales tax on groceries to zero percent. While lobbying for her proposal, Noem warned lawmakers that voters would pass a ballot measure repealing the state sales tax on groceries if the Legislature didn't act.

Her office did not grant an interview but sent South Dakota Searchlight a statement.

"Governor Noem and her team are preparing for all potential scenarios depending on what the people of South Dakota decide at the ballot box," her spokesperson Ian Fury wrote. "South Dakota will have a balanced budget next year, as we have for 135 years."

Noem cabinet member and Bureau of Finance and Management Commissioner Jim Terwilliger said in an emailed statement that the state's low debt levels, strong reserve funds, fully funded pension fund, strong economy, and long history of prudent budget management will not go away if the ballot measure passes.

"Those are all positive aspects of how we are rated as a state, and I do not expect those to change

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because of an initiated measure," he said.

'Do the right thing'

Nesiba alleged that Republicans including Michels, Venhuizen and Sanderson are essentially arguing that the Republican-dominated Legislature cannot be trusted to manage the budget if voters decide to repeal the state sales tax on groceries.

"They are arguing South Dakotans will choose to repeal the sales tax on groceries, and Republicans will then act irresponsibly, and that's somehow the voters' fault," Nesiba said. "It would be a Republican leadership failure. The Legislature works for the people, so they need to make it work. If voters can't trust Republican leadership, then we need new leadership."

Nesiba said credit agencies would only downgrade South Dakota's bond rating if they lose confidence in the Legislature's ability to navigate the issue in a fiscally responsible manner.

"I trust that the Legislature will do the right thing," he said.

Among the 45 states that collect a statewide sales tax, South Dakota is currently 36th in combined state and local rates, making it one of the lowest, according to the nonprofit and nonpartisan Tax Foundation.

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.

Pesticide labeling becomes issue in South Dakota's U.S. House race

BY: SETH TUPPER AND JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 9, 2024 3:02 PM

Legislation affecting the regulation of pesticide labels has become an issue in South Dakota's U.S. House race after a Democratic challenger leveled criticism at incumbent Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson.

The Washington Post reported in June that Rep. Johnson worked with biotech giant Bayer to insert a provision into a draft of the federal farm bill. According to legal and environmental experts interviewed by the Post, the provision could help shield Bayer from lawsuits alleging that frequent use of its Roundup herbicide causes cancer.

Rep. Johnson is seeking reelection to a fourth term. His opponent in the Nov. 5 general election is Sheryl Johnson, a Democrat.

Sheryl Johnson alleged in a press release Thursday that Rep. Johnson is "putting the interests of large corporations above the health and safety of our people."

Rep. Johnson answered questions from South Dakota Searchlight on Wednesday at the Sioux Empire Fair in Sioux Falls.

"Our legislation doesn't do anything in the courts," Rep. Johnson said. "If somebody's got a legitimate claim in court today, there isn't anything that we would do to adjust their claim from a backward-looking perspective."

He did not address the forward impact of the legislation. The Post reported that Bayer is "hoping to erect a blockade against future lawsuits."

Bayer's role

Roundup was originally produced by Monsanto, which was acquired by Bayer in 2018. Users ranging from homeowners to farmers apply Roundup by the hundreds of millions of pounds annually to kill weeds. Some seeds sold to farmers are genetically modified to tolerate Roundup.

Bayer has already faced expensive litigation from plaintiffs alleging links between Roundup's active ingredient, glyphosate, and cancer. In 2020, the company agreed to pay approximately \$10 billion to settle lawsuits involving roughly 125,000 claims, without an admission of wrongdoing.

Rep. Johnson, in answer to Searchlight questions on Wednesday, did not deny working with Bayer.

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"Listen, anytime you're writing legislation, you need to be talking to a broad cross-section of stakeholders," he said. "Shame on any member of Congress who thinks they have all of the answers and just goes in and tries to make law for the whole country without talking to people who were affected."

Sheryl Johnson's news release referenced Searchlight's Wednesday story about Rep. Johnson's comments. "While he talks about consulting 'the people affected,' he fails to recognize the most critical stakeholders — those who have cancer as a result of exposure to Roundup," Sheryl Johnson said. "These people, many of whom are South Dakotans, deserve more than just lip service. They deserve justice and accountability."

Rep. Johnson: Uniformity is goal

Rep. Johnson has described his provision in the farm bill as providing "uniformity" in pesticide labeling. The provision would reaffirm the federal Environmental Protection Agency's legal authority over pesticide labeling requirements, and squash attempts by individual states — including California — to impose their own labeling rules.

California has attempted to require a label on Roundup warning users that glyphosate causes cancer. That requirement has been blocked in federal court.

The EPA does not classify glyphosate as cancer-causing, but plans to reevaluate that position in 2026. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans."

Rep. Johnson declined a follow-up request Thursday from Searchlight for another on-the-record interview. He instead provided a written statement reiterating that his pesticide labeling provision would ensure labels are "consistent across the country, consistent with federal law, and consistent with EPA's science-based process."

"There is a reason the Constitution calls for Congress to regulate interstate commerce," the statement said. "Having 50 different and competing product labeling requirements across the country would be a mess. That's why I've supported a variety of labeling legislation, especially in the agricultural and food arena."

He noted the provision has support from colleagues of both parties, and that 11 state attorneys general — including South Dakota's — urged the EPA this week to prevent a patchwork of state regulations on farm chemicals.

Challenger has 'serious questions'

Sheryl Johnson criticized her opponent's rationale and questioned his motivation.

"By advocating for federal-only oversight in this case, Dusty Johnson is effectively putting the interests of large corporations above the health and safety of our people," Sheryl Johnson said. "His selective advocacy for federal oversight raises serious questions about whose interests he's really serving."

Data compiled by Open Secrets, a nonprofit that tracks money in politics, shows that Rep. Johnson's campaign committee has received \$4,000 from political action committees affiliated with Bayer this election cycle, and \$1,000 in each of the 2020 and 2022 cycles.

Open Secrets also reports a combined \$11.83 million of lobbying spending by Bayer or its affiliates in 2023 and 2024.

The House has not yet scheduled a vote on its 1,000-page farm bill. The current version of the bill expires Sept. 30.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

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.

Black Hills Energy proposes Rapid City power plant costing up to \$270 million

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 9, 2024 1:52 PM

Black Hills Energy plans to build a new power generation plant in Rapid City for a cost between \$250 million and \$270 million, according to a notice sent Aug. 2 to state regulators on the Public Utilities Commission.

The plant would have three engines fueled by natural gas and three turbines using natural gas and diesel. It is expected to produce about 100 megawatts of electricity during peak demand, an amount typically described as enough to power tens of thousands of homes.

The project would be constructed next to an existing Black Hills Energy-owned substation on land zoned for industrial purposes on Deadwood Avenue in northwest Rapid City.

The notice says Black Hills Energy plans to file for a permit from the Public Utilities Commission on Feb. 1. Construction would take 12-15 months, with the plant expected to begin operations by July 1, 2026. The company is also working to obtain other permits from local, state and federal agencies.

The notice says the project would employ up to 200 construction personnel and create three full-time jobs. It would also generate an estimated \$10.5 million in sales, use and contractor's excise taxes for the state during construction, and \$1.5 million in additional annual property taxes for local governments.

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.

Congress aims to boost enforcement at the border – with Canada

BY: LIA CHIEN - AUGUST 9, 2024 3:46 PM

WASHINGTON – While much of U.S. border security talk focuses on the southwest corner of the country, the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan bill in June aimed at a different target — growing migration along the U.S.-Canada border.

The legislation, titled the Northern Border Coordination Act, was co-authored by Sens. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, and Gary Peters, a Michigan Democrat. The measure would hire additional U.S. Border Patrol agents for critically understaffed areas of the northern border and establish the Northern Border Coordination Center at Selfridge Air National Guard Base near Detroit to coordinate border security strategy.

The Senate passed the measure by unanimous consent, but the House has not acted on it.

The northern border is the longest international border in the world at just over 5,500 miles, divided into eight patrol sectors comprising 49 official border crossing stations.

It is also largely undefended.

Much of the border is undefined and unobstructed, marked only by a 6-foot clearing, or vista, that follows the length of the border, hundreds of white markers, and naturally occurring boundaries like streams or lakes.

Illegal crossings up

There has been growing attention from northern-state lawmakers in recent years over increased attempted illegal border crossings as migration from Latin America grows due to economic and political conditions.

In 2023, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol encountered almost 190,000 individuals attempting to cross from Canada to the United States. That's almost seven times more than in 2021.

CBP encountered almost 2.5 million individuals on the southern border in 2023.

The Swanton Sector, a 24,000-square-mile area spanning the northern borders of eastern New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire, has seen the highest number of illegal crossings. From October 2022 to

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September 2023, CBP saw a 550% increase in apprehensions of people crossing from Quebec into the sector.

Encounters are when border officials catch individuals illegally crossing from one country to another either at or between ports of entry. Individuals can then be sent back to their country of origin, Canada, or released into the U.S.

Collen Putzel, an associate policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, a liberal-leaning immigration policy think tank, said in an interview with States Newsroom that encounter numbers don't perfectly reflect the number of people entering the U.S.

"The encounter numbers may be increasing, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the number of people actually entering are increasing," Putzel said.

Understaffed

Staffing on the northern border remains a critical issue in maintaining border policies and security. The U.S. Government Accountability Office conducted a study in 2019 and found there were "an insufficient number of agents that limited patrol missions along the northern border."

GAO attributed many of the staffing shortages to be a result of "competing priorities along the U.S.-Mexico border."

A CBP spokesperson told States Newsroom in a written statement that more congressional support is needed to address northern border issues.

"CBP continuously adjusts to shifting trends while continuing to call on Congress to provide the resources and personnel necessary to sustain and improve our border security along all our borders," the spokesperson said.

Peters said his bill with Collins would help solve staffing shortages.

"This legislation will further cement the center's role in coordinating border security efforts, supporting personnel training and conducting testing for new border security technologies," he said in a press release from Collins' office.

Routes set by smugglers

Most of the people crossing the border come from areas outside Canada. About half come from Mexico, CBS News Boston reported. Others are from India, Bangladesh and Haiti.

Many buy one-way plane tickets to Toronto or Montreal.

The increased movement of people through Canada could be fueled by smuggling operations, Putzel said. "Oftentimes, migration routes are, in part, dictated by the smuggling networks that are controlling them," she said.

In February, Canada changed a visa rule for Mexican nationals, requiring citizens to obtain a Canadian or U.S. travel visa before entering Canada. Previously, no visas were required.

Canada has seen an increase in Mexican migrants claiming asylum over the past decade. In 2015, only 110 people from Mexico applied for asylum. At the end of 2023, almost 24,000 applied, the majority filing their claims from airport offices, according to the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Department.

National security vulnerabilities

With more people moving from Canada into the U.S., the situation at the northern border has grown more precarious, prompting bills like the Northern Border Coordination Act, which was introduced in July 2023.

In 2023, the CBP Office of Field Operations, which monitors the border at ports of entry, encountered 484 individuals on the terrorist watchlist attempting to cross into the U.S. from Canada. That's almost nine times more than in 2021, according to CBP data. Officials on the southern border only encountered 80 people on the watchlist in 2023.

Authorities have also encountered more drugs being brought over the northern border. According to the

CBP, drug seizures in 2023 were up by about 29% from 2021 levels. Marijuana was the most common drug officers found, with just under 3,500 seizures in 2023 compared to just under 2,000 in 2021.

But weapons and ammunition seizures have decreased in recent years. In 2021, CBP seized over 9,000 weapons, ammunition, and gun parts. In 2023, that figure was down to just over 4,000.

Rep. Shri Thanedar, a Democrat who represents part of the Detroit area along the northern border, said in a statement to States Newsroom that the Collins-Peters proposal "is essential to address the rising national security threat along the northern border."

"I firmly believe this strategic investment will benefit the safety of communities within Michigan's 13th Congressional District," Thanedar said.

Economic factors push more migrants to U.S.

The U.S. may be more appealing to migrants than Canada because of culture and the job market, Silvia Pedraza, a professor of sociology and American culture at the University of Michigan, said. Immigrants are more likely to get jobs in the U.S. than Canada, she said.

"In Canada, people (immigrants) don't get decent jobs. They (Canadians) treat them nicely. They're even, I would say, hospitable and warm," said Pedraza. "The fact of the matter is that they don't give them any jobs that are worth anything."

"We (the U.S.) don't give them papers, but we give them jobs," she said, acknowledging the better job prospects immigrants seek to support themselves and their families.

But Pedraza also thinks that Americans should recognize the positive economic impact immigrants bring.

She said with U.S. citizens' increasing levels of education, they are less willing to work jobs in the service industry, construction, and agriculture. In recent years, immigrant workers have begun to make up significant populations in these industries, according to a study by Pew Research Center.

"We don't seem to recognize that we have a real need, a real lack of people in these sorts of jobs that are essential to the economy," said Pedraza.

Pedraza emphasized that the U.S. is a country built on immigration and that intense media coverage of the southern border won't help solve the crisis.

"It's such a negative portrayal all the time that doesn't see the value of what immigrants bring to a country," she said.

Lia is a Capitol Reporting Fellow based in the States Newsroom Washington, D.C Bureau. She is passionate about covering agriculture, climate, and education policy areas.

More than 1 million veterans receiving benefits via PACT Act ahead of anniversary

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - AUGUST 9, 2024 2:46 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Friday celebrated the number of veterans enrolled in VA health care and benefits as part of a law he signed nearly two years ago, though he said more work must be done for troops who were stationed at a base in Uzbekistan in the early 2000s.

"Two years ago, I signed the bipartisan Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins (PACT) Act enacting the most significant expansion of benefits and health care for toxic exposed veterans and their survivors in over thirty years," Biden wrote in a statement.

The law, which spent years gaining the support it needed in Congress, expanded health care coverage and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances like Agent Orange and open-air burn pits.

To date, more than 1 million veterans and 10,000 survivors of veterans who died have begun to receive disability benefits stemming from the law, accounting for approximately \$6.8 billion in earned benefits.

Biden said in his statement that his administration would continue studying veterans' other illnesses for a "presumptive status," which could ensure them access to health care and benefits without having to

prove to the VA that their conditions are directly linked to their military service.

The VA is also planning to “close loopholes for certain veterans exposed to harmful toxins during their military service,” Biden wrote, without elaborating.

A White House fact sheet says the VA is looking into providing benefits for 16,000 veterans who served at Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan, also known as K2, between 2001 and 2005, since there were “several contaminants...in either the air, water, soil, or soil gas.”

“VA plans to take steps to consider veterans who served in Uzbekistan as Persian Gulf Veterans so that any veteran who served at K2 and who experience undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses can get the benefits they deserve,” it states. “VA will also create new training materials for claims processors and examiners on the hazards identified at K2.”

Since the law — known as the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act or the PACT Act — took effect nearly two years ago, the VA says that 739,421 veterans have enrolled in its health care programs.

Of that total, 333,767 veterans are covered under the new law, including those who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and the wars that followed the Sept. 11 attacks.

The numbers released Friday are significantly higher than they were when Biden gave a speech on the law’s one-year anniversary. The VA said at the time, which was one year ago, that 408,581 veterans had filed their claims and that 348,469 of those had been approved.

But Friday’s announcement is somewhat similar to one Biden made in May when he cheered the VA granting 1 million claims under the law.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough said on a call with reporters at the time the law had led to “more than \$5.7 billion in earned benefits for veterans.”

The exact number of veterans with approved PACT Act claims as of Friday stood at 1,005,341 while the number of survivors approved had reached 10,777.

A total of 1,251,720 veterans so far have completed filing Pact Act claims as have 21,416 survivors.

The VA has an interactive dashboard that provides veterans with information about how to apply for health care and benefits under the PACT Act as well as how many claims have been submitted.

The VA has a calendar of in-person events that can be found here. Veterans or their family members can also call the VA at 800-698-2411 to inquire about PACT Act benefits.

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

South Dakota joins 14 other states challenging health insurance for DACA recipients

BY: TIM CARPENTER, KANSAS REFLECTOR - AUGUST 9, 2024 7:05 AM

TOPEKA, Kansas — Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach filed a lawsuit Thursday on behalf of 15 states, including South Dakota, in an attempt to stop President Joe Biden from expanding health care access to DACA recipients by making them eligible for participation in the Affordable Care Act’s insurance marketplace.

Kobach, a Republican who built a political career concentrated on legal issues tied to undocumented migrants, was joined in the federal lawsuit by attorneys general in Alabama, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia.

Kobach challenged the federal rule issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that would make people who arrived in the United States as children, sometimes known as Dreamers, eligible for taxpayer-subsidized health plans under the ACA. The Biden administration’s initiative would enable DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, to be part of the health insurance marketplace on Nov. 1.

The lawsuit urged the federal court to postpone the effective date of the HHS rule pending completion of the case. It also sought to vacate the rule as “both contrary to law and unreasonable, arbitrary and

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capricious.”

“Illegal aliens shouldn’t get a free pass into our country,” said Kobach, using an offensive term for undocumented residents. “They shouldn’t receive taxpayer benefits when they arrive, and the Biden-Harris administration shouldn’t get a free pass to violate federal law. That’s why I am leading a multistate lawsuit to stop this illegal regulation from going into effect.”

Kobach said in the U.S. District Court complaint filed in North Dakota that the administration of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris intended to violate a federal law forbidding government benefits from flowing to people who weren’t citizens of the United States or were otherwise unlawfully in the country.

He said Congress limited eligibility for federal public benefits to certain “qualified aliens” in 1996. DACA recipients weren’t included in the definition of qualified immigrants, he said. In addition, Kobach’s filing said Congress restricted eligibility to participate in the ACA’s qualified health plans to “citizens or nationals” of the United States or “aliens lawfully present in the United States.”

“Indeed, eligibility for DACA requires unlawful presence in the United States,” Kobach’s petition said.

Xavier Becerra, the secretary of HHS, said when the final DACA rule was published in May the change could lead to 100,000 previously uninsured DACA recipients enrolling in health coverage through the marketplaces.

“HHS is committed to making health coverage accessible for DACA recipients — Dreamers — who have worked hard to live the American dream,” Becerra said. “Dreamers are our neighbors and friends. They are students, teachers, social workers, doctors and nurses. More importantly, they are fellow Americans.”

Kobach asserted the HHS rule would make as many as 200,000 DACA recipients eligible for health insurance through the marketplace. His total of DACA participants included 4,350 in Kansas and 2,550 in Missouri. In terms of other plaintiff states, the numbers ranged from 7,810 in Virginia, 7,450 in Indiana, 6,360 in Tennessee and 4,840 in South Carolina to 220 in New Hampshire, 190 in South Dakota, 130 in North Dakota and 80 in Montana.

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall said extending health insurance through the ACA to 3,460 DACA recipients in Alabama represented a new “assault on the American worker.”

“First, this administration is demanding that hardworking Americans pay for someone else’s college degree, then it forces them to pay for medical procedures that violate their beliefs, and now they want to dictate paying for health care for people who shouldn’t even be in this country,” Marshall said.

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson said the lawsuit was necessary to derail the Biden administration’s unconstitutional move to broaden the reach of Obamacare.

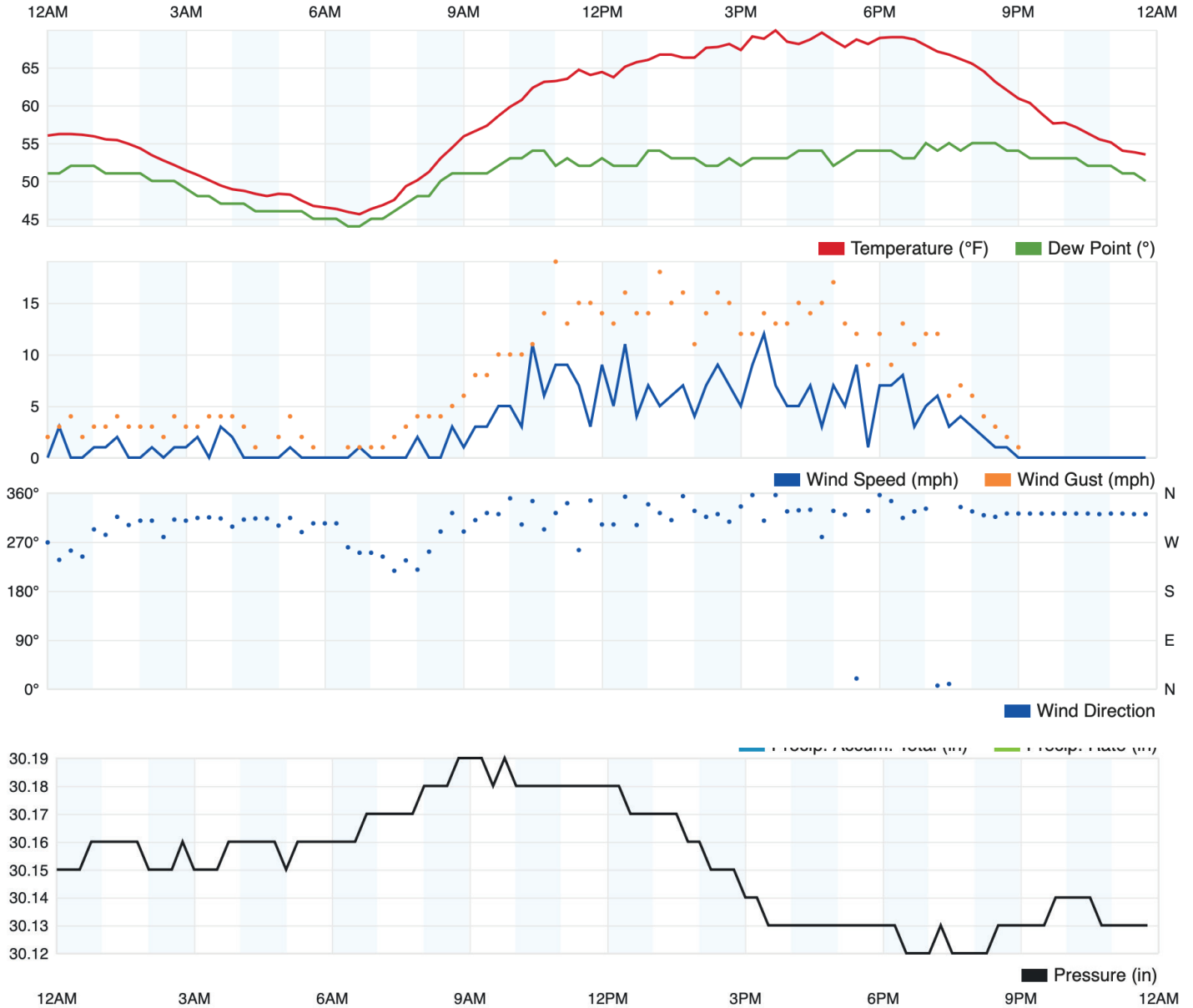
“I’m sympathetic to these people who didn’t choose to be brought here,” Wilson said. “However, this is yet another example of the Biden administration trying to do something it doesn’t have the authority to do.”

Tim Carpenter has reported on Kansas for 38 years. He covered the Capitol for 16 years at the Topeka Capital-Journal and previously worked for the Lawrence Journal-World and United Press International.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 75 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 49 °F

Mostly Clear

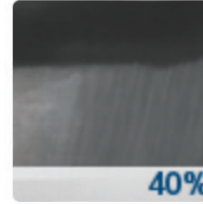
Sunday



High: 77 °F

Mostly Sunny

Sunday Night



Low: 56 °F

Chance
Showers

Monday



High: 76 °F

Slight Chance
Showers

Today
Low 70s East to Near 80 West

Tonight
Low to Mid 50s

Sunday
Low to Mid 70s
Showers & Weak Storms
Mainly West of the James
(40-70% Chance For Rain)

NWS Aberdeen, SD

NWS National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Dry conditions continue through tonight, with increasing chances for moisture during the day Sunday. The area of rain then continues east Sunday night

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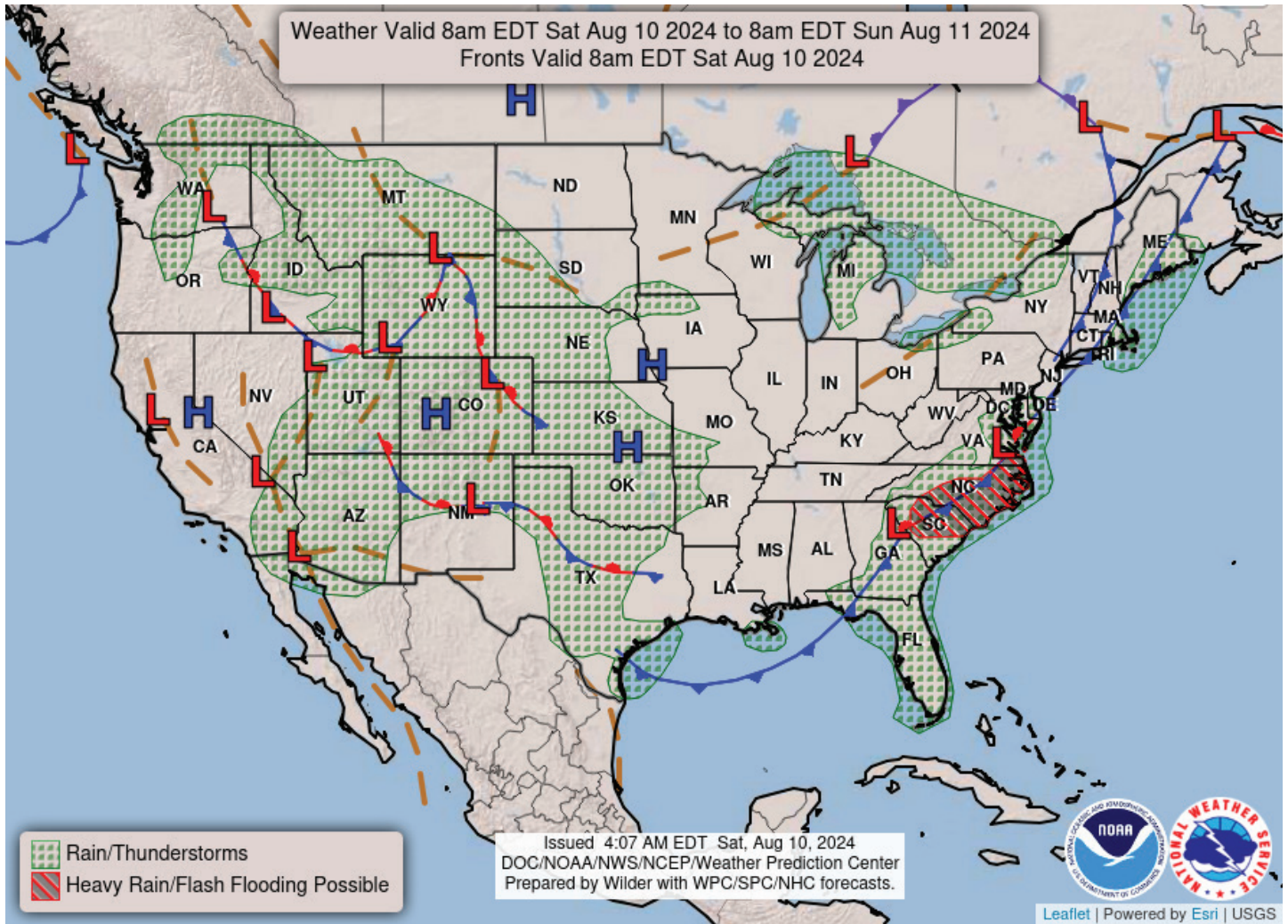
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 3:47 PM
Low Temp: 46 °F at 6:42 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 10:54 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1947
Record Low: 42 in 1985
Average High: 84
Average Low: 58
Average Precip in Aug.: .73
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.10
Average Precip to date: 14.83
Precip Year to Date: 15.99
Sunset Tonight: 8:48:42 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:27:48 am

Day length: 14 hours, 22 minutes



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Today in Weather History

August 10, 1886: An estimated F3 tornado moved southeast from 10 miles northwest of Aberdeen. This massive tornado destroyed four homes and a dozen barns. This is the earliest significant tornado on record for Brown County.

August 10, 2007: Several supercell thunderstorms developed along a frontal boundary during the evening bringing large hail, damaging winds, along with a couple of tornadoes. An EF0 tornado touched down north of Timber Lake with no damage reported. Another EF0 tornado touched down briefly north of Trail City with no damage occurring. Wakpala, in Corson County, and Mobridge saw golf ball sized hail. The hail broke some windows and damaged the siding on several houses in the Mobridge area.

1884: An earthquake, centered near New York City and registering a magnitude 5.5, hit the region a little after 2 PM. The tremor made houses shake, chimneys fall, and residents wonder what the heck was going on, according to a New York Times article two days later.

1856: A hurricane destroyed Isle Dernieres or Last Island, a pleasure resort south-southwest of New Orleans on this day. The highest points of the island were under five feet of water. The resort hotel was destroyed, along with the island's gambling establishments. Over 200 people perished, and the island lost all its vegetation and split in half. Only one cow remained on the island after the catastrophe. The Last Island is now just a haven for pelicans and other seabirds. The steamer Nautilus foundered during the storm. The lone survivor clung to a bale of cotton and washed ashore sometime later.

1882 - Sandusky OH noted a four minute snow squall during the morning, frost was reported in the suburbs of Chicago, and a killing frost was reported at Cresco IA. (The Weather Channel)

1884 - An earthquake, centered near New York City and registering a magnitude 5.5, hit the region a little after 2 PM. The tremor made houses shake, chimneys fall, and residents wonder what the heck was going on, according to a New York Times article two days later.

1898 - The temperature at Pendleton OR climbed all the way to 119 degrees at set a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1924 - Colorado's deadliest tornado killed a woman and nine children in one house along its twenty-mile path east southeast of Thurman. Mennonite men had left the farm to provide possible aid, as the 200-yard wide storm was first seen while far away.(The Weather Channel)

1936 - The temperature soared to 114 degrees at Plain Dealing, LA, and reached 120 degrees at Ozark AR, to establish record highs for those two states. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Hurricane Allen came ashore above Brownsville, TX, dropping fifteen inches of rain near San Antonio, and up to 20 inches in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Tidal flooding occurred along the South Texas coast. Hurricane Allen packed winds to 150 mph, and also spawned twenty-nine tornadoes. Total damage from the storm was estimated at 750 million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Unseasonably hot weather continued in the southeastern U.S. Ten cities in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina reported record high temperatures for the date. Macon GA hit 101 degrees. A tropical depression deluged southeastern Texas and southwestern Louisiana with torrential rains. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Citizens of Bluefield, WV, where the Chamber of Commerce provides free lemonade on days when the temperature warms into the 90s, were able to celebrate their record high of 90 degrees. Eight other cities also reported record high temperatures for the date,including Bismarck ND with a reading of 102 degrees.(The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thirty-eight cities in the south central and southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Asheville NC with a reading of 48 degrees, and Victoria TX with a low of 63 degrees. Oklahoma City OK reported a record cool afternoon high of 71 degrees, and the daily high of 64 degrees at Raleigh NC established a record for August. In Arizona, a record sixty-four day streak of 100 degree days at Phoenix came to an end.(The National Weather Summary)



HOW DID GOD GET IN YOUR LIFE?

The new pastor wanted to get to know the members of his congregation. One evening at a church dinner he asked Mark how he came to know the Lord as his Savior.

To his surprise Mark replied, "Well pastor, I believe God is at work in our family."

One thing is for certain: If our faith is real and at work, it will be real and at work in our homes. Family relationships always seem to be "on the edge." There are so many different individual wants and needs, so many competing priorities and interests that relationships always seem to be stressed to the point of breaking.

The letter to Ephesians has some sound advice for families. It very clearly states that children are to obey their parents as long as parents act in the will and way of God. Parents have every right to have expectations of their children that are in keeping with His Word. Ideally, parents will act with thoughtfulness, gentleness and love. While this may seem difficult, if family members act in accordance with the teachings of God's Word, each will put the other's interests ahead of their own and selfishness will be replaced with selflessness because the real Father is the head of the home and worshiping Him will come first.

Fathers are also advised to "Bring up your children with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord."

Prayer: We pray, Father, for families that are struggling to survive, dealing with overwhelming problems that leave them helpless. Give them hope through Christ to be victors. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." Ephesians 6:1-4

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:
08.09.24

12 32 38 40 57 21

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$435,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.07.24

15 24 42 44 51 4

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$6,530,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 3 Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.09.24

19 26 36 42 43 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 18 Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.07.24

10 20 25 27 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$62,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 18 Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.07.24

16 29 31 60 65 26

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 47 Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.07.24

6 19 35 47 57 9

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$201,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 47 Mins 11 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
- Cancelled:** 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 **AP** Associated Press

'Original sin': Torture of 9/11 suspects means even without plea deal, they may never face a verdict

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, ERIC TUCKER and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Defense Department disagreement over how to bring to justice the accused mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks and two others has thrown the cases into disarray and surfaced tension between the desire of some victims' families to see a final legal reckoning and the significant obstacles that may make that impossible.

Defense lawyers and some legal experts blame many of the endless delays on what they call the "original sin" haunting the military prosecutions: the illegal torture that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and his co-defendants were subjected to in CIA custody. That years-old abuse has snarled the case, leaving lawyers to hash out legal issues two decades later in the now often-forgotten military courtrooms at the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

An approved plea bargain sparing Mohammed and two co-defendants from the death penalty appeared to clear those hurdles and push the cases toward conclusion. But after criticism of the deal from some family members and Republican lawmakers, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Aug. 2 revoked the deal signed by the official he had appointed.

Austin said later he believed Americans deserved the opportunity to see the trials through. Pentagon deputy spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said Friday the case "will continue toward trial with pretrial proceedings as it has been."

Asked for comment, a CIA spokesperson said that the "CIA's detention and interrogation program ended in 2009."

The events reflect the disconnect between the wish of many to see the defendants convicted and sentenced in their death penalty cases and the view of many experts that the legal obstacles caused by torture, disputes over evidence and other extraordinary government actions make it unrealistic to expect a conclusion anytime soon.

Relatives of some of the nearly 3,000 people killed in 2001 when al-Qaida recruits flew four hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field differed in their hoped-for outcomes for the prosecution. Yet there is shared frustration with its handling so far.

Some said they still want the death penalty imposed even though they know legal complications may make that impossible.

"They've been telling us this for years," said Terry Strada, the leader of the group 9/11 Families United and one of the most vocal family representatives.

Strada said she is still willing to wait years for justice and for "the punishment to fit the crime. And that would be the death penalty."

Brett Eagleson, whose father, Bruce, was among the World Trade Center victims, said families should not suffer the consequences of government failures.

"At the end of the day, if ... they can't prosecute them, or they can't convict them, well, the blood's not on our hands because all the evidence that they've obtained was illegal. That's not our issue," he said.

"That's blood on the Bush administration's hands and that's blood on the CIA's hands," said Eagleson, the president of 9/11 Justice, a victims' advocacy group. "That has nothing to do with us, and I think the juice is worth the squeeze here."

Guantanamo defense lawyer J. Wells Dixon points to his own experience on how compelling revelations about the torture can be when cases reach trial. In 2021, seven of eight members of a military panel of officers serving as the jury at the Guantanamo trial of Majid Khan, a former al-Qaida courier whom Dixon represented, surprised the court by requesting clemency for him after hearing his account of mistreatment.

The torture in CIA custody "is a stain on the moral fiber of America; the treatment of Mr. Khan in the

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hands of US personnel should be a source of shame for the US government," the officers wrote to the judge.

After more than a decade of pretrial hearings on the admissibility of torture-tinged evidence and other significant legal challenges, the 9/11 case "is further from trial now potentially than it was at the time that it was charged," Dixon said. "And the reason for that is everything about this case is so tainted by torture."

Mohammed and two co-defendants, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi, had agreed to plea deals that would have required them to answer questions about the attack from victims' relatives.

A fourth defendant, Ammar al-Baluchi, did not agree to the deal, and is the only one proceeding in pre-trial hearings while the others challenge Austin's decision. The military judge at Guantanamo declared the fifth 9/11 defendant, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, mentally unfit last year, after a military medical panel diagnosed him with post-traumatic stress and psychosis after his torture and solitary confinement in CIA custody.

The abuse that the 9/11 defendants and other detainees underwent in CIA custody began in the stated interest of getting information urgently to stave off additional attacks. Critics question if what the George W. Bush administration termed "enhanced interrogation" techniques ever yielded information that prevented attacks.

They also attribute much of the delays to the administration's decision to use World War II-era laws to create special military commissions to try foreign defendants.

In 2009, then-Attorney General Eric Holder announced plans to put Mohammed and the four others on trial in civilian court in New York City.

Those plans were stalled and ultimately shelved after opposition from members of Congress who imposed restrictions on the transfer of detainees to U.S. soil and from New York politicians who feared a trial would require exorbitantly costly security and be a burden on neighborhoods recovering from the attacks.

Other major challenges have piled up for the succession of four judges who have rotated through Guantanamo. If the 9/11 cases ever clear the hurdles of trial, verdicts and sentencing, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit would likely hear many of the issues in the course of any death penalty appeals.

The issues include the CIA destruction of videos of interrogations, whether Austin's plea deal reversal constituted unlawful interference and whether the torture of the men tainted subsequent interrogations by "clean teams" of FBI agents that did not involve violence.

Eugene R. Fidell, who teaches military justice at Yale Law School, says the impact of torture on the case raises doubt that any death penalty would survive federal court review.

"I'm not an advocate for these defendants. I think the crimes they're accused of are horrendous," Fidell said. "But as a matter of the administration of justice, there's a lot of problems here. And they seem to keep going."

While some victims' relatives have been vocal about wanting Mohammed and the others executed, others call the military commissions a travesty that should stop.

Elizabeth Miller, who was 6 when her firefighter father Douglas was killed at the World Trade Center, leads a group of 250 family members who oppose the death penalty. This month, Miller was signing up through a government portal provided as part of the plea deal to send along her many questions for Mohammed, including whether he feels remorse. Austin's reversal of the plea agreement suspended that search for answers.

Sally Regenhard, co-founder of another group representing families of firefighters, urged that the prosecution be moved to Manhattan federal court just a few blocks from "the scene of the crime."

"Put it on the fast track and stop with the years going by," she said. "How many more parents are going to have to die, knowing they never had justice for their child's murder?"

Neumeister reported from New York

Brazilian authorities are investigating the cause of the fiery plane crash that killed 62

By MAURICIO SAVARESE, GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA and DAVID KOENIG Associated Press
VINHEDO, Brazil (AP) — Brazilian authorities worked Saturday to piece together what exactly caused the plane crash in Sao Paulo state the previous day that killed all 62 people on board.

Local airline Voepass' plane, an ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop, was headed for Sao Paulo's international airport in Guarulhos with 58 passengers and 4 crew members, when it went down in the city of Vinhedo.

Initially, the company said its plane had 62 passengers, then it revised the number to 61 and early on Saturday it raised the figure once again after it found a passenger named Constantino Thé Maia was not on its original list.

Images recorded by witnesses showed the aircraft in a flat spin and plunging vertically before smashing to the ground inside a gated community, and leaving an obliterated fuselage consumed by fire. Residents said there were no injuries on the ground.

Rain drizzled down on rescue workers as they recovered the first bodies from the scene in the chill of the Southern Hemisphere's winter. Some residents of the condominium silently left to spend the night elsewhere.

It was the world's deadliest airline crash since January 2023, when 72 people died on board a Yeti Airlines plane in Nepal that stalled and crashed while making its landing approach. That plane also was an ATR 72, and the final report blamed pilot error.

A report Friday from Brazilian television network Globo's meteorological center said it "confirmed the possibility of the formation of ice in the region of Vinhedo," and local media cited experts pointing to icing as a potential cause for the crash.

An American Eagle ATR 72-200 crashed on Oct. 31, 1994, and the United States National Transportation Safety Board determined that the probable cause was ice buildup while the plane was circling in a holding pattern. The plane rolled at about 8,000 feet and dove into the ground, killing all 68 people on board. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration issued operating procedures for ATRs and similar planes, telling pilots not to use the autopilot in icing conditions.

But Brazilian aviation expert Lito Sousa cautioned that meteorological conditions alone might not be enough to explain why the plane fell in the manner that it did on Friday.

"Analyzing an air crash just with images can lead to wrong conclusions about the causes," Sousa told the AP by phone. "But we can see a plane with loss of support, no horizontal speed. In this flat spin condition, there's no way to reclaim control of the plane."

Speaking to reporters Friday in Vinhedo, Sao Paulo Public Security Secretary Guilherme Derrite said the plane's black box had been recovered, apparently in a preserved state.

Marcelo Moura, director of operations for Voepass, told reporters Friday night that, while there were forecasts for ice, they were within acceptable levels for the aircraft.

Likewise, Lt. Col. Carlos Henrique Baldi of the Brazilian air force's center for the investigation and prevention of air accidents, told reporters in a late afternoon press conference that it was still too early to confirm whether ice caused the crash.

The plane is "certified in several countries to fly in severe icing conditions, including in countries unlike ours, where the impact of ice is more significant," said Baldi, who heads the center's investigation division.

In an earlier statement, the center said that the plane's pilots did not call for help nor say they were operating under adverse weather conditions. There has been no evidence that the pilots tried to contact controllers of regional airports, either, Ports and Airports Minister Silvio Costa Filho told reporters Friday night in Vinhedo.

Brazil's Federal Police began its own investigation, and dispatched specialists in plane crashes and the identification of disaster victims, it said in a statement.

Sao Paulo state government said Saturday morning that 21 bodies had been retrieved from the scene, and two were already identified.

French-Italian plane manufacturer ATR said in a statement that it had been informed that the accident involved its ATR 72-500 model, and that company specialists are "fully engaged to support both the investigation and the customer."

The ATR 72 is generally used on shorter flights. The planes are built by a joint venture of Airbus in France and Italy's Leonardo S.p.A.

Crashes involving various models of the ATR 72 have resulted in 470 deaths going back to the 1990s, according to a database of the Aviation Safety Network.

Brazilian authorities began transferring the corpses to the morgue Friday, and called on victims' family members to bring any medical, X-ray and dental exams to help identify the bodies. Blood tests were also done to help identification efforts.

Costa Filho, the airports minister, said the air force's center will also conduct a criminal probe of the accident.

"We will investigate so this case is fully explained to the Brazilian people," he said.

Sá Pessoa reported from Sao Paulo and Koenig from Dallas.

Seoul says North Korea has flown more trash balloons toward South Korea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's military says North Korea is again flying balloons likely carrying trash toward the South, adding to a bizarre psychological warfare campaign amid growing tensions between the war-divided rivals.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said Saturday that the winds could carry the balloons to regions north of the South Korean capital, Seoul. Seoul City Hall and the Gyeonggi provincial government issued text alerts urging citizens to beware of objects dropping from the sky and report to the military or police if they spot any balloons.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or property damage.

North Korea in recent weeks has flown more than 2,000 balloons carrying waste paper, cloth scraps and cigarette butts toward the South in what it has described as a retaliation toward South Korean civilian activists flying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border.

Pyongyang has long condemned such activities as it is extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of leader Kim Jong Un's authoritarian rule.

North Korea last flew balloons toward the South on July 24, when trash carried by at least one of them fell on the South Korean presidential compound, raising worries about the vulnerability of key South Korean facilities. The balloon contained no dangerous material and no one was hurt, South Korea's presidential security service said.

South Korea, in reaction to the North's balloon campaign, activated its front-line loudspeakers to blast broadcasts of propaganda messages and K-pop songs. Experts say North Korea hates such broadcasts because it fears it could demoralize front-line troops and residents.

The Koreas' tit-for-tat Cold War-style campaigns are inflaming tensions, with the rivals threatening stronger steps and warning of grave consequences.

Their relations have worsened in recent years as Kim continues to accelerate the North's nuclear weapons and missile program and issue verbal threats of nuclear conflict toward Washington and Seoul. In response, South Korea, the United States and Japan have been expanding their combined military exercises and sharpening their nuclear deterrence strategies built around U.S. strategic assets.

Experts say animosity could further rise later this month when South Korea and the United States kick off their annual joint military drills that are being strengthened to deal with the North's nuclear threats.

The resumption of the balloon campaign comes as North Korea struggles to recover from devastating floods that submerged thousands of homes and huge swaths of farmland in areas near its border with China.

North Korean state media said Saturday that Kim ordered officials to bring some 15,400 people displaced by the floods to the capital city, Pyongyang, to provide them better care, and that it would take two or three months to rebuild homes in flood-hit areas.

He has so far turned down aid offers by traditional allies Russia and China and international aid groups, insisting that North Korea is capable of handling the recovery on its own. He accused "enemy" South Korea of a "vicious smear campaign" to tarnish the image of his government, claiming that the South's media have been exaggerating the damage and casualties caused by the floods.

An Israeli airstrike on a Gaza school kills at least 80 people, Palestinian health officials say

By WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli airstrike hit a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City early Saturday, killing at least 80 people, Palestinian health authorities said, in one of the deadliest strikes in the 10-month-old war between Israel and Hamas.

The Israeli military acknowledged the strike on the Tabeen school in central Gaza City, claiming it hit a Hamas command center within the school. Hamas denied that.

There have been reports of increasing Israeli attacks on Gaza's schools, which have become shelters for people who have been forced to flee their homes by the war.

Video from the scene showed walls blown out on the ground level of a large building. Concrete chunks and twisted metal lay atop the blood-soaked floor, along with clothing, toppled furniture and other debris. A blackened car with the windows blown out was covered in rubble.

Fadel Naeem, director of the al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, told The Associated Press that the facility received 70 bodies of those killed in the strike and the body parts of at least 10 others. The Health Ministry said another 47 people were wounded.

Naeem said some of the wounded had severe burns and many had to have limbs amputated.

"We received some of the most serious injuries we encountered during the war," he said.

The strike hit without warning in the early morning before sunrise as people were praying at a mosque inside the school, according to Abu Anas, a witness who worked to rescue people.

"There were people praying, there were people washing and there were people upstairs sleeping, including children, women and old people," he said. "The missile fell on them without warning. The first missile, and the second. We recovered them as body parts."

Three missiles ripped through the school and the mosque inside, where about 6,000 displaced people were taking shelter from the war, said Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesperson for the Civil Defense first responders who operate under the Hamas-run local government.

Many of the dead were unrecognizable, he said, adding that he expected the death toll to rise. Many of the casualties were women and children, he said.

In a report issued Monday, the U.N. Human Rights Office said there were at least 17 attacks on schools in the previous month — seven of them in the previous eight days alone — that reportedly killed 163 people, many of them women and children. Many of the schools were serving as shelters, the report said, adding that Israel has a duty under international law to provide safe shelter for the displaced.

"There's no justification for these massacres," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement posted on the social media platform X, in reference to the strikes on schools.

The U.N. said that as of July 6, 477 out of 564 schools in Gaza had been directly hit or damaged in the war.

On Thursday Israel's military hit two schools sheltering displaced people in eastern Gaza City, killing at least 15 people, according to hospital officials.

Israel has blamed civilian deaths in Gaza on Hamas, saying the group endangers noncombatants by using schools and residential neighborhoods as bases for operations and attacks.

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Israeli intelligence indicated about 20 militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, including senior commanders, were using the Tabeen school compound to plan attacks on Israeli forces, Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman said in a statement on X.

Izzat al-Rishq, a top Hamas official denied there were militants in the school.

Shoshani also questioned the casualty numbers issued by the Palestinian Health Ministry.

Israel said the targeted school was located next to a mosque serving as a shelter for Gaza City residents.

A cameraman working for The Associated Press said, however, that the mosque and the classrooms were in one building, with the prayer hall on the ground floor and the school above it. A missile appeared to have penetrated through the floor of the classrooms to the mosque below and then exploded, according to the cameraman.

The strike came as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for the two parties to achieve a cease-fire agreement that could help calm soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of top Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut.

Egypt, which borders Gaza and serves as a key mediator, said the strike on the school showed Israel had no intention of reaching a cease-fire deal and ending the war. Neighboring Jordan condemned the attack as a "blatant violation" of international law. Qatar demanded an international investigation, calling it a "heinous crime" against civilians.

Late Friday, two separate airstrikes in central Gaza killed at least 13 people including three children and seven women, hospital authorities said. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah.

One strike hit a house in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing seven people, all but one of them women, hospital officials said. Another hit a house in Deir al-Balah, killing six, including a woman and her three children, the hospital said.

Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,790 Palestinians and wounded more than 92,000 others, according to the Health Ministry, in the Hamas-run territory, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its tally. The war was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which militants from Gaza stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 250 others.

More than 1.9 million of Gaza's prewar population of 2.3 million have been driven from their homes, fleeing repeatedly across the territory to escape offensives. Most are now crowded into ramshackle tent camps in an area of about 50 square kilometers (19 square miles) on the Gaza coast.

Magdy reported from Cairo.

Mars and Jupiter get chummy in the night sky. The planets won't get this close again until 2033

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Mars and Jupiter are cozying up in the night sky for their closest rendezvous this decade.

They'll be so close Wednesday, at least from our perspective, that just a sliver of moon could fit between them. In reality, our solar system's biggest planet and its dimmer, reddish neighbor will be more than 350 million miles (575 million kilometers) apart in their respective orbits.

The two planets will reach their minimum separation — one-third of 1 degree or about one-third the width of the moon — during daylight hours Wednesday in most of the Americas, Europe and Africa. But they won't appear that much different hours or even a day earlier when the sky is dark, said Jon Giorgini of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

The best views will be in the eastern sky, toward constellation Taurus, before daybreak. Known as planetary conjunctions, these comic pairings happen only every three years or so.

"Such events are mostly items of curiosity and beauty for those watching the sky, wondering what the two bright objects so close together might be," he said in an email. "The science is in the ability to ac-

curately predict the events years in advance.”

Their orbits haven't brought them this close together, one behind the other, since 2018. And it won't happen again until 2033, when they'll get even chummier.

The closest in the past 1,000 years was in 1761, when Mars and Jupiter appeared to the naked eye as a single bright object, according to Giorgini. Looking ahead, the year 2348 will be almost as close.

This latest link up of Mars and Jupiter coincides with the Perseid meteor shower, one of the year's brightest showers. No binoculars or telescopes are needed.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Meet Nacer Zorgani, the vision-impaired Para-judo athlete who doubles as boxing's Olympic voice

By TOM NOUVIAN and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The crowd at Roland Garros, the legendary home of French tennis that's now hosting Olympic boxing, erupted in applause as Nacer Zorgani's deep, resonant voice filled the venue.

“Ladies and gentlemen, in the red corner, representing France — Billal Bennama!” he announced in French, his words reverberating through the stands. The 20,000 spectators hung on his every word, unaware that the man captivating them with his powerful baritone couldn't see a single one of them, because he's acutely vision-impaired.

It wasn't until the fourth semifinal match Thursday night -- when Zorgani stood up from his seat and felt his way with a white cane -- that some realized. As he and his volunteer guide, Laureline Jeunemaitre, made their way to the restroom, heads turned, and whispers filled the air.

“He's tall, he's big, and he carries a walking stick. You can't help but notice him,” remarked spectator Florian Warth. “But when he got back to his seat and started speaking to the crowd, I realized he was speaking to us all along. That's outstanding.”

By day, Zorgani is a fiercely dedicated Para-judo competitor, training tirelessly for the Paralympic Games that run Aug. 28-Sept. 8. This 38-year-old mountain of a man will compete in the men's 90-kilogram division that includes athletes with acute vision impairments.

By night, he transforms into the voice of Olympic boxing, a role he never imagined for himself until a fateful night in 2017 at Wembley Stadium. There, while attending a title fight between Anthony Joshua and Wladimir Klitschko, Zorgani was mesmerized by legendary boxing announcer Michael Buffer.

He says he told himself: “Wow, this guy is great. This thing is great. I would love (to) do that one day.”

And now, he's living out that ambition at the Paris Olympics.

That's both a testament to his determination and a powerful example of how small adjustments by others — like having someone act as his eyes — can ensure that people with disabilities are fully included and not sidelined at major events.

Jeanmaitre, a 24-year-old Olympics volunteer, is one of the key figures allowing Zorgani to put his vocal talents to Olympic use. Wherever he goes in the boxing venue, she is by his side, guiding him, reading the match schedule, and feeding him information during the show.

Arriving early at the venue having already exhausted himself at judo training earlier that day, Zorgani warmed up his voice while sipping hot water with honey to soothe his vocal cords, which he considers his God-given talent.

“Maybe I'm visually impaired, maybe God did take my eyes, but he gave me the voice,” he said.

Zorgani was declared legally blind at 17 after a doctor diagnosed progressive deterioration of both retinas. By 20, he had lost most of his vision and could only see blurry shapes in very bright environments. His phone and computers are set to high contrast modes and equipped with audio transcription systems. Sitting just 10 feet (3.3 meters) from the Olympic boxing ring, he could barely distinguish the white ropes from the red and blue fighters battling in front of him.

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Throughout the night, Jeanmaitre whispered details into his ear, described the crowd, and ensured he had everything he needed, from coffee to toilet breaks or making sure his phone charger is plugged in.

When he draws a blank, he taps his aide's knee to get her attention — such as when Zorgani forgot the weight category of the fourth match of the night.

"Usually, I only have to read him the entire schedule once, before the show starts. But sometimes, he forgets one tiny thing," Jeanmaitre said. "It's pretty rare, my job is pretty easy."

Zorgani's ability to memorize text and address a crowd he can't see amazed his co-host, Mike Markham, who handles the English announcements.

"I have no clue how he does it," Markham, a veteran with 15 years of experience, admitted. "He's a perfect example of how heightened senses can compensate for the lack of one."

Zorgani's journey has inspired many, including longtime friend Redouane Bougheraba, a well-known stand-up comedian in France. Bougheraba, who grew up with Zorgani in the Belle-de-Mai district of Marseille — a neighborhood with a poverty rate more than twice the national average in 2024 according to the French national institute for statistics — was in the stands Thursday night.

"Where we are from, we call him Daredevil," Bougheraba said with pride, comparing Zorgani to the famous comic's blind superhero. "Because of him, I realized there was no excuse in life."

As the night drew to a close, Zorgani faced a reminder of the daily challenges of acute lack of vision. He struggled to find a cab, waiting on the sidewalk for 15 minutes, his cane in one hand and his damp judo gear from earlier in the day in the other.

The following day, he had two training sessions scheduled in the morning and more boxing matches scheduled that night. In total, he will have taken part in more than 200 bouts in less than 14 days. While many would consider this routine exhausting, Zorgani sees it as a form of exercise that has helped steel him for his upcoming Paralympic challenge.

"Doing the ring announcements — with the crowds, the lights, the people, the noise, the music, the ceremonies — it's a kind of training, mental training," he said. "On my D-Day in September, I won't be influenced, I won't be emotionally taken by the atmosphere ... one helps the other." ____

AP Summer Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games>

A chess club for kids thrives in a Congo refugee camp. It's about more than the game

By RUTH ALONGA Associated Press

KANYARUCHINYA, Congo (AP) — Children sit on the dirt, their clothes ragged and torn, their shoes punctured with holes, but their eyes bright and fixed on what's playing out in front of them.

In a corner of a refugee camp in conflict-wracked eastern Congo, about a dozen chess games are going, each one with its own fascinated audience.

The Soga Chess Club for children doesn't have enough tables and chairs. The "boards" are squares of paper with green and white blocks marked on them and are lined with plastic to protect them from the wear and tear coming their way. Irritatingly, the pieces sometimes topple over if players haven't found a flat enough stretch of ground to lay their game out on.

But the chess club founders say it's good enough to try and take these kids' minds away from what they've seen and experienced so far: fighting and killing, hunger and fear. They've all lost their homes. Some have lost fathers, mothers or siblings in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Chess is "a therapeutic escape from the stress and horrors these children have endured," said Gabriel Nzaji, one of the club's instructors. He said the game encourages the children to be quiet and to focus, a way of calming their minds.

More than 5 million people have been displaced by decades of conflict in eastern Congo, where dozens of armed groups fight each other over land and control of areas rich in sought-after minerals. An increase in fighting in recent months has led to a new surge of refugees, and there's no end in sight for a displacement disaster that dwarfs many others that get more global attention.

Hundreds of thousands of people forced to escape the attacks that destroy their towns and villages have ended up in vast displacement camps like Kanyaruchinya, where the Soga Chess Club operates. The United Nations Children's Fund says around a quarter million children live in the camps, ripped away from their homes and their schools, and sometimes their families.

Soga has around 100 children signed up to its club. One of them is 9-year-old Heritier, who is still learning the game, but confident enough already to hand out his own lesson.

"Here," he said, his fingers flicking across the board. "I'm doing everything to protect my king on the chessboard. I have to sacrifice this queen. You see that?"

"I like this game," Heritier said. "It relaxes me."

The trauma suffered by children in eastern Congo is incalculable as aid agencies battle to provide food and shelter to as many of the millions that have been displaced as possible. Some of the children in the chess club have been living in the Kanyaruchinya camp for almost two years, their lives in limbo.

But in Heritier's grin and his newfound delight in a game — a given for so many kids — the club organizers see a sign of hope.

"The perspective of these children has changed drastically," said Nzaji. "(They) approach life with a different mindset."

The organizers said they noticed that most of the children would spend their days engaged in rough, war-like games, sometimes involving sticks they'd swing at each other. They hope chess offers them something other than a mimicking of the conflict they've grown up around.

Akili Bashige, president of the Soga Chess Club, said parts of the camp have been transformed into sites of optimism by children playing chess. "Despite their limited resources, their passion persists," he said of his club's recruits.

Soga has also taken the game to orphanages in the region, and Bashige said he wants to start clubs for children who live on the streets in nearby towns.

The club can also be uplifting to parents, who worry for their children and their future — which they see slipping away.

Arusi, a 13-year-old girl, recently won a tournament and with it a reputation for being a fierce competitor. Her mother beamed with pride as she recalled the feat.

"Before Soga chess, they were idle because of the war and a lack of schooling," said Feza Twambaze, Arusi's mom. "Seeing them engaged and thriving fills me with immense joy."

For more news on Africa and development: <https://apnews.com/hub/africa-pulse>

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North Korean leader says thousands of flood victims will be brought to capital for temporary care

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea will not seek outside help to recover from floods that devastated areas near the country's border with China, leader Kim Jong Un said as he ordered officials to bring thousands of displaced residents to the capital to provide them better care.

Kim said it would take about two to three months to rebuild homes and stabilize the areas affected by floods. Until then, his government plans to accommodate some 15,400 people — a group that includes mothers, children, older adults and disabled soldiers — at facilities in Pyongyang, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Saturday.

KCNA said Kim made the comments during a two-day trip to northwestern town of Uiju through Friday

to meet flood victims and discuss recovery efforts. The agency gave Kim its typical effusive praise, saying the visit showed his "sacred leadership" and "warm love and ennobling spirit of making devoted service for the people."

State media reports said heavy rains in late July left 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields, and numerous other public buildings, structures, roads and railways flooded in the northwestern city of Sinuiju and the neighboring town of Uiju.

The North has not provided information on deaths, but Kim was quoted blaming public officials who had neglected disaster prevention for causing "the casualty that cannot be allowed."

Traditional allies Russia and China, as well as international aid groups, have offered to provide North Korea with relief supplies, but the North hasn't publicly expressed a desire to receive them.

"Expressing thanks to various foreign countries and international organizations for their offer of humanitarian support, (Kim) said what we regard as the best in all realms and processes of state affairs is the firm trust in the people and the way of tackling problems thoroughly based on self-reliance," KCNA said.

Kim made similar comments earlier in the week after Russian President Vladimir Putin offered help, expressing his gratitude but saying that the North has established its own rehabilitation plans and will only ask for Moscow's assistance if later needed.

While rival South Korea has also offered to send aid supplies, it's highly unlikely that the North would accept its offer. Tensions between the Koreas are at their highest in years over the North's growing nuclear ambitions and the South's expansion of combined military exercises with the United States and Japan.

The North had also rejected South Korea's offers for help while battling a COVID-19 outbreak in 2022.

During his recent visit to Uiju, Kim repeated an accusation that South Korea exaggerated the North's flood damages and casualties, which he decried as a "smear campaign" and a "grave provocation" against his government. Some South Korean media reports claim that the North's flood damages are likely worse than what state media have acknowledged, and that the number of deaths could exceed 1,000.

Donald Trump headlines Montana rally after plane was diverted but landed safely

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BOZEMAN, Mont. (AP) — Donald Trump traveled to Montana for a Friday night rally intended to drum up support for ousting the state's Democratic senator, but the former president's plane first had to divert to an airport on the other side of the Rocky Mountains because of a mechanical issue, according to airport staff.

Trump's plane was en route to Bozeman, Montana, when it was diverted Friday afternoon to Billings, 142 miles to the east, according to Jenny Mockel, administrative assistant at Billings Logan International Airport. Trump continued to Bozeman via private jet.

The former president came to Montana hoping to remedy some unfinished business from 2018, when he campaigned repeatedly in Big Sky Country in a failed bid to oust incumbent Democratic Sen. Jon Tester. On Friday, Trump ripped into the three-term senator, mocking him for being overweight and for insinuating he sometimes sided with the former president.

"He voted to impeach me — that guy voted to impeach me," Trump said of Tester, whom he called a "slob" with "the biggest stomach I've ever seen."

Trump also invited to the stage Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson, his former White House physician, to further slam Montana's senior senator. Tester sank Jackson's nomination to be Trump's Veterans Affairs secretary, alleging the doctor drank and used prescription drugs while on duty.

Tester has tried to convince voters he's aligned with Trump on many issues, mirroring his successful strategy from six years ago. While that worked in a non-presidential election year, it faces a more critical test this fall with Tester's opponent, former Navy SEAL Tim Sheehy, trying to link the three-term incumbent to Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris.

Trump kicked off his rally about 90 minutes behind schedule and immediately began lacing into Tester. "We are going to defeat radical left Democrat Jon Tester, he's terrible," Trump said. "We're going to evict

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crazy Kamala," he continued, workshopping a nickname on his new rival.

Harris has benefitted nationally from a burst of enthusiasm among core Democratic constituencies, who coalesced quickly around her after President Joe Biden withdrew from the campaign last month. She's drawn big crowds in swing states, touring this week with Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, her choice to be her vice presidential nominee.

Trump's only rally this week, meanwhile, was in a state he won by 16 percentage points four years ago rather than a November battleground. Facing new pressure in the race from a candidate with surging enthusiasm, Trump on Thursday called questions about his lack of swing state stops "stupid."

"I don't have to go there because I'm leading those states," he said. "I'm going because I want to help senators and congressmen get elected."

He will add on fundraising stops in Wyoming and Colorado.

Trump could be decisive in Montana's Senate race

Friday's rally at Montana State University drew thousands of GOP supporters. Yet the former president's bigger impact could be simply having his name above Sheehy's on the ballot in November, said University of Montana political analyst Rob Saldin.

"There is a segment of the electorate that will turn out when Trump is on the ticket," Saldin said. And that could benefit Sheehy, a Trump supporter and newcomer to politics who made a fortune off an aerial firefighting business.

Republicans have been on a roll in Montana for more than a decade and now hold every statewide office except for Tester's.

Tester won each of his previous Senate contests by a narrow margin, casting himself as a plainspoken farmer who builds personal connections with people in Montana and is willing to break with his party on issues that matter to them. He's also become a prolific fundraiser.

The race has drawn national attention with Democrats clinging to a razor-thin majority in the Senate and defending far more seats than the GOP this year. Tester is considered among the most vulnerable Democratic incumbents.

For him to win, large numbers of Trump supporters would have to vote a split ticket and get behind the Democratic senator.

Trump's drive to oust Tester traces back to the lawmaker's work in 2018 as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Tester revealed past misconduct by Trump's personal physician, Ronny Jackson, that sank Jackson's nomination to lead the Veterans Affairs Department.

Then-President Trump took the matter personally and came to Montana four times to campaign for Republican Matt Rosendale, who was then the state auditor. Rosendale lost by 3 percentage points.

Tester has positioned himself apart from national Democrats

Before Trump's latest visit, Tester has sought to insulate himself against charges that he's part of the Democratic establishment by rolling out the names of Republicans who support him, including former Montana Gov. Marc Racicot. His campaign highlighted more than 20 pieces of legislation, many dealing with veterans' issues, that Tester sponsored and Trump signed.

Tester also was the sole Democratic delegate from Montana to withhold a vote backing Harris as the party's presidential candidate in the wake of Biden's withdrawal. And when the Democratic National Convention takes place later this month in Chicago, Tester will be back in Montana "farming and meeting face to face with Montanans," campaign spokesperson Harry Child said.

The last time Tester attended the Democratic National Convention was in 2008. That's also the last time a Democratic presidential candidate came anywhere near winning Montana, with President Barack Obama losing by just over 2 percentage points.

On Friday, in an interview as he waited for the Trump rally to start, Sheehy dismissed the idea that Tester can survive Montana's swing to the right. "Jon Tester is by 95%-plus in lockstep with the Biden-Harris agenda," Sheehy said. "So I don't think his attempt to message himself as a moderate is going to work."

A similar situation is developing in Ohio, where three-term Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown faces a tough

race in a state expected to vote for Trump.

Harris visited Ohio when the two were Senate colleagues to raise money for Brown's 2018 campaign, but Brown has said he has no plans to campaign with her this year. Like Tester, Brown has highlighted legislation he worked on that Trump signed into law.

Friday's rally takes place in Gallatin County, which Tester has become increasingly reliant on over the course of his political career.

He lost the county in his first Senate race, in 2006, but his support has since grown. A substantial margin of victory in Gallatin in 2018 helped push him ahead of Rosendale.

Republican Don Seifert, a former Gallatin County commissioner, said he voted for Tester that year and plans to do so again this year.

Seifert backed Trump in 2016 and said he has continued to support other Republicans, including Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte and Sen. Steve Daines.

"Montanans tend to vote for the person over the party," Seifert said. "For the state of Montana, Jon is the one that can do what we need."

But Sheehy says Tester has lost touch with his home state and fallen into step with Democrats in Washington. The Republican said in a message this week to supporters that Tester was "responsible for the rise of Kamala Harris" because he served as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee from 2015 to 2017, when she was elected to the Senate from California.

Tester has outraised Sheehy by more than three-to-one in campaign donations reported to the Federal Election Commission. However, outside groups supporting Sheehy have helped the Republican make up much of that gap. Spending in the race is on track to exceed \$200 million as advertisements from the two sides saturate Montana's airwaves.

Associated Press reporters Amy Beth Hanson in Helena, Montana, and Julie Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

Trump is putting mass deportations at the heart of his campaign. Some Republicans are worried

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Mass Deportation Now!" declared the signs at the Republican National Convention, giving a full embrace to Donald Trump's pledge to expel millions of migrants in the largest deportation program in American history.

Some Republicans aren't quite ready for that.

Lauren B. Peña, a Republican activist from Texas, said that hearing Trump's calls for mass deportations, as well as terms like "illegals" and "invasion" thrown around at the convention, made her feel uncomfortable. Like some Republicans in Congress who have advanced balanced approaches to immigration, she hopes Trump is just blustering.

"He's not meaning to go and deport every family that crosses the border, he means deport the criminals and the sex offenders," Peña said.

But Trump and his advisers have other plans. He is putting immigration at the heart of his campaign to retake the White House and pushing the Republican Party towards a bellicose strategy that harkens back to the 1950s when former President Dwight D. Eisenhower launched a deportation policy known by a racial slur — "Operation Wetback."

Trump, when pressed for specifics on his plan in an interview with Time Magazine this year, suggested he would use the National Guard, and possibly even the military, to target between 15 million and 20 million people — though the government estimated in 2022 there were 11 million migrants living in the U.S. without permanent legal permission.

His plans have raised the stakes of this year's election beyond fortifying the southern border, a longtime conservative priority, to the question of whether America should make a fundamental change in its ap-

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proach to immigration.

After the southern border saw a historic number of crossings during the Biden administration, Democrats have also moved rightward on the issue, often leading with promises of border security before talking about relief for the immigrants who are already in the country.

And as the November election approaches, both parties are trying to reach voters like Peña, 33. Latino voters could be pivotal in many swing states.

Trump won 35% of Hispanic voters in 2020, according to AP VoteCast, and support for stronger border enforcement measures has grown among Hispanic voters. But an AP analysis of two consecutive polls conducted in June by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows that about half of Hispanic Americans have a somewhat or very unfavorable view of Trump.

Still, Peña, who described herself as a multiracial Hispanic person, has become a new and enthusiastic recruit for the GOP. She was drawn to Trump after seeing people debilitated by drugs in the public housing complex where she lives in Austin. She feels that government programs have failed low-income people and that the recent migration surge has put a pinch on public assistance like food stamps.

But Peña said she also feels concern when her fellow Republicans discuss ideas like barring children who don't have permanent legal status from public schooling.

"Being Hispanic, it's a difficult topic," she said. "I feel like we need to give these people a chance."

Still, GOP lawmakers have largely embraced Trump's plans. "It's needed," House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said at a July interview at the conservative Hudson Institute.

Some, however, have shown tacit skepticism by suggesting more modest goals.

Sen. James Lankford, an Oklahoma Republican, pointed to over 1 million people who have already received a final order of removal from an immigration judge and said, "There's a difference between those that are in the process right now and those that are finished with the process."

Lankford, who negotiated a bipartisan border package that Trump helped defeat earlier this year, added that it would be a "huge" task both logistically and financially just to target that group.

Other Republicans, including Floridians Sen. Marco Rubio and Rep. Mario Diaz Balart, suggested Trump in the White House would prioritize migrants with criminal backgrounds.

Indeed, Trump entered office in 2016 with similar promises of mass deportation but only succeeded in deporting about 1.5 million people.

This time, though, there's a plan.

Trump has worked closely with Stephen Miller, a former top aide who is expected to take a senior role in the White House if Trump wins. Miller describes a Trump administration that will work with "utter determination" to accomplish two goals: "Seal the border. Deport all the illegals."

To accomplish that, Trump would revive travel bans from countries deemed undesirable, such as majority-Muslim countries. He would launch a sweeping operation by deputizing the National Guard to round up immigrants, hold them in massive camps and put them on deportation flights before they could make legal appeals.

Beyond that, Trump has also pledged to end birthright citizenship — a 125-year-old right in the U.S. And several of his top advisers have laid out a sweeping policy vision through the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 that would choke off other forms of legal migration.

The Trump administration, under those plans, could also grind to a halt temporary programs for over 1 million migrants, including recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, Ukrainians and Afghans who fled recent conflicts as well as others who receive temporary protection due to unrest in their home country.

The policies would have far-reaching disruptions in major industries like housing and agriculture, including in key battleground states.

"If the 75,000-plus immigrants who perform the hardest of work in Wisconsin's dairy and agriculture were gone tomorrow, the state economy would tank," said Jorge Franco, the CEO of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin.

Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar, a Florida Republican who has pushed legislation that would allow a path to citizenship for longtime residents, argued that large-scale deportations were now necessary because of recent surges in border crossings under President Joe Biden. But she also hoped that Trump could see the difference between recent arrivals and longtime residents.

"There is a group of congresspeople that will make sure that the new administration understands it because there's another aspect: the business community," she said. "The developers in construction ... and the farmers, what are they going to say? They need hands."

Meanwhile, Democrats feel that Trump's threats are now motivating Latino voters.

"The mass deportation put a lot of people on high alert," said María Teresa Kumar, the CEO of Voto Latino, a leading voter registration organization that is backing Democrat Kamala Harris.

Like many other groups aligned with Harris, Voto Latino has seen an outpouring of interest since she rose to the top of the Democratic ticket. Kumar said the organization has registered nearly 36,000 voters in the weeks since Biden left the race — almost matching its tally from the first six months of the year.

In a heavily Latino House district on the southern tip of Texas, Democratic Rep. Vicente Gonzalez said voters want to see better management of the border, but at the same time, many also have friends or family members who don't have their immigration documentation in order.

"Much more could be done, in terms of good policy, that would help control surges at the border," Gonzalez said. "But mass deportation, it just gives people heartburn."

Debby finally moves out of the US, though risk from flooded rivers remains

By DAVID SHARP, MICHAEL HILL, MARK SCOLFORO and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

Debby finally moved out of the U.S. on Saturday after the storm spent the better part of week unleashing tornadoes and flooding, damaging homes and taking lives as it moved up the East Coast after first arriving in Florida as a hurricane.

Debby's last day over the U.S. before blowing into Canada inundated south-central New York and north-central Pennsylvania with rain, prompting evacuations and rescues by helicopter. The post-tropical cyclone continued dropping rain on New England and southern Quebec, Canada, on Friday night with conditions expected to improve Saturday morning as the system continued moving northeast.

Some of the worst flash flooding in New York on Friday happened in villages and hamlets in a largely rural area south of the Finger Lakes.

In Steuben County, which borders Pennsylvania, officials ordered the evacuation of the towns of Jasper, Woodhull and part of Addison, and said people were trapped as floodwaters made multiple roads impassable. By mid-evening, some of those orders were lifted as threat of severe flooding passed.

In the hamlet of Woodhull, a rain-swollen creek overtopped a bridge. Area resident Stephanie Waters said parts of sheds, branches and uprooted trees were among the debris that slammed into the span.

"Hearing the trees hit the bridge was scary," she said.

Fire Chief Timothy Martin said everybody in the town was safe, but "every business in Woodhull is damaged."

John Anderson said he watched the floodwaters come up quickly, overwhelming some vehicles in Canisteo, in Steuben County, and nearby in Andover, in Allegany County. "It's been very fierce," said Anderson, who was providing dispatches to The Wellsville Sun. He said he watched people's belongings get carried away by the raging water.

In Canisteo, farm owners Deb and Cliff Moss suffered heavy damage to their dairy farm, which has been there for more than five decades. A neighbor's double-wide trailer floated down a field to a river during the flooding, said their daughter, Stacey Urban.

Urban said the catastrophic damage to the community was hard to fathom.

"They have lost a lot. Beyond heartbreaking," Urban said.

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Ann Farkas, who also lives in Canisteo, said it was the first time her home, one of the oldest in the county, has flooded since she moved there in 1976.

"The water's going down, and so what's left is this really thick — it's like wet concrete — mud," Farkas said.

"Like a lot of people, I don't have flood insurance, so I doubt my homeowner's is going to cover any of this," she said.

Steuben County manager Jack Wheeler said the storm was hitting some of the same areas as Tropical Storm Fred three years earlier and that a half-dozen swift water rescue teams had retrieved people trapped in vehicles and homes.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro declared states of emergency.

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Director Randy Padfield said a National Guard helicopter with aquatic rescue capability was sent to Tioga County, which borders New York, because of severe flooding conditions in the region. Padfield said Tioga officials asked for help with eight to 10 rescue locations, and boat-based rescues were also conducted.

In Potter County, also on the border with New York, the storm took out bridges and did severe damage to Route 49, Commissioner Bob Rossman said.

"My understanding is the roadway is pretty much well gone," Rossman said. "That'll be a very costly replacement. And one of the main thoroughfares in the county."

He said one firefighter suffered water-related injuries, but Rossman did not know the extent.

Late Friday, more than 90,000 customers were without power in New York and Pennsylvania, down from 150,000 customers earlier in the day, according to PowerOutage.us. In Ohio, nearly 144,000 customers were still waiting for power to come back on Friday night after Debby-related storms including tornadoes blew through the northeastern part of the state on Wednesday.

Debby was downgraded to a tropical depression late Thursday afternoon and was a post-tropical cyclone on Friday, the National Hurricane Center said. It made landfall early Monday on the Gulf Coast of Florida as a Category 1 hurricane, emerged over the Atlantic Ocean and then hit land a second time early Thursday in South Carolina as a tropical storm.

There have been at least nine deaths related to Debby, most in vehicle accidents or from fallen trees.

In Vermont, where more than 44,000 customers were without electricity on Friday night, Gov. Phil Scott had warned that Debby's remnants could cause serious damage, including in already drenched places that were hit by flash flooding twice last month. But a flood watch was called off by mid-evening. Flooding that slammed the northeastern part of the state on July 30 knocked out bridges, destroyed and damaged homes, and washed away roads in the rural town of Lyndon. It came three weeks after deadly flooding from the remnants of Hurricane Beryl. President Joe Biden approved Vermont's emergency declaration.

Rick Dente, who owns Dente's Market in Barre, Vermont, worked to protect his business with plastic and sandbags as the rain poured down on Friday. "There isn't a whole lot else you can do," he said.

Jaqi Kincaid, hit by flooding last month in Lyndon, Vermont, said the previous storm knocked out her garage and well, so they have no water. It also felled a 120-foot (36-meter) tree and took down fencing. "We're doing a lot of this," Kincaid said, holding her hands together as if in prayer.

Associated Press journalists Carolyn Thompson in Buffalo, New York; Lisa Rathke in Barre, Vermont; Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina; and Susan Haigh in Norwich, Connecticut, contributed to this report.

US Coast Guard Academy works to change its culture following sexual abuse and harassment scandal

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

NEW LONDON, Conn. (AP) — The grueling basic training for fledgling cadets at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, known as swab summer, has been revamped this year in light of a sexual abuse scandal that has rocked the prestigious service academy.

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Gone is the shock-and-awe on Day 1 of the seven-week boot camp when rising juniors, known as cadre, shout in the faces of the roughly 300 incoming freshmen students when they first arrive at the New London, Connecticut, campus for future U.S. Coast Guard officers. This year, the cadre read forcefully from a prepared script, avoiding improvisation and yelling.

The goal is to drain the adrenaline of the cadre and make the boot camp more about mentorship and respect than browbeating and bullying, hopefully creating a positive ripple effect throughout the Coast Guard.

"When you don't have a script, you end up just resorting to volume," said retired Cmdr. John Heller, the deputy commandant of cadets for strategy and leadership, who has worked at the academy in various roles for about 25 years and helped to oversee the latest changes mirrored after the U.S. Military Academy's cadet training. "What ends up happening is, we had been onboarding our cadets for decades, unintentionally perhaps, in a climate of fear and intimidation."

Changing the climate of swab summer is one of seven actions the academy was instructed to take following revelations the Coast Guard kept secret a probe called Operation Fouled Anchor. The investigation found that dozens of sexual assault and harassment cases involving cadets from 1990 to 2006 had been mishandled by the school, including the prevention of some perpetrators from being prosecuted.

The revelation, first reported by CNN, sparked calls for major reforms and long-awaited accountability for the offenders and those who protected them. There are multiple government and congressional investigations underway looking into the mishandling of serious misbehavior at the school and beyond.

A damning majority staff report released Wednesday by the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations found "systemic failures" that "continue to this day" at the academy and in the wider Coast Guard. At a field hearing the committee held Thursday in New London, past and present enlisted personnel spoke of abuse and harassment they experienced and how a "culture of coverup" ultimately protected their perpetrators.

Shannon Norenberg, a former sexual assault response coordinator at the academy who resigned in June and turned whistleblower, said 20-year-old cadets training and having power over swabs a couple years younger, with minimal supervision, was an issue she raised during last year's review that the commandant ordered following the revelations of Operation Fouled Anchor.

"Sometimes the cadets just are not mature enough to handle that role of being in charge and they go too far" and get personal, such as making comments about a swab's intelligence or appearance, said Norenberg, who has since rescinded her resignation and is trying to return to her campus position. "Instead of correcting swabs' behavior, they would insult their character or attack their worthiness to be there."

Months later, the swabs have learned that the cadre, whom they still call sir and ma'am, can tell them what to do and get them in trouble.

"You can imagine the misuse of power that has been taken advantage of over and over," said Norenberg, who noted that during her 11 years at the academy, she dealt with more than 150 reported sexual assault cases, including many that involved the abuse of power.

As ordered by the commandant, there's more oversight of the cadre this summer. Drill instructors from Training Center Cape May in New Jersey, where enlisted personnel are trained, have been tasked with mentoring the cadre. Outside experts have been invited to campus to talk about issues such as power dynamics.

That's in addition to professional victim advocates who were first hired at the school in 2021 and who have been training the swabs and cadre about sexual harassment, assault and rape.

A new program called shield training was implemented this year to emphasize the Coast Guard's core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. Every night after tired swabs have showered — some in individual stalls that were recently built to provide privacy — they break into groups with a cadre member to go over a lesson and discuss what happened that day with their squad.

Swabs are allowed to note personal issues they might be having in daily diaries that cadre review. They can also make a special hand gesture to signal they need to speak in private with cadre.

Olivia Spada, a swab from Long Island, New York, said she had some trepidation before coming to the

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academy due the reports of sexual abuse and harassment. But a few weeks into her new life as a cadet, she felt completely safe.

"Like, never, ever would I feel like anything like that would happen," she said. "I feel completely safe around my cadre, around my shipmates."

But the changes have been met with skepticism by some past and present Coasties, the nickname for Coast Guard members.

"It's theater. They have not internalized any wrongdoing," said retired Cmdr. Kimberly McLearn, a former whistleblower who taught at the academy and later founded the Right the Ship Coalition, which seeks to help those "wronged by the culture of cruelty and cover-up" in the Coast Guard.

"They are taking calculated measures to shift attention to cadets' performance to distract from the culture of the staff, faculty, and leaders up to the commandant."

Academy staff are well aware of the skepticism about the changes being made and whether they get to the heart of the problem.

"We've got a lot of trust that we've got to earn back," said Cmdr. Krystyn Pecora, who attended the academy 20 years ago. "And so I can appreciate that skepticism."

Pecora said she disagrees with criticism from some old-guard Coasties, who believe the school is now going too easy on the new cadets.

"There's nothing easy about respect," she said. "In fact, it's easier for me to just go down there and scream and intimidate. It's not more effective. So putting this focus on building respectful leadership, that's challenging and it's not easier for anyone."

The Coast Guard as a whole has been tasked with taking 33 actions in light of Operation Fouled Anchor, including seven assigned to the academy.

Besides changes to swab summer, the cadets' conduct system is being updated and security in the dormitory is being strengthened, including plans to upgrade locks on cadets' rooms and install more security cameras. There's a new policy that allows cadets who have been assaulted to continue their studies at another service academy.

Cadet 2nd Class Gabriella Kraus-Rivera said Operation Fouled Anchor is common knowledge among the cadets and "there's no kid here that doesn't understand what happened" and that cultural changes are needed.

"I think that's part of having honor, is living with that integrity and being able to be honest about the things that happened at this academy," she said. "The only way you're going to change it is if you acknowledge it first."

In Las Vegas, Kamala Harris sees a chance to improve her odds of winning

By RIO YAMAT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is working to make Nevada look like less of a political gamble in November's election.

The Democratic presidential nominee visits the state on Saturday with her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. It's the final stop of a battleground blitz in which Democrats are showing new energy after President Joe Biden exited the race and Harris replaced him at the top of the ticket. That new enthusiasm has enabled them to boost turnout efforts in swing states such as Nevada and Arizona, which Harris visited Friday.

Magnolia Magat, a 59-year-old restaurant owner in Las Vegas who lives in the neighboring city of Henderson, said she's now "more hopeful" about the election.

"I am very happy that not only is our candidate a woman, she is Black and she's also Asian," said Magat, who is Filipino American. "And it's not because Harris is a woman that I want to endorse her. It's because she's highly capable of running the country."

As part of the trip, Harris is hoping to build greater support among Latino voters. In 2020, Biden nar-

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rowly beat Republican Donald Trump by 2.4 percentage points in Nevada. Trump, the former president, is trying this time to create more support in a state that relies on the hotel, restaurant and entertainment industry by pledging to make workers' tips tax-free.

But the union representing 60,000 workers in that industry, the Culinary Workers Union, announced Friday night its endorsement of Harris. About 54% of the union's members are Latino, 55% women and 60% immigrants.

"The path to victory runs through Nevada," the union said in a statement, "and the Culinary Union will deliver Nevada for President Kamala Harris and Vice President Tim Walz."

AP VoteCast found in 2020 that 14% of Nevada voters were Hispanic, with Biden winning 54% of their votes. His margin with Hispanic voters was slightly better nationwide, a sign that Democrats cannot take this bloc of voters for granted.

Harris is hoping to drive a wedge with Republicans by focusing on issues such as access to abortion and repairs to the U.S. immigration system. Her message is that Trump killed a bipartisan deal this year to improve security on the southern border and address immigration issues, with Democrats saying he did so in hopes of improving his own political odds.

Because Harris' portfolio in the Biden administration included the root causes of migration and due to some of her comments before the 2020 election, Republicans have sought to portray her as weak on the southern border and enabling illegal immigration.

At a Thursday news conference, Trump said of Harris, "As a border czar, she's been the worst border czar in history, in the world history."

The Republican has proposed mass deportations if he returns to the White House, but AP VoteCast found in 2020 that nearly 7 in 10 Nevada voters said that immigrants living in the United States illegally should be offered the chance to apply for legal status.

Harris and Walz over the past week have also visited the crucial midwestern "blue wall" states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan. Along with Nevada and Arizona, those five states represent 61 electoral votes that could be essential for reaching the 270 threshold required to win November's election. Harris had also planned to visit North Carolina and Georgia this past week — between them another 32 electoral votes — but those stops were postponed due to Tropical Storm Debby.

In Nevada's rural Douglas County near the California border, Gail Scott, 71, serves on the central committee of the local Democratic Party and said she didn't initially agree with calls for Biden to leave the race. Trump won the county in 2016 and 2020, but trimming his margins there could lower his ability to compete in Nevada.

Scott said it's impossible to miss the energy that Harris has created among younger voters who could help statewide.

"Young people are embracing Kamala Harris and the enthusiasm and the joy that she's brought to the campaign," she said.

Brian Shaw, a Republican from northern Nevada, said Harris' arrival on the top of the ticket could make it harder for Trump to win because Biden was a "pitiful candidate" and there's little time to expose the vice president's "incompetence." He said he attended Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance's rally in Reno on July 30 and found him to be "likable, capable, polished as a politician, but not veneered." He didn't have much of an opinion of Walz.

Boak reported from Washington. AP writer Scott Sonner contributed to this report from Reno, Nevada.

Ukraine's foray into Russia's border region embarrasses Putin.

How will it affect the course of war?

By The Associated Press undefined

A swift Ukrainian incursion into Russia's Kursk region was the largest such cross-border raid by Kyiv's forces in the nearly 2½-year war, exposing Russia's vulnerabilities and dealing a painful blow to the Kremlin.

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The surprise foray has prompted thousands of civilians to flee the region as the Russian military struggles to repel the attack.

For Ukraine, the cross-border raid offers a much-needed boost to public morale at a time when the country's undermanned and under-gunned forces have faced relentless Russian attacks along the more than 1,000 kilometer (620-mile) front line.

A glance at the Ukrainian raid and its implications.

How did the Ukrainian attack unfold?

Kyiv's troops poured into the Kursk region from several directions early Tuesday, quickly overwhelming a few checkpoints and field fortifications manned by lightly armed border guards and infantry units along the region's 245-kilometer (152-mile) frontier with Ukraine.

Unlike previous raids conducted by small groups of Russian volunteers fighting alongside Ukrainian forces, the incursion into the Kursk region reportedly involved units from several battle-hardened Ukrainian army brigades.

Russian military bloggers reported that Ukrainian mobile groups comprised of several armored vehicles each quickly drove dozens of kilometers (miles) into Russian territory, bypassing Russian fortifications and sowing panic across the region.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think-tank, said Ukrainian forces have managed to push up to 35 kilometers (20 miles) deep into the region. "Ukrainian forces appear to be able to use these small armored groups to conduct assaults past the engagement line due to the low density of Russian personnel in the border areas," it said in an analysis of the raid.

The Ukrainian forces have widely used drones to strike Russian military vehicles and deployed electronic warfare assets to suppress Russian drones and derail military communications.

While small Ukrainian mobile groups roamed the region without trying to consolidate control, other troops reportedly have started digging in around the town of Sudzha about 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border and in some other areas.

How has the Russian military responded?

Caught off guard, Russian troops failed to mount a quick response to the incursion. With the bulk of the Russian army engaged in the offensive in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, few troops were left to protect the Kursk border region. The Russian units along the frontier consisted mostly of poorly trained conscript soldiers, who were easily overcome by elite Ukrainian units. Some conscripts were captured.

The manpower shortage prompted Russian military command to initially rely on warplanes and helicopter gunships to try to stem the Ukrainian attack. At least one Russian helicopter was downed and another one was damaged by the advancing Ukrainian forces, according to Russian military bloggers.

Russian reinforcements, including elite special forces units and hardened veterans of the Wagner military contractor, later started to arrive in the Kursk region, but they so far have failed to dislodge the Ukrainian forces from Sudzha and other areas near the border.

Some of the newly arriving troops lacked combat skills and suffered casualties. In one example, a convoy of military trucks carelessly stopped on the roadside near the combat area and was pummeled by Ukrainian fire.

The Russian Defense Ministry declared Friday that Ukraine lost 945 soldiers in four days of fighting. The claim couldn't be independently verified. The ministry didn't offer any data on Russian casualties.

What did Ukrainian authorities say about the incursion?

Ukrainian officials have refrained from commenting on the cross-border raid. In a video address to the nation late Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy avoided directly mentioning the fighting in the Kursk region. But he said that "Russia brought the war to our land, and it should feel what it has done."

Zelenskyy adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said Thursday that cross-border attacks will cause Russia to "start to realize that the war is slowly creeping inside of Russian territory." He also suggested such an operation would improve Kyiv's hand in any future negotiations with Moscow.

"When will it be possible to conduct a negotiation process in a way that we can push them or get something from them? Only when the war is not going on according to their scenarios," he said.

What did the Kremlin say?

Russian President Vladimir Putin has described the incursion as a "large-scale provocation" that involved "indiscriminate shelling of civilian buildings, residential houses and ambulances."

Russian authorities said at least five civilians, including two ambulance workers, have been killed in the Ukrainian attack on the Kursk region and nearly 70 others have been wounded.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of the Putin-chaired Security Council, said the Ukrainian raid emphasized the need for Moscow to expand its war goals to capturing more of the Ukrainian territory, including the capital of Kyiv, the Black Sea port of Odesa and other major cities.

Russia has declared a federal emergency in the Kursk region, giving local authorities more powers to quickly coordinate an emergency response. Russian state propaganda focused on the Kremlin's efforts to provide assistance to displaced residents while playing down the military's unpreparedness for the attack.

What are Ukraine's goals and how could the situation unfold?

By launching the incursion, Kyiv could be aiming to force the Kremlin to divert resources from the eastern Donetsk region, where Russian forces have pressed offensives in several sectors and made slow but steady gains, relying on their edge in firepower.

Coming at a time when Kyiv's forces are struggling to stem the Russian advances in the east, the swift cross-border raid shows Ukraine's ability to seize the initiative. It has also dealt a blow to the Kremlin, highlighting its failure to protect the country's territory and shattering Putin's narrative that Russia has remained largely unaffected by the hostilities.

But despite the initial successes, the foray into Russia could cause attrition in some of Ukraine's most capable units and leave troops in Donetsk without vital reinforcements.

Trying to establish a lasting presence in the Kursk region could be challenging for the Ukrainian forces, whose supply lines would be vulnerable to Russian fire.

Military analysts say it's still unclear what Ukraine's operational goals are and how many troops it has committed in the Kursk raid.

Michael Kofman, a military analyst with the Carnegie Endowment, said that "a fair bit depends on what Ukraine has available in reserve to throw into the operation, and how quickly Russian Federation organizes to counter."

Kamala Harris makes an immigration pitch in Arizona as she fights to gain ground in the Sun Belt

By GABRIEL SANDOVAL, DARLENE SUPERVILLE, SEUNG MIN KIM and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris drew on her prosecutorial background to make her first expansive pitch on immigration to border-state voters as she and her new running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, attracted thousands to a campaign rally in Arizona during their tour of battleground states.

Harris, the former attorney general of California, reminded the crowd that she, as a law enforcement official, targeted transnational gangs, drug cartels and smugglers.

"I prosecuted them in case after case, and I won," Harris said in front of a crowd of more than 15,000 in Glendale, a suburb of Phoenix. "So I know what I'm talking about."

Harris promoted a border security bill that a bipartisan group of senators negotiated earlier this year, which Republican lawmakers ultimately opposed en masse at Republican nominee Donald Trump's behest.

"Donald Trump does not want to fix this problem," Harris said. "Be clear about that: He has no interest or desire to actually fix the problem. He talks a big game about border security, but he does not walk the walk."

Her effort to address immigration — a political liability that has dogged Harris for most of her vice presidency — head-on in the critical battleground state is part of a broader push from her campaign to make gains in Sun Belt states that had become increasingly out of reach with Joe Biden at the top of the ticket.

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Trump and his allies, who had long hammered Biden over the influx of migrants during his term, are now shifting their attacks to Harris. Kari Lake, who is running against Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego for the open Senate seat in Arizona, bashes Gallego in a recent ad for supporting Biden's and Harris' "radical border agenda," featuring repeated clips of the vice president chortling.

"It's very easy for us to segue and switch our sights and focus on her," said Dave Smith, Pima County's Republican party chairman.

But Harris has been courting the state's fast-growing Latino population and released a new ad of her own, highlighting how Harris, the daughter of immigrants from India and Jamaica, rose to the highest echelons of American politics.

And, as she has done in other campaign stops, Harris during the rally infused the theme of "freedom" throughout her remarks, especially as it came to voting rights, gun safety, LBGT rights and access to abortion.

"Arizona, ours is a fight for the future and it is a fight for freedom," Harris said, who had walked out on the stage as Beyonce's "Freedom" blared throughout Desert Diamond Arena.

Harris' message on safety and gun restrictions resonated with Jen Duran, a 37-year-old mother and independent voter.

"I have an elementary school daughter who has been going to this school since she was 4, and today we got a notification that there was a lockdown drill," Duran said. "So safety for our kids is really important."

Phyllis Zeno, a 65-year-old grandmother from Maricopa, said she was thrilled to hear Harris' message of unity and her policy positions, especially on affordable health care and reproductive rights.

"Her message to me, it wasn't just hope, but renewed faith in democracy, that we can do this," Zeno said.

Arizona is represented by Democrat Mark Kelly in the U.S. Senate, who has won two tough races in the politically divided states and whom Harris passed over as a running mate this week.

In choosing Walz over Kelly, Harris may have lost the chance to win over people like Gonzalo Leyva, a 49-year-old landscaper in Phoenix. Leyva plans to vote for Trump but says he would have backed a Harris-Kelly ticket.

"I prefer Kelly like 100 times," said Leyva, a lifelong Democrat who became an independent at the beginning of Trump's term in office. "I don't think he's that extreme like the other guys."

In Arizona, every vote will be critical. The state is no stranger to nail-biter races, including in 2020 when Biden bested Trump by fewer than 11,000 votes. Both parties are bracing for a similar photo finish this year.

Harris acknowledged how tough the race will be as she and Walz toured a campaign office in North Phoenix Friday afternoon and thanked volunteers, who were making signs with sayings such as "This Mamala is Voting for Kamala" and "Kamala and the Coach." (Walz has been a high school football coach.)

She also emphasized it during the rally.

"As exciting as this is, we cannot lose sight of a really important fact: We are definitely running as the underdog," Harris said.

Democrats are confident Harris is in solid shape in the state even without Kelly on the ticket. The senator plans to remain a strong advocate for Harris and is already mentioned for possible Cabinet posts or other prominent roles should the vice president ascend to the Oval Office.

"What this is about is who works harder. That's it," Kelly said at the rally. "It is as simple as that."

Arizona is something of a magnet for Midwesterners seeking to escape the cold. So, several observers say, Walz may still play well there. The governor himself noted that during his opening remarks for Harris, saying: "I'm like a damn snowman, I'm melting here."

Scott Snyder, who moved to Phoenix three years ago from Detroit, wasn't too familiar with Kelly's background or his politics, but said Harris made the right choice with Walz.

"He reminds me a lot of my dad," said Snyder, an electrician. "You see pictures of him out there coaching high school football. That's something that resonates with me. You see him out there duck hunting. Same thing. That's fairly common in Michigan, where I'm from."

Arizona was reliably Republican until Trump's combative approach to politics went national.

In 2016, Trump won Arizona, then quickly started feuding with the late Republican Sen. John McCain, a political icon in the state. That sparked a steady exodus of educated, moderate Republicans from the GOP and toward Democrats in top-of-the-ticket contests.

In 2018, Democrats won an open Senate race in the state, foreshadowing Kelly's and Biden's wins in 2020. In 2022, Kelly won again, and Democrats swept the top three statewide races for governor, attorney general and secretary of state, defeating Republican candidates who hewed to Trump's style and his lies about fraud costing him the 2020 presidential election.

Chuck Coughlin, a Republican strategist and former McCain staffer, said the same voters who tipped the state to Democrats in the past few cycles remain lukewarm, at best, on Trump.

"Trump's not doing anything to embrace that segment of the electorate," he said.

Meanwhile, there was a fresh reminder of yet another liability for Harris when she was interrupted by Gaza protesters.

Harris said she has been clear that "now is the time to get a cease-fire deal" to end fighting between Israel and Hamas that has caused the deaths of tens of thousands of people in Gaza. She stressed that she and Biden "are working around the clock every day to get that cease-fire deal done and bring the hostages home."

Harris added, "I respect your voices, but we are here to now talk about this race in 2024."

She responded differently earlier this week when Gaza protesters interrupted her during a Detroit-area rally. She talked over the protesters.

Riccardi reported from Denver, and Kim reported from Washington. Walt Berry and Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix contributed to this report.

Flooding from the remnants of Debby leads to high water rescues in New York, Pennsylvania

By DAVID SHARP, MICHAEL HILL, MARK SCOLFORO and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

First responders launched high-water and helicopter rescues of people trapped in cars and homes in rural New York and Pennsylvania as heavy rain from the remnants of Debby slammed the Northeast with intense floods.

The worst of the flash flooding so far in New York was occurring in villages and hamlets in a largely rural area south of the Finger Lakes, not far from the Pennsylvania border.

In Steuben County, which borders Pennsylvania, officials ordered the evacuation of the towns of Jasper, Woodhull and part of Addison, and said people were trapped as floodwaters made multiple roads impassable. By mid-evening, some of those orders were being lifted as threat of severe flooding passed.

In the hamlet of Woodhull, a rain-swollen creek ran so ferociously that the water overtopped a bridge. Area resident Stephanie Waters said parts of sheds, branches and uprooted trees were among the debris that slammed into the span.

"Hearing the trees hit the bridge was scary," she said.

Fire Chief Timothy Martin said everybody was safe in the town, but "every business in Woodhull is damaged."

John Anderson said he watched the floodwaters come up quickly, overwhelming some vehicles in Canisteo, in Steuben County, and nearby in Andover, in Allegany County. "It's not a slow rise. It's been very fierce," said Anderson, who was providing dispatches to The Wellsville Sun. He said he watched people's belongings get carried away by the raging water.

In Canisteo, farm owners Cliff and Deb Moss suffered heavy damage to their dairy farm, which has been there for more than five decades. A neighbor's double-wide trailer floated down a field to a river during the flooding, said their daughter, Stacey Urban.

Urban said the catastrophic damage to the community was still coming into focus and was hard to fathom.

"They have lost a lot. Beyond heartbreaking," Urban said.

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Ann Farkas, who also lives in Canisteo, said it was the first time her home, one of the oldest in the county, has flooded since she moved there in 1976. She now has to shovel out layers of thick and heavy silt that were left behind.

"The water's going down, and so what's left is this really thick — it's like wet concrete — mud," Farkas said. Her plans are to clean out a garage so furniture can be moved there before the baseboards, floorboards and possibly the subflooring on the first floor can be ripped up.

"Like a lot of people, I don't have flood insurance, so I doubt my homeowner's is going to cover any of this," she said.

Steuben County manager Jack Wheeler said the storm was hitting some of the same areas as Tropical Storm Fred three years earlier and that a half-dozen swift water rescue teams were retrieving people trapped in vehicles and homes.

About 20 evacuees arrived at a shelter set up at a high school, Red Cross spokesperson Michael Tedesco said. A second shelter was also being set up at another high school in Steuben County.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro declared states of emergency.

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Director Randy Padfield said a National Guard helicopter with aquatic rescue capability was sent to Tioga County because flooding conditions had become severe in the region, which runs along the New York state line.

Padfield said Tioga officials have asked for help with eight to 10 rescue locations, and multiple boat-based rescues were also being conducted.

In Potter County, also on the border with New York, the storm took out bridges and did severe damage to Route 49, Commissioner Bob Rossman said.

"My understanding is the roadway is pretty much well gone," Rossman said. "That'll be a very costly replacement. And one of the main thoroughfares in the county."

He said one firefighter suffered water-related injuries, but Rossman did not know the extent.

More than 150,000 customers were without power across New York and Pennsylvania, according to PowerOutage.us.

Debby was downgraded to a tropical depression late Thursday afternoon and was a post-tropical cyclone on Friday, the National Hurricane Center said. It made landfall early Monday on the Gulf Coast of Florida as a Category 1 hurricane, emerged over the Atlantic Ocean and then hit land a second time early Thursday in South Carolina as a tropical storm.

In Vermont, where more than 47,000 customers were without power, Gov. Phil Scott had warned that Debby's remnants could cause serious damage, including in already drenched places that were hit by flash flooding twice last month. But a flood watch was called off by mid-evening. Flooding that slammed the northeastern part of the state on July 30 knocked out bridges, destroyed and damaged homes, and washed away roads in the rural town of Lyndon. It came three weeks after deadly flooding from the remnants of Hurricane Beryl. President Joe Biden approved Vermont's emergency declaration.

Rick Dente, who owns Dente's Market in Barre, Vermont, worked to protect his business with plastic and sandbags as the rain poured down on Friday. "There isn't a whole lot else you can do," he said.

Jaqi Kincaid, hit by flooding last month in Lyndon, Vermont, said the previous storm knocked out her garage and well, so they have no water. It also felled a 120-foot (36-meter) tree and took down fencing.

"We're doing a lot of this," Kincaid said, holding her hands together as if in prayer.

Stormwater swamped parts of downtown Annapolis, Maryland, including at the U.S. Naval Academy on Friday. And flash flooding hit the South Carolina town of Moncks Corner, where one of Debby's early bands unleashed a tornado on Tuesday. Across the surrounding Berkeley County, emergency crews made 33 high-water rescues.

There were eight dam breaches in Georgia, half of them in rural Bulloch County northwest of Savannah, Gov. Brian Kemp said. At one point, 140 people were in shelters, he said. Some poultry facilities flooded, and some cattle were lost in flooded pastures, officials said.

There have been at least nine deaths related to Debby, most in vehicle accidents or from fallen trees.

This story has been updated to correct that Jaqi Kincaid was hit once by flooding, not twice. It also has been updated to correct the spelling of the Pennsylvania governor's name.

Sharp and Whittle reported from Portland, Maine. Hill reported from Altamont, New York. Scolforo reported from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Associated Press journalists Carolyn Thompson in Buffalo, New York; Lisa Rathke in Barre, Vermont; Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina; and Susan Haigh in Norwich, Conn. contributed to this report.

Plane crashes in Brazil's Sao Paulo state, killing all 61 aboard, airline says

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA Associated Press

VINHEDO, Brazil (AP) — A passenger plane crashed into a gated residential community in Brazil's Sao Paulo state Friday, killing all 61 people aboard and leaving a smoldering wreck, officials and the airline said.

Officials did not say if anyone was killed on the ground in the neighborhood where the plane landed in the city of Vinhedo, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of the metropolis of Sao Paulo. But witnesses at the scene said there were no victims among local residents.

The airline Voepass said that its plane, an ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop, was headed for Sao Paulo's international airport Guarulhos with 57 passengers and 4 crew members aboard when it crashed in Vinhedo. It provided a flight manifest with passenger names, but not their nationalities. A prior statement had said there were 58 passengers.

"The company regrets to inform that all 61 people on board flight 2283 died at the site," Voepass said in a statement. "At this time, Voepass is prioritizing provision of unrestricted assistance to the victims' families and effectively collaborating with authorities to determine the causes of the accident."

It was the deadliest airline crash since January 2023, when 72 people died on board a Yeti Airlines plane in Nepal that stalled and crashed while making its landing approach. That plane also was an ATR 72, and the final report blamed pilot error.

At an event in southern Brazil, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva asked the crowd to stand and observe a minute of silence as he shared the news. Friday evening, he declared three days of mourning.

The state's firefighters, military police and civil defense authority dispatched teams to the location. Sao Paulo's public security secretary Guilherme Derrite spoke to reporters and confirmed that no survivors had been found. He also said the plane's black box was recovered.

"I thought it was going to fall in our yard," a resident and witness who gave her name only as Ana Lucia de Lima told reporters near the crash site. "It was scary, but thank God there were no victims among the locals. It seems that the 62 people inside the plane were the real victims, though."

Parana state's Gov. Ratinho Júnior told journalists in Vinhedo that many of the passengers were doctors from his state attending a seminar.

"They were people who were used to saving lives, and now they lost theirs in such tragic circumstances," Júnior said, adding he had friends aboard. "It is a sad day."

Video obtained from a witness by The Associated Press and verified shows at least two bodies strewn about flaming pieces of wreckage.

Brazilian television network GloboNews showed aerial footage of an area with smoke coming out of an obliterated plane fuselage. Additional footage on GloboNews earlier showed the plane plunging in a flat spin.

A report from television network Globo's meteorological center said it "confirmed the possibility of the formation of ice in the region of Vinhedo," and local media cited analysts pointing to icing as a potential cause for the crash.

But aviation expert Lito Sousa cautioned that meteorological conditions alone might not be enough to explain why the plane fell as it did.

"Analyzing an air crash just with images can lead to wrong conclusions about the causes," Sousa told the AP by phone. "But we can see a plane with loss of support, no horizontal speed. In this flat spin condition,

there's no way to reclaim control of the plane."

And Marcelo Moura, director of operations for Voepass, told reporters Friday night that, while there were forecasts for ice, they were within acceptable levels for the aircraft.

Likewise, Lt. Col. Carlos Henrique Baldi, of the Brazilian air force's center for the investigation and prevention of air accidents, told reporters in a late afternoon press conference that it was still too early to confirm whether ice caused the accident.

The plane is "certified in several countries to fly in severe icing conditions, including in countries unlike ours, where the impact of ice is more significant," said Baldi, who heads the center's investigation division.

In an earlier statement, the center said that the plane's pilots didn't call for help nor say they were operating under adverse weather conditions.

In a separate statement, Brazil's Federal Police said it already had begun its investigation, and had dispatched specialists in plane crashes and the identification of disaster victims.

Authorities began transferring the corpses to the morgue on Friday, and called on victims' family members to bring any medical, X-ray and dental exams in order as a means to help identify the bodies.

French-Italian plane manufacturer ATR said in a statement that it had been informed that the accident involved its ATR 72-500 model, and said company specialists are "fully engaged to support both the investigation and the customer."

The ATR 72 generally is used on shorter flights. The planes are built by a joint venture of Airbus in France and Italy's Leonardo S.p.A. Crashes involving various models of the ATR 72 have resulted in 470 deaths going back to the 1990s, according to a database of the Aviation Safety Network.

The Capela neighborhood where the plane crashed Friday sits in a district far from the center of the prosperous city that's home to 77,000 residents. It had departed from Cascavel, in Parana state.

Sá Pessoa reported from Guarulhos. AP videojournalist Tatiana Pollastri contributed from Vinhedo. AP writer David Koenig contributed from Dallas.

US ambassador confirms Mexican drug lord Ismael 'El Mayo' Zambada was brought to US against his will

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The U.S. ambassador to Mexico confirmed Friday that drug lord Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada was brought to the United States against his will when he arrived in Texas in July on a plane along with fellow drug lord Joaquín Guzmán López.

Zambada's attorney had earlier claimed the longtime chief of the Sinaloa cartel had been kidnapped. But officials had not confirmed that and Zambada's age and apparent ill-health had led some to speculate he turned himself in.

U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar on Friday said "the evidence we saw ... is that they had brought El Mayo Zambada against his will."

"This was an operation between cartels, where one turned the other one in," Salazar said. Zambada's faction of the Sinaloa cartel has been engaged in fierce fighting with another faction, led by the sons of imprisoned drug kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. Guzmán López is the half-brother of the factional leaders.

Salazar said no U.S. personnel, resources or aircraft were involved in the flight on which Guzmán López turned himself in, and that U.S. officials were "surprised" when the two showed up at an airport outside El Paso, Texas on July 25.

Frank Pérez, Zambada's attorney, said in a statement in July that "my client neither surrendered nor negotiated any terms with the U.S. government."

"Joaquín Guzmán López forcibly kidnapped my client," Pérez wrote. "He was ambushed, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed by six men in military uniforms and Joaquin. His legs were tied, and a black bag was placed over his head."

Pérez went on to say that Zambada, 76, was thrown in the back of a pickup truck, forced onto a plane

and tied to the seat by Guzmán López.

In early August, Zambada made his second appearance in federal court in Texas after being taken into U.S. custody the week before.

Guzmán López had apparently long been in negotiations with U.S. authorities about possibly turning himself in. Guzmán López, 38, has pleaded not guilty to drug trafficking and other charges in federal court in Chicago.

But U.S. officials said they had almost no warning when Guzmán López's plane landed at an airport near El Paso. Both men were arrested and remain jailed. They are charged in the U.S. with various drug crimes.

Salazar said the plane had taken off from Sinaloa — the Pacific coast state where the cartel is headquartered — and had filed no flight plan. He stressed the pilot wasn't American, nor was the plane.

The implication is that Guzmán López intended to turn himself in, and brought Zambada with him to procure more favorable treatment, but his motives remain unclear.

Zambada was thought to be more involved in day-to-day operations of the cartel than his better-known and flashier boss, "El Chapo," who was sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. in 2019.

Zambada is charged in a number of U.S. cases, including in New York and California. Prosecutors brought a new indictment against him in New York in February, describing him as the "principal leader of the criminal enterprise responsible for importing enormous quantities of narcotics into the United States."

The capture of Zambada and Guzmán López — and the idea that one cartel faction had turned in the leader of the other — raised fears that the already divided cartel could descend into a spiral of violent infighting.

That prompted Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to take the unusual step of issuing a public appeal to drug cartels not to fight each other. ____

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Breanna Stewart, US women's basketball team advance to gold medal game at Paris Olympics

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

PARIS (AP) — Breanna Stewart and the U.S. women's basketball team cruised to a familiar place — the Olympic gold medal game.

Stewart led a balanced offense as the Americans beat Australia 85-64 on Friday in the semifinals to extend their Olympic winning streak to 60 consecutive games dating back to the 1992 Barcelona Games.

"The streak is crazy. I mean, they just told me when I was doing TV that it was, like, before I was born that it kind of started, which is wild," Stewart said. "It just goes to show those that have really paved the way and to create USA Basketball and what it is now. Tons of appreciation for that and knowing that when you represent this jersey and wear USA across your chest the standard is high and there really is nothing higher."

And the team didn't disappoint some notable onlookers, including Sue Bird, Dawn Staley, Kevin Durant and Vanessa Bryant and her children.

After the business-like semifinal win in which the U.S. started strong and never took its foot off the gas, the Americans will face France for the title. The U.S. is trying to become the first team — in any sport — to win eight consecutive Olympic gold medals, breaking the tie with the U.S. men's program that won seven in a row from 1936-68.

The U.S. was able to take control of the game in the first half allowing coach Cheryl Reeve the opportunity to play her starters limited minutes, give players on the bench more court time, so everyone will be fresh and mentally set for the gold medal game.

"The group that's going to be out there is going to be a little more ready and rested to be able to give everything they had," Reeve said.

A win Sunday would be a record sixth gold medal for Diana Taurasi. A game after not starting for the first time since the 2004 Olympics, the Americans' most decorated Olympic basketball player didn't enter

the game until 2:08 remained in the third quarter with the U.S. up 63-40. She missed her two shots, playing just a little over 6 minutes.

The U.S. jumped out to an early lead on Australia, but only were up 20-16 after the opening quarter. The Americans put the game away in the second quarter, starting the period with a 12-0 run. The U.S. led 45-27 at the half.

Jackie Young added 14 points, Kahleah Copper 11 and A'ja Wilson 10 for the Americans.

Isobel Borlase led Australia with 11, and Tess Madgen and Ezi Magbegor each had 10.

There was no shortage of WNBA players on the court.

But while the American team features 12 WNBA All-Stars who have won multiple MVPs, the Australia roster is full of complementary players in the league. The Opals, who started five current WNBA players, just didn't have enough offensive firepower to compete with the U.S. juggernaut.

In the end, the U.S. once again denied the Australians a chance at a gold medal in what's been a one-sided affair between the teams. The Opals have never beaten the U.S. in Olympic competition, losing in the gold medal game in 2000, '04 and '08.

"We had to play a perfect game today. I always say you got to believe that you can" beat the U.S., Australia coach Sandy Brondello said. "But nine times out of 10, there's one game where you maybe can get them on a bad day. And it wasn't our best day here."

The Australians also lost to the U.S. in the semifinals of the 1996 and 2012 Olympics.

"America, they're the goats for a reason, you know?" said Australian Lauren Jackson, who has played in five of those losses. "They are full of superstars and I mean you look at the name on every single jersey out there and they are the best players in the world for a reason. They're incredible."

Jackson played 5 minutes after sitting out the last two games and didn't score. The 43-year-old Jackson hasn't contributed much in this Olympics, but the fact she's still playing is a near miracle itself after she retired due to injuries in 2016.

Jackson made a return for the Opals at the 2022 World Cup, helping the team earn bronze there. Now she'll hope that the team can get one more win Sunday to medal — something the Australians have done in each of the four other Olympics she's competed in.

The U.S. will be looking for another gold.

"I'm so proud of us," Reeve said. "You know, the evolution that we've made as a team. And I'm excited that we've got ... to the last stand, if you will, in this campaign. (Now) see if we can get the gold."

AP Summer Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games>

Boxer Imane Khelif wins gold to cap an Olympics marked by scrutiny over her sex

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Algerian boxer Imane Khelif has won a gold medal Friday at the Paris Olympics, emerging a champion from a tumultuous run at the Games where she endured intense scrutiny in the ring and online abuse from around the world over misconceptions about her womanhood.

Khelif beat Yang Liu of China 5:0 in the final of the women's welterweight division, wrapping up the best series of fights of her boxing career with a victory at Roland Garros, where crowds chanted her name, waved Algerian flags and roared every time she landed a punch.

After her unanimous win, Khelif jumped into her coaches' arms, one of them putting her on his shoulders and carrying her in a victory lap as she pumped her fists and grabbed an Algerian flag from the crowd.

"For eight years, this has been my dream, and I'm now the Olympic champion and gold medalist," Khelif said through an interpreter. Asked about the scrutiny, she told reporters: "That also gives my success a special taste because of those attacks."

"We are in the Olympics to perform as athletes, and I hope that we will not see any similar attacks in future Olympics," she said.

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Fans have embraced Khelif in Paris even as she faced an extraordinary amount of scrutiny from world leaders, major celebrities and others who have questioned her eligibility or falsely claimed she was a man. It has thrust her into a larger divide over changing attitudes toward gender identity and regulations in sports.

It stems from the Russian-dominated International Boxing Association's decision to disqualify Khelif and fellow two-time Olympian Li Yu-ting of Taiwan from last year's world championships, claiming both failed an eligibility test for women's competition that IBA officials have declined to answer basic questions about.

"I'm fully qualified to take part in this competition," Khelif said Friday. "I'm a woman like any other woman. I was born as a woman, I live as a woman, and I am qualified."

The International Olympic Committee took the unprecedented step last year of permanently banning the IBA from the Olympics following years of concerns about its governance, competitive fairness and financial transparency. The IOC has called the arbitrary sex tests that the sport's governing body imposed on the two boxers irretrievably flawed.

The IOC has repeatedly reaffirmed the two boxers' right to compete in Paris, with President Thomas Bach personally defending Khelif and Lin while calling the criticism "hate speech."

Khelif noted that she has boxed in IBA competitions since 2018 but now "they hate me, and I don't know why."

"I sent them a single message with this gold medal, and that is that my dignity and honor are above all else," she said.

The IBA's reputation hasn't stopped the international outcry tied to misconceptions around the fighters, which has been amplified by Russian disinformation networks. It also hasn't slowed two boxers who have performed at the highest levels of their careers while under the spotlight's glare.

Khelif was dominant in Paris at a level she had never reached before: She won every round on every judge's scorecard in each of her three fights that went the distance.

Khelif's gold medal is Algeria's first in women's boxing. She is only the nation's second boxing gold medalist, joining Hocine Soltani (1996) while claiming the seventh gold medal in Algeria's Olympic history.

While Khelif drew enthusiastic, flag-draped fans in Paris, she also has become a hero in her North African country, where many have seen the world's dissection of Khelif as criticism of their nation.

Dubbed "The Night of Destiny" in local newspapers, Khelif's fight was projected on screens set up in public squares throughout Algiers and other cities. In the city of Tiaret in the region where Khelif is from, workers braved scorching summer heat to paint a mural of Khelif on the gym where she learned to box.

"Imane has managed to turn the criticism and attacks on her femininity into fuel," said Mustapha Bensaou of the Tiaret gym. "The slander has given her a boost. ... It's a bit of a blessing in disguise."

Khelif won the first round over Yang on all five judges' cards despite showing a bit less aggression than earlier in the tournament. Khelif then knocked Yang back against the ropes with a combination early in the second, although Yang responded with a flurry of shots and fought gamely.

Khelif won the second round and cruised through the third, doing a triumphant boxer's shuffle in the final seconds of the bout before the boxers hugged. When the verdict was announced, Khelif saluted and pumped her arm with glee.

During the medal ceremony, she grinned and waved to the crowd before kissing her gold medal. The four medalists — boxing gives out two bronze — then posed for a podium selfie, clasped hands and raised them together.

The gold medal fight was the culmination of Khelif's nine-day run through an Olympic tournament that began bizarrely. Khelif's first opponent, Angela Carini of Italy, abandoned their bout after just 46 seconds, saying she was in too much pain from Khelif's punches.

An already brewing story suddenly drew comments from the likes of former U.S. President Donald Trump and "Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling, weighing in with criticism and false speculation about men competing with women in sports. Carini later said she regretted her actions and wished to apologize to Khelif.

Khelif has never done as well in another international tournament as she did in these Olympics. When she was cast as some sort of unstoppable punching machine last week by pundits and provocateurs who had never seen her fight before, opponents and teammates who knew her were shocked by the charac-

terization.

Then she lived up to the notion of being one of the best Olympic boxers in the world.

Lin fights for a gold medal Saturday on the final card of the Olympics. She takes on Julia Szeremeta of Poland with a chance to win Taiwan's first boxing gold.

AP Summer Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games>

Michael Brown's death 10 years ago sparked change in Ferguson

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

FERGUSON, Mo. (AP) — Michael Brown once told his father the "world is going to know my name," words Michael Brown Sr. still takes to heart.

Friday marks 10 years since the 18-year-old was killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, turning the St. Louis suburb into the focal point of the national reckoning with the historically tense relationship between U.S. law enforcement and Black people.

Activists marked the anniversary with a march through Ferguson, with crowds of people on foot but others in cars and SUVs honking their horns. They chanted Brown's name and sang as they walked. Some of them linked arms.

When the march reached a memorial of stuffed animals, blue roses, lillies and candles, Brown's father released butterflies from a box. Speakers included Fred Hampton Jr., chairman of the Black Panther Party, and Black scholar and progressive activist Cornel West.

"Justice ain't nothing but what love looks like in public," said West, who is running for president. He added later: "We shall never, ever forget the joy and the love of our dear brother Michael Brown."

The elder Brown now devotes his time to the Michael Brown Sr. Chosen for Change Organization, a foundation that helps fathers, mothers and children come to grips with tragedy in their lives. It's a legacy he feels obligated to pass on under the name he shares with his son.

"He was going to shake the world," Brown said of his son. "So, I guess that's what we're doing. He's still doing the work from the grave."

Brown's death catalyzed massive change in Ferguson. In 2014, every city leader was white in the majority-Black city. Today, the mayor, police chief, city attorney and other leaders are Black. The mostly-white police force of a decade ago now has more officers that are Black than white.

The municipal court system that once brought in millions of dollars in fines and fees, often for relatively minor traffic offenses — paid mostly by poor residents — now collects only a fraction of that.

But problems persist. The current and former mayor acknowledge that race still divides the community of 18,000 residents. Some are concerned that police, wary of criticism, aren't enforcing traffic laws, since serious and sometimes fatal wrecks are common.

What happened on Aug. 9, 2014

Michael Brown and a friend were walking along Canfield Drive when Officer Darren Wilson drove up and told them to get on the sidewalk. A fight ensued and fearing for his life, the teenager ran.

Though Brown was unarmed, Wilson described Brown as menacing at 6-foot-4 and claimed he came at the officer. But some nearby residents said Brown had his hands up in surrender when Wilson shot him.

Activist Zaki Baruti recalled the horror and fear that other Black residents felt after Brown's death.

"There was a sense of shock, not knowing what to do," Baruti said.

James Knowles III, who was mayor in 2014, believes that the widespread anger about Brown's death was driven by several factors. Social media allowed information — and sometimes misinformation — to spread quickly, he said. Neighbors were incensed when Brown's body was left in the street for over four hours on that hot August afternoon.

The night after Brown's death, thousands of protesters marched along West Florissant Avenue, near Canfield. A QuikTrip convenience store was torched, and goods were stolen from many businesses. Months of fierce protest, at which demonstrators were tear gassed, soon thrust the city into the national spotlight.

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When St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Bob McCulloch announced in November 2014 that Wilson would not be charged, protests erupted again.

What changed in Ferguson

In 2015, an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice also found no grounds to prosecute Wilson. But the report gave a scathing indictment of the police department — raising significant concerns about how officers treated Black residents, and about a court system that created a cycle of debt for many residents. A year later, the city agreed to a federal consent decree requiring sweeping changes. The decree is still ongoing.

Missouri lawmakers stepped in, too. In 2016, legislators passed a law limiting the amount of revenue that municipal courts could collect from fines.

In 2013, Ferguson collected \$2 million in court fines and fees, according to data from ArchCity Defenders, a St. Louis-based civil rights law firm. In 2023, the city collected about \$97,000 — a decline of more than 95%.

'A new look' for policing

Troy Doyle was a veteran St. Louis County police officer who worked in Ferguson during the 2014 protests. Nearly a decade later in April 2023, Doyle, who is Black, was hired as Ferguson's chief — the latest of several hires since Tom Jackson resigned in 2015, following the Justice Department report.

Back in 2014, Ferguson had roughly 50 white officers, but just three Black officers. Today, 22 of Ferguson's 41 officers are Black. Only four officers who were on staff in 2014 remain. Officers today are trained on implicit bias, de-escalation and community relationship building.

Doyle said he has worked hard to change the mindset of officers who might be resistant to the court-imposed requirements. He even replaced uniforms and changed the look of patches, badges and police cars, worried that the old look was "triggering" for many residents.

"For some people who live in the community, every time they saw a Ferguson police officer, it brought back memories," Doyle said. "I wanted to give us a new look, but part of that new look was to let people know it was a new police department."

Michael Brown Sr. said he's noticed the change.

"It's a weight that's been lifted up off the Black community in terms of stop-and-frisk and assessing tickets," Brown said. "There's a lot of things that still need to get done. Those things are not promised overnight. It's a process."

More jobs and a helping hand

Some companies and organizations stepped in to create jobs and opportunities after the unrest in Ferguson, which brought more awareness of economic challenges in the community.

Centene Corp. opened a managed care service center in Ferguson in 2016, creating about 250 jobs. But after the COVID-19 pandemic and a move to virtual work, the center closed. In April, Centene donated the \$25 million building to the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis for early childhood programs, workforce assistance and other services.

Bob Clark, founder of the St. Louis-based construction company Clayco, in 2015 created the Construction Career Development Initiative. Since then, 175 people have been placed in jobs in the construction industry. Among them is Malik Johnson. He was a high school student who was homeless at the time of Brown's death.

"My reality was divorce. My reality was mom with breast cancer, homeless, going hungry," Johnson, 28, recalled. "Not knowing what tomorrow looks like." Now, he's married, employed as a pipefitter and planning a family.

But challenges remain

After serving three terms as mayor, Knowles left office in 2020 due to term limits.

Knowles frequently meets for breakfast with Ella Jones, who was elected as Ferguson's first Black mayor in 2020 and reelected last year. They both acknowledge that race relations remain a struggle.

"The city is turning back," Jones told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "It really is. Everything here is along racial lines." The City Council has four white members and three Black members, and little gets done, she

lamented.

Knowles sees that, too. He also worries about public safety as many drivers — aware police are less likely to pull them over — flaunt traffic laws.

He also believes too much money is being spent on the consent decree — money he believes would be better spent on fixing streets, hiring more officers and restoring crumbling parks.

The place where Black Lives Matter took off

Karla Scott, communications professor and former African American Studies program director at St. Louis University, said Ferguson will survive because its residents are resilient and proud of their community, even after all it has gone through.

“But I think it will always be the sort of epicenter for many of us who can remember where we were when we heard the news, or for people who went out there to stand in solidarity, to march in solidarity, to make their voices heard,” Scott said. “It will always be that place where the Black Lives Matter movement really took off.”

During Friday’s memorial march in Ferguson, participants chanted the words that started it all. “Hands Up! Don’t Shoot!” as well as “Say His Name! Mike Brown!”

They laid blue roses on the pavement of Canfield Drive, then yelled, “Whose street? Our street!” and “We’ve got to fight back!”

A few carried American and other flags and signs such as, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Hampton, the Black Panther leader, encouraged participants to raise their arms and clench their fists to give its Black power salute.

“Differences amongst the people are reconcilable. However — however, differences between the people and the state are irreconcilable,” Hampton said. “Ain’t no forgiving what they did to Mike Brown.”

This story is part of an AP ongoing series exploring the impact, legacy and ripple effects of what is widely called the Ferguson uprising, which sparked outcry over police violence against Black Americans and broader calls for solutions to entrenched racial injustices nationwide.

Russia declares an emergency in Kursk, under attack by Ukraine. 14 die in a Russian strike on a mall

By SAMYA KULLAB and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia declared a “federal-level” emergency in the Kursk region following a large-scale incursion from Ukraine and sent reinforcements there on Friday, four days after hundreds of Ukrainian troops poured across the border in what appeared to be Kyiv’s biggest attack on Russian soil since the war began.

Meanwhile, a Russian plane-launched missile slammed into a Ukrainian shopping mall in the middle of the day, killing at least 14 people and wounding 44 others, authorities said.

The mall in Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donetsk region, is located in the town’s residential area. Thick black smoke rose above it after the strike.

“This is another targeted attack on a crowded place, another act of terror by the Russians,” Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin said in a Telegram post.

It was the second major strike on the town in almost a year. Last September, a Russian missile hit an outdoor market there, killing 17.

July saw the heaviest civilian casualties in Ukraine since October 2022, the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine said Friday. Conflict-related violence killed at least 219 civilians and injured 1,018 in July, the mission said.

Russia’s Defense Ministry said reinforcements were on their way to Kursk to counter Ukraine’s raid, with Russia deploying multiple rocket launchers, towed artillery guns, tanks transported on trailers and heavy tracked vehicles.

The ministry reported fighting in the western outskirts of Sudzha, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) from

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the border. The town has an important pipeline transit hub for Russian natural gas exports to Europe.

"The operational situation in the Kursk region remains difficult," Kursk acting governor Alexei Smirnov said on Telegram.

Social services and civic associations are providing assistance to people forced to flee their homes by the fighting, he said. The last Russian figure for those evacuated from Kursk was 3,000.

There has been little reliable information on the daring Ukrainian operation and its strategic aims are unclear. Ukrainian officials have refused to comment on the incursion, which is taking place about 500 kilometers (320 miles) southwest of Moscow.

But a top adviser to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that border region attacks will cause Russia to "start to realize that the war is slowly creeping inside of Russian territory." Myhailo Podolyak also suggested that the operation would improve Kyiv's hand in the event of negotiations with Moscow.

Asked about Ukraine's incursion, White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Friday the United States was "in touch with our Ukrainian counterparts" but that he would not comment until "those conversations are complete."

"There's been no changes in our policy approaches," Kirby said when asked if there had been a change in U.S. policy on use of weapons. "They're using it in an area where we had said before that they could use U.S. weapons for cross-border strikes. The end goal here is to help Ukraine defend itself."

Mathieu Boulegue, a defense analyst at the Chatham House think tank in London, said the Ukrainians appear to have a clear goal, even if they're not saying what it is.

"Such a coordinated ground force movement responds to a clear military objective," Boulegue told The Associated Press over the phone. Also, the raid has spooked the Russian public and delivered a slap in the face to Russian President Vladimir Putin, offering Ukraine "a great PR coup," he said.

The attack "is a massive symbol, a massive display of force (showing) that the war is not frozen," he said.

Separately, the Ukrainian army is struggling to hold at bay an intense Russian push at places on the front line in eastern Ukraine, especially in the Donetsk region. Putin has made clear he wants to capture the parts of Donetsk that the Kremlin's forces do not already occupy.

Russia declares federal level emergencies in situations when there are more than 500 victims or damage exceeds 500 million rubles (about \$6 million).

The Kursk fighting has earned considerable attention in Russian media, at the top of news websites and state television news broadcasts.

State TV channel Rossiya-1 devoted its first 10 minutes of its 11 a.m. newscast Friday to the situation, running Defense Ministry's video showing the destruction of Ukrainian military vehicles and a howitzer.

Much of the coverage was about the humanitarian situation — children being taken to shelters aboard buses, people in other regions gathering food and diapers and other supplies to be sent to Kursk.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, says Ukrainian forces have pressed on with their "rapid advances" deeper into the Kursk region, reportedly going up to 35 kilometers (20 miles) beyond the border.

"The lack of a coherent Russian response to the Ukrainian incursion into Kursk ... and the reported rate of Ukrainian advance indicates that Ukrainian forces were able to achieve operational surprise," the think tank said late Thursday.

A Russian Defense Ministry statement Friday said Russia's military "continues to repel the attempted invasion" and is responding with airstrikes, artillery and troops on the ground. It claimed the Ukrainian armed forces have lost 945 soldiers and 102 armored vehicles, including 12 tanks, in the assault. The claim that could not be independently verified.

Ukraine has also kept up its strategy of hitting rear areas with long-range drones, targeting Russian military sites, oil refineries and other infrastructure.

Ukrainian drones attacked Russia's Lipetsk region, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) from the Ukraine border, on Thursday night, authorities said.

Drones operated by Ukraine's Security Service hit a military airfield there, a security official told the AP

on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

The airfield was a base for fighter jets and helicopters and more than 700 powerful glide bombs in storage," the official said.

Ukraine's Army General Staff also confirmed the strike on Lipetsk-2 airfield Friday morning, saying it was used as a base for multiple Su-34, Su-35 and MiG-31 jets.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that 75 Ukrainian drones were shot down during the night, 19 of them over Lipetsk.

Hatton reported from Lisbon, Portugal.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

For freed Russian opposition activist Ilya Yashin, resuming work against Putin is his priority

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — All Russian opposition politician Ilya Yashin had with him when he was released from his penal colony in a swap was his toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, his expired passport and the prison garb he was wearing.

But he has hit the ground running.

Within days of arriving in Germany, Yashin not only bought new clothes, set up a smartphone and reunited with his parents, but also held a news conference, fielded questions from his supporters live on YouTube and held a rally in a Berlin park — even if it meant he didn't have time to catch up on sleep.

The 41-year-old dissident, released last week in the historic East-West prisoner exchange, admits he doesn't quite know how to be a politician in exile, a role that was forced upon him against his wishes.

But in an interview Friday in Berlin with The Associated Press, he said he wanted to continue campaigning against Russia's war in Ukraine, trying to free more political prisoners and advance projects to unite the country's fragmented opposition.

"There is a lot of work," said Yashin, visibly tired from his tight schedule.

A vocal and outspoken critic of President Vladimir Putin, Yashin was convicted of spreading false information about the Russian military after he made remarks on YouTube about hundreds of corpses found in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha after Russian forces withdrew from the area in March 2022, some bound and shot at close range.

He was serving 8 1/2 years in prison when on Aug. 1, Russian authorities put him on a plane to Turkey in the exchange.

It wasn't something he wanted or sought, Yashin stressed at a news conference after arriving to Germany along with other Russian dissidents. In fact, he had said at one point that he would never accept such a deal — and reiterated it last week, describing his release as a "forced deportation."

Unlike many Kremlin critics, Yashin had long refused to leave Russia despite mounting pressure from the authorities, arguing that his voice would sound weaker from abroad. He stayed even after the invasion in 2022 and hastily adopted laws criminalizing any public criticism of it.

He told AP that his newfound freedom has left him feeling conflicted.

On one hand, there's "a massive surge of enthusiasm, massive inspiration and a lot of joy," Yashin said. "For the first time in over two years ... I don't need to wake up at 5 a.m. after being ordered to wake up, I don't need to walk with my hands behind my back, there are no bars, fences and barbed wire around, I can breathe in fresh air, eat what I want, call whoever and whenever I want," Yashin said. "This feeling of freedom, it's inebriating."

On the other hand, when he thinks about scores of other people still languishing in prisons and jails in Russia, "it feels like I'm getting hit in the head with a hammer."

Working to swap more of them is now part of Yashin's focus. There are so many more worthy of freedom than himself, the dissident believes, especially those whose emotional and physical health is rapidly deteriorating behind bars.

He also wants to stay in touch with Russian emigres abroad and advocate for them with Western officials, as well as put forward projects that Kremlin foes could unite around.

But Yashin sees his main mandate as reaching as many people inside Russia as he can — and not just those who oppose the war, but those who support it, too.

"We need to talk to them, and we need to pull these people out of the shackles of Putin's propaganda," Yashin told the Berlin rally on Wednesday. "We need to explain that this monstrous war against Ukraine ... is a war against Russia too, because this war is crippling ... entire generations. It is taking away the future of our country."

He has faced criticism for urging a cease-fire in one of his first interviews after release, but says it will not deter him.

"I feel responsibility for what is happening and want to prove ... to Russians that this war is harmful for Russia, that it a tragedy for both Ukraine and Russia," Yashin said.

Getting through to those who support the Kremlin "will be an important step to stop the aggression," he said.

Yashin intends to use his YouTube channel, which has nearly 1.7 million followers, but admits it could be difficult because Russian authorities reportedly are slowing down the platform that is a vital conduit there for critical voices at a time when most independent media and Western social platforms have been blocked.

He said at some point, he will need to take a pause to sort out his life in Germany, assemble a team and find time to rest and recuperate after prison.

Over two years behind bars took a toll on his physical and mental state, Yashin admitted. He has noticed, for example, that he slouches more often after many nights on an uncomfortable cot in solitary confinement. Although there are other health issues he must address, he says he is "fine" overall.

He said he got a big emotional boost from Wednesday's rally, that drew hundreds of his supporters.

"The atmosphere there was absolutely amazing," Yashin added. "I recharged with the warm, lively energy from the people, which will definitely help me adjust more than any therapists, any beaches and any food."

Meet the press? Hold that thought. The candidate sit-down interview ain't what it used to be

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

During Kamala Harris' thrill ride that has upended the 2024 presidential campaign, journalists for the most part have been on the outside looking in. The vice president hasn't given an interview and has barely engaged with reporters since becoming the Democratic choice to replace Joe Biden.

That's about to change, now that it has become a campaign issue. But for journalists, the larger lesson is that their role as presidential gatekeepers is probably diminishing forever.

Harris travels with reporters on Air Force Two and frequently talks to them, but her campaign staff insists the conversations are off the record. Outside of the plane on Thursday, she approached cameras and notebooks to publicly answer some questions, and one of them was about when she would sit down for an in-depth interview.

"I've talked to my team," she said. "I want us to get an interview together by the end of the month."

She spoke on the same afternoon that her Republican opponent, former President Donald Trump, gave a news conference at his Mar-a-Lago resort, in part to draw a contrast with Harris. "She's not smart enough to do a news conference," Trump said. His vice presidential candidate, JD Vance, posted a comment on social media to point out that Trump was doing something that Harris hadn't.

The landscape for candidate interviews has changed

Given that modern presidential campaigns are essentially marketing operations, Harris' stance is not surprising. For the teams behind candidates, "the goal is to control the message as much as possible,"

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said Kevin Madden, a Republican communications strategist who was senior adviser to Mitt Romney's campaigns in 2008 and 2012.

Interviews and news conferences take that control away. Candidates are at the mercy of questions that journalists raise — even if they try to change the subject. News outlets decide which answers are newsworthy and will be sliced and diced into soundbites that rocket around social networks, frequently devoid of the context in which they were uttered.

In such an environment, the value and perception of the sit-down interview has changed — for journalists and candidates alike.

When Trump appeared last month in an interview format before the National Association of Black Journalists, his aides almost certainly didn't want the main headline to be about their candidate suggesting Harris had misled voters about her race.

Between Instagram, Tik-Tok, televised rallies, emails or texts, campaigns have so many other ways of getting their message across to potential voters today. This lessens the need to directly engage with journalists, Madden said.

"Presidential campaigns increasingly are conducted as performances before a sympathetic audience, one that is invited to watch and listen but not to question or respond," The New York Times wrote in a recent editorial.

Harris' unusual late entry into the race means she bypassed vetting by voters, with journalists often as their surrogates, that takes on a more important role in the early stages of a nomination fight where a more intimate form of retail politics varies from state to state. That makes it all the more important that she be available to speak about her record and plans, the newspaper argued.

"Americans deserve the opportunity to ask questions of those who are seeking to lead their government," the editorial said.

The Times' editorial board has requested an interview with Harris and hasn't received an answer, a spokesman said. The same was true of Biden before he dropped out.

A sympathetic interview — or none at all

Harris and her team may be taking lessons from her boss; Biden has lagged behind previous presidents in the number of interviews granted and press conferences held. That changed after the June debate with Trump that sent his re-election effort into a death spiral; televised interviews with ABC's George Stephanopoulos and NBC's Lester Holt did little to change that trajectory.

Trump has been more available, but often he talks with people unlikely to challenge him. Since July 5, he's given interviews to Fox News personalities Maria Bartiromo, Laura Ingraham, Jesse Watters, Harris Faulkner, Brian Kilmeade and Sean Hannity. He's also appeared twice on the "Fox & Friends" morning show.

Between those interviews — frequently clipped and run on other networks — and an endless stream of posts on his Truth Social site, Trump is "a content machine," Madden said.

Trump's news conference was telecast live on CNN, Fox News Channel and MSNBC, although CNN and MSNBC both cut out before it was finished to fact check some of the claims.

Fox has also frequently pointed out the issue of Harris' lack of access. "Trump Takes Questions as Harris Dodges Media," said one of the network's onscreen messages as Trump talked.

"We can't be the only media company that talks about it," Fox's Bill Hemmer said on Tuesday, making reference to the upcoming Democratic national convention. "Sixteen days she has gone without a significant interview. Is it possible that she could run out the clock until Chicago? That would be extraordinary. Then you'd have to ask yourself. What are you hiding? What is your team hiding from?"

Madden said that while interviews carry less importance than they used to, there are still some undecided voters who want to see them to help make their choices. That's why he expects they will happen.

"You want to control it as long as possible as much as possible," he said. "They have had so much momentum over the last couple of weeks, they haven't had to really sit down and make their case directly to reporters yet. The day is surely coming."

Associated Press reporters Seung Min Kim and Will Weissert in Washington and Darlene Superville in Romulus, Michigan, contributed to this report. David Bauder writes about media for the AP. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/dbauder>.

3rd person in custody over foiled plot targeting now-canceled Taylor Swift shows in Vienna

By PHILIPP-MORITZ JENNE and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Austrian authorities on Friday announced a third arrest in connection with the foiled conspiracy to attack three now-canceled Taylor Swift concerts, even as disappointed fans charmed Vienna by trading friendship bracelets and singing the pop star's songs in the streets.

The main suspect, a 19-year-old, planned to target onlookers gathered outside Ernst Happel Stadium — up to 30,000 each night, with another 65,000 inside the venue — with knives or homemade explosives during the concert on Thursday or Friday. The suspect hoped to “kill as many people as possible,” authorities said.

He was taken into custody on Tuesday, along with a 17-year-old, officials said. Both are Austrian citizens.

The third suspect, an 18-year-old Iraqi citizen, was arrested Thursday evening, the interior minister said at an unrelated news conference Friday.

A 15-year-old was also interrogated but was not arrested. Their names were not released, in line with Austrian privacy rules.

Swift is still set to travel to London's Wembley stadium for five concerts between Aug. 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said that while he understood Vienna's reasons for canceling, “We're going to carry on.”

Still, the Vienna plot drew comparisons to a 2017 attack by a suicide bomber at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, that killed 22 people. The bomb detonated at the end of Grande's concert as thousands of young fans were leaving, becoming the deadliest extremist attack in the United Kingdom in recent years.

Coldplay is scheduled to play four nights at the same Vienna stadium later this month.

Authorities said the scheme was inspired by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida. The main suspect, as well as the 18-year-old arrested Friday, pledged “an oath of allegiance” to the Islamic State group.

Investigators discovered bomb-making materials at the main suspect's home, as well as Islamic State group and al-Qaida material at the 17-year-old's home. That suspect, who has so far refused to talk, was employed a few days ago by a company providing unspecified services at the venue for the concerts.

Although the 18-year-old swore the oath and “comes from the social environment” of the main suspect, Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said, he is not directly linked to the plot.

The Austrian Interior Ministry, in a statement Friday to The Associated Press, said “his arrest underscores the broad scope of the ongoing investigation. Authorities are taking decisive action against anyone who might be involved in terrorist activities or exhibits radical tendencies.”

Investigators are scrutinizing the “networks” of the suspects, the statement said, and have turned to evaluating physical and electronic evidence.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby spoke to reporters Friday regarding the U.S. role in providing intelligence to Austria related to the Swift concerts.

“The United States has an enduring focus on our counterterrorism mission. We work closely with partners all over the world to monitor and disrupt threats. And so as part of that work, the United States did share information with Austrian partners to enable the disruption of a threat to Taylor Swift's concerts there in Vienna,” he said.

Shiraz Maher, an expert on Islamic extremism with the Department of War Studies at King's College London, said in a statement to the AP that attackers “prioritize casualties and therefore choose soft targets where they know large numbers of people will be congregating.”

Concert organizer Barracuda Music said it canceled the three-night Eras Tour run, scheduled to begin

Thursday, because the arrests were too close to showtime.

Heartbroken Swifties consoled each other on social media and in the streets of Vienna. After traveling from across the globe, hundreds gathered on Corneliusgasse, a small street just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the stadium whose name echoes that of "Cornelia Street," a contemplative synth-pop track from Swift's 2019 album, "Lover."

They sang Swift's top hits, took selfies and traded friendship bracelets hanging from the branches of the only tree on the street. Swift fans often swap the beaded bracelets, typically bearing Swift's song titles or popular phrases, with strangers at her concerts.

Huiyeon Kim, 22, took a 14-hour flight from South Korea to Vienna for the concert. On Friday, she was among some 300 fans spending the day on Corneliusgasse. She called the cancellation "so disappointing." "We couldn't understand or believe it," she told AP. "I think it was very very sad."

Meanwhile, younger fans and their parents traveled to the Vienna zoo for sightseeing — and discovered references to Swift's songs among souvenirs in the gift shop, photos posted to social media show.

The lyric "Karma is a cat" — written in paper banners designed like friendship bracelets, of course — was nestled among stuffed felines, quoting "Karma" off the 2022 album "Midnights."

Even as the fans belted out her hits, the superstar has not spoken publicly about the plot or canceled shows. "Taylor Nation," a verified Instagram page widely believed to be run by her team, reposted the announcement from Barracuda Music, while her main account has not posted anything.

A representative for Swift did not respond to AP's multiple requests for comment this week.

Last month, when a suspect in England killed three girls and wounded 10 people in a knife attack during a Taylor Swift-themed dance and yoga class, the performer said she was "completely in shock" over the violence.

Dazio reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin; Maria Sherman in New York; Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark; Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland; Danica Kirka in London; and David Klepper, Ellen Knickmeyer and Seung Min Kim in Washington contributed to this report.

Body camera footage shows local police anger at Secret Service after Trump assassination attempt

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the chaotic aftermath of the attempted assassination of Donald Trump at a Pennsylvania rally last month, a local police officer told a fellow officer he had warned the Secret Service days earlier that the building where the 20-year-old gunman opened fire needed to be secured.

"I (expletive) told them they needed to post guys (expletive) over here," the officer said in police body camera footage released by the Butler Township Police Department. "I told them that (expletive) Tuesday."

When another officer asked who he told that to, he responded: "the Secret Service."

Police body camera videos, released in response to a public records request, show frustration among local law enforcement at how Thomas Matthew Crooks — whom police had flagged as suspicious before the shooting — managed to slip away from their view, scale a roof and open fire with an AR-style rifle at the former president and Republican presidential nominee. They also show police expressing confusion and anger about why no law enforcement had been stationed on the roof.

"I wasn't even concerned about it because I thought someone was on the roof," one officer says. He asked how "the hell" they could have lost sight of Crooks after spotting him acting suspiciously if law enforcement had been on top of the building. The other officer responded: "They were inside."

Trump was struck in the ear but avoided serious injury. One spectator was killed and two others were injured.

Several investigations are underway into the security failures that led to the shooting. Acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe Jr., who took over after the resignation of former chief Kimberly Cheatle, has said he "cannot defend why that roof was not better secured." The Secret Service controls the area

after people pass through metal detectors, while local law enforcement is supposed to handle outside the perimeter. Rowe told lawmakers last month that Secret Service had "assumed that the state and locals had it" covered.

A Secret Service spokesperson said Friday the agency is reviewing the body camera footage.

"The U.S. Secret Service appreciates our local law enforcement partners, who acted courageously as they worked to locate the shooter that day," spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi said in an email, "The attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump was a U.S. Secret Service failure, and we are reviewing and updating our protective policies and procedures in order to ensure a tragedy like this never occurs again."

Two officers from local county sniper teams were inside the complex of buildings and spotted Crooks acting strangely. One of them ran outside to look for Crooks while the other remained in the building on the second floor, according to Butler County District Attorney Richard Goldinger. But neither officer could see Crooks on top of the adjacent building from their second-floor position, Goldinger has said.

Another video shows officers frantically looking for Crooks in the moments before the shooting. The video shows one officer help another climb up to the roof to investigate, spotting Crooks before dropping down and running to his car to grab his gun. There is no audio in the video until the officer is back at his car, grabbing his weapon, so it's unclear what he said after seeing Crooks on the roof. It was not immediately clear whether the sound was not recorded, or if the audio had been redacted by police.

The acting Secret Service director has said local law enforcement did not alert his agency before the shooting that an armed person had been spotted on a nearby roof.

After the shooting, officers are seen in one video climbing onto the roof, where Crooks lay dead. Standing near his body, one of the officers says he was "(expletive) pissed" that police "couldn't find him."

"I hear you bro," the officer responds. "But for now, I mean, he's the only one."

Lauer reported from Philadelphia

The threat Israel didn't foresee: Hezbollah's growing drone power

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group launched one of its deepest strikes into Israel in mid-May, using an explosive drone that scored a direct hit on one of Israel's most significant air force surveillance systems.

This and other successful drone attacks have given the Iranian-backed militant group another deadly option for an expected retaliation against Israel for its airstrike in Beirut last month that killed top Hezbollah military commander Fouad Shukur.

"It is a threat that has to be taken seriously," Fabian Hinz, a research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said of Hezbollah's drone capability.

While Israel has built air defense systems, including the Iron Dome and David's Sling to guard against Hezbollah's rocket and missile arsenal, there has been less focus on the drone threat.

"And as a result there has been less effort to build defensive capabilities" against drones, Hinz said.

Drones, or UAVS, are unmanned aircraft that can be operated from afar. Drones can enter, surveil and attack enemy territory more discreetly than missiles and rockets.

Hezbollah proclaimed the success of its May drone strike, which targeted a blimp used as part of Israel's missile defense system at a base about 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the Lebanon border.

The militants released footage showing what they said was their explosive Ababil drone flying toward the Sky Dew blimp, and later released photographs of the downed aircraft.

Israel's military confirmed Hezbollah scored a direct hit.

"This attack reflects an improvement in accuracy and the ability to evade Israeli air defenses," said a report released by the Institute for National Security Studies, an independent think tank affiliated with Tel Aviv University.

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Since the near daily exchange of fire along the Lebanon-Israel border began in early October, Hezbollah has used drones more to bypass Israeli air defense systems and strike its military posts along the border, as well as deep inside Israel.

While Israel has intercepted hundreds of drones from Lebanon during the Israel-Hamas war, its air defense systems are not hermetic, an Israeli security official said. Drones are smaller and slower than missiles and rockets, therefore harder to stop. That's especially true when they are launched from close to the border and require a shorter reaction time to intercept.

The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly in line with Israeli security restrictions, said Israeli air defense systems have had to contend with more drones during this war than ever before, and Israel responded by attacking launch points.

On Tuesday, a Hezbollah drone attack on an Israeli army base near the northern city of Nahariya wounded six people. One of the group's bloodiest drone attacks was in April, killing one Israeli soldier and wounding 13 others plus four civilians in the northern Israeli community of Arab al-Aramsheh.

Hezbollah also sent surveillance drones that filmed vital facilities in Israel's north, including in Haifa, its suburbs and the Ramat David Airbase, southeast of the coastal city.

While Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has boasted the militant group can now manufacture its own drones, its attacks so far have mainly relied on Iranian-made Ababil and Shahed drones. It has also used a drone, at least once, that fires Russian-made S5 guided missiles.

Hezbollah's increasing capabilities have come despite Israel killing some of its most important drone experts.

The most high-profile was Shukur, who Israel said was responsible for most of Hezbollah's most advanced weaponry, including missiles, long-range rockets and drones.

In 2013, a senior Hezbollah operative, Hassan Lakkis, considered one of its drone masterminds, was shot dead south of Beirut. The group blamed Israel. More recent strikes in Syria attributed to Israel killed Iranian and Hezbollah drone experts, including an official with the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division.

In its early days, Hezbollah used lower-tech tactics, including paragliders, to attack behind enemy lines.

After Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 after an 18-year occupation, Hezbollah began using Iranian-made drones and sent the first reconnaissance Mirsad drone over Israel's airspace in 2004.

After the 34-day Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006, Lakkis, the Hezbollah drone mastermind, took charge of the drone program.

Hezbollah increased its use of drones in reconnaissance and attacks during its involvement in Syria's conflict. In 2022, as Lebanon engaged in indirect negotiations to demarcate its maritime border with Israel, the group sent three drones over one of Israel's biggest gas facilities in the Mediterranean before they were shot down by Israel.

Hezbollah's drone program still receives substantial assistance from Iran, and the UAVs are believed to be assembled by experts of the militant group in Lebanon.

"Since Iran has not been able to achieve aerial supremacy, it has resorted to such types of aircraft," said retired Lebanon general and military expert Naji Malaaeb referring to drones. He added that Russia has benefited from buying hundreds of Iranian Shahed drones to use in its war against Ukraine.

In February, the Ukrainian intelligence service said that Iranian and Hezbollah experts were training Russian troops to operate Shahed-136 and Ababil-3 drones at an air base in central Syria. Russia, Iran and Hezbollah have a military presence in Syria, where they have been fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

In a 2022 speech, Nasrallah boasted that "we in Lebanon, and since a long time, have started producing drones."

The Lebanese militant group still apparently relies on parts from Western countries, which could pose an obstacle to mass production.

In mid-July, three people were arrested in Spain and one in Germany on suspicion of belonging to a network that supplied Hezbollah with parts to build explosive drones for use in attacks in northern Israel.

The Spanish companies implicated, like others in Europe and around the world, purchased items, including electronic guidance components, propulsion propellers, gasoline engines, more than 200 electric motors and materials for the fuselage, wings and other drone parts, according to investigators.

Authorities believe Hezbollah may have built several hundred drones with these components. Still, Iran remains Hezbollah's main supplier.

"Israel's air force can fire missiles on different parts of Lebanon, and now Hezbollah has drones and missiles that can reach any areas in Israel," Iranian political analyst and political science professor Emad Abshenass said. He added that as the U.S. arms its closest ally, Israel, Iran is doing the same by arming groups such as Hezbollah.

Associated Press writer Julia Frankel contributed to this report from Jerusalem.

Interim leader Muhammad Yunus takes the helm in Bangladesh, to seek peace and prepare elections

By JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took the oath of office as head of Bangladesh's interim government Thursday after protests forced out former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina this week.

The key tasks for Yunus now are restoring peace in Bangladesh and preparing for new elections following the ouster of Hasina, who fled to India after weeks of student protests over job quotas grew into an uprising against her increasingly autocratic 15-year rule.

The figurehead President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to Yunus for his role as chief adviser, which is the equivalent to a prime minister, in the presence of diplomats, civil society members, top businessmen and members of the former opposition party at the presidential palace in Dhaka. No representatives of Hasina's party were present.

The 16 other members of the interim Cabinet were drawn mainly from civil society and include two of the student protest leaders. The Cabinet members were chosen in discussions this week among student leaders, civil society representatives and the military.

The protests began in July against a quota system for government jobs that critics said favored people with connections to Hasina's party. But she resigned and fled to India on Monday after the protests coalesced into a movement against her government and more than 300 people including students and police officers were killed in the spiraling violence.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent his best wishes to Yunus in a statement on social media platform X, and alluded to reports that Hindus in Muslim-majority Bangladesh had been targeted during the violence.

"We hope for an early return to normalcy, ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities," Modi said. "India remains committed to working with Bangladesh to fulfill the shared aspirations of both our peoples for peace, security and development."

Yunus, who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work developing microcredit markets, was in Paris for the Olympics when he was chosen for the interim role. He called for calm and an end to partisan violence before he returned home earlier Thursday.

In his first comments after his arrival, he told a news briefing that his priority would be to restore order. "Bangladesh is a family. We have to unite it," Yunus said, flanked by student leaders. "It has immense possibility."

Yunus has been a longtime opponent of Hasina, who had called him a "bloodsucker" allegedly for using force to extract loan repayments from rural poor, mainly women. Yunus has denied the allegations.

On Wednesday, a tribunal in Dhaka acquitted Yunus in a labor law violation case involving a telecommunication company he founded, in which he was convicted and sentenced to six months in jail. He had been released on bail in the case.

The president had dissolved Parliament on Tuesday, clearing the path for the interim administration. The quick move to select Yunus came when Hasina's resignation created a vacuum and left the future unclear for Bangladesh, which has a history of military rule and myriad crises.

Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, who acts as an adviser to his mother, has vowed that his family and the Awami League party would remain engaged in Bangladesh's politics despite what he said have been attacks on the Awami League party over the past week. Many observers see Joy as Hasina's successor in a dynastic political culture that dominates the South Asian nation's politics.

"If we want to build a new Bangladesh, it is not possible without the Awami League," he said. "The Awami League is the oldest, democratic, and largest party in Bangladesh."

Hasina, 76, was elected to a fourth consecutive term in January, but the vote was boycotted by her main opponents, thousands of opposition members were jailed beforehand, and the U.S. and U.K. denounced the result as not credible. Hasina's critics say her administration increasingly was marked by human rights abuses and corruption.

The chaos on Bangladesh's streets continued after her resignation on Monday. Dozens of police officers were killed, prompting police to stop working across the country. They threatened not to return unless their safety is ensured.

Overnight into Thursday, residents across Dhaka carried sticks, iron rods and sharp weapons to guard their neighborhoods amid reports of robberies. Communities used loudspeakers in mosques to alert people that robberies were occurring, and police remained off duty. The military shared hotline numbers for people seeking help.

Many have feared Hasina's departure could trigger even more instability in the nation of some 170 million people, already dealing with high unemployment, corruption and a complex strategic relationship with India, China and the United States.

China and the United States have both welcomed the new government.

"We think the interim government will play a vital role in establishing long-term peace and political stability in Bangladesh," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters. He also reiterated that the government's decisions "should respect democratic principles, rule of law, and the will of the Bangladeshi people."

China said it stood ready to work with Bangladesh to promote bilateral cooperation and advance their strategic partnership. "We respect Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the development path independently chosen by the Bangladeshi people," the Foreign Ministry statement said.

A win for the Harris-Walz ticket would also mean the country's first Native American female governor

By GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

If Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, are elected this fall, not only would a woman of color lead the country for the first time, but a Native woman would govern a state for the first time in U.S. history too.

Peggy Flanagan, the lieutenant governor of Minnesota and a citizen of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, is poised to serve as the state's next governor should Walz step down to accept the role of vice president of the United States. Her rise to power has been watched closely by Indigenous peoples in Minnesota and across the country who see her as a champion of policies that positively affect Native Americans.

In recent years, Minnesota has integrated tribal consultation into numerous aspects of the state government, created one of the country's first state offices for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives and strengthened its laws protecting Native children in the adoption system. Many Indigenous leaders point to Flanagan as the driving force behind these changes, as well as a significant rise in respect for tribal sovereignty and autonomy in state policy.

Flanagan has been the highest-ranking Native American statewide official in the U.S. since she was elected as lieutenant governor in 2018. That position is often performed behind the scenes, but Walz and Flanagan

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have said they chose instead to govern as partners. Their administration has bolstered government-to-government relationships with tribal nations in Minnesota and many in Indian Country see Flanagan as a key figure in a new era of politics with Native women at the forefront.

President Joe Biden made a difficult decision to step down and let Harris take his place as the Democratic presidential nominee, Flanagan said.

"He created space for a woman of color to lead. And to be really honest with you, quite frankly, that's what Tim Walz did for me," she said.

Her rise to the governor's office would solidify her place among Indigenous female leaders including Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland, Congresswoman Shaurice Davids and a growing list of Native women in statehouses. Thirty-six state women lawmakers nationwide who identify as Native American were elected to office in 2023, a record, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

When Flanagan was first elected to the state House in 2015, there were far fewer Native women in seats of power.

"For my daughter, and for so many other young Native people across the country, their reality right now is totally different than how I grew up," Flanagan said. "Representation matters."

The number of Native women in the Minnesota Legislature has doubled since she took office, from two to four, and Flanagan said having more people from under-represented populations is the "secret sauce" to better governing.

"It allowed us to be able to speak on our own behalf on the floor, and to really be in a place where, frankly, decisions had to be made with us at the table in a way that had just never happened," she said.

Flanagan first met Walz when she worked at an organization that did grassroots training for progressive political candidates. She helped prepare Walz, a social studies teacher, for his first congressional race and the two became close friends and political allies. He later chose her as his running mate, supporting her numerous efforts to strengthen the voices of Indigenous peoples in the state government.

Walz was the first Minnesota governor to make diplomatic trips to the 11 tribal nations in the state. An executive order he passed in 2019 requires state agencies to consult with tribal governments, take training to improve those relationships and hire liaisons to work directly with tribal partners.

Louise Matson, executive director of the Division of Indian Work, a nonprofit that supports Native Americans living in urban areas, attributes those gains to the influence of Flanagan.

Flanagan was raised in Minneapolis, an urban hub for Indigenous activism including the American Indian Movement, and those who know her well say she has always focused on creating better outcomes for Native people, particularly children.

Matson, also a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, worked with Flanagan more than 20 years ago when, as a new college graduate, she got her first job advocating for Native families in the public education system. Matson recalled she was determined and not afraid to face challenges.

"I don't know if she always felt that confident, but I loved that she just jumped right into this job having to navigate a system that hasn't always been friendly to our people," Matson said.

Just a few years later, Flanagan ran for a position on the Minneapolis Board of Education. That's where she met Robert Lilligren, another member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe and the first Native person elected to the Minneapolis City Council. Lilligren said she reached out to him for campaign advice.

"I was like: 'This woman could be governor someday. Hell, she could be president someday.' I mean, she was just that impressive," Lilligren said.

He said the work Flanagan did on Walz's executive order requiring tribal consultation within state departments underscored her political influence and tenacity. The order has increased Indigenous visibility and respect for tribal sovereignty, he said. "That is because Peggy's there."

Flanagan's father, the late White Earth activist Marvin Manypenny, spent many years agitating for Native land rights, including by holding his own tribe's government to task. He often said Native people have the inherent right to govern themselves, and she incorporates that into much of the work she does today.

"He was a troublemaker and rabble rouser, and an expert in our tribal constitution," she said. "He taught me to take up space at the table and to tell the truth, even if it makes people uncomfortable."

Graham Lee Brewer is an Oklahoma City-based member of AP's Race and Ethnicity team.

This story has been corrected to show Flanagan's father's last name was spelled Manypenny, not Manny-penny.

Daniel Wiffen's most excellent Olympic adventure ends with a two-hour dip in the Seine

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP National Writer

PARIS (AP) — For Daniel Wiffen, it was the beginning of his open water career.

And, in all likelihood, the ending.

The star of Olympic swimming for Ireland after winning a gold medal in the 800-meter freestyle and a bronze in the 1,500 free, Wiffen dove into the Seine River on a breezy Friday morning to try something different.

The rough-and-tumble world of open water.

"I'd say the start was pretty bad when I got punched in the face," Wiffen said, flashing a grin. "I got hit in the head three times. Somebody kicked me in the stomach. I think I pulled my groin halfway through. And then, in terms of the last lap, I was just absolutely dead. That was the worst thing."

Wiffen finished 18th — nearly 6 1/2 minutes behind gold medalist Kristóf Rasovszky of Hungary — in a 10-kilometer race he knew he had no chance of winning as a complete neophyte.

His goal, essentially, was to finish.

"It's a new experience to me," Wiffen said. "I've never even swam 10,000 meters straight before in my life in the pool. So to do that in a race, I mean, I'm pretty proud of myself. It was a pretty hard thing to do. I've got big respect for everybody who does this as a specialist."

Wiffen called himself "one and done" as an open water swimmer after what he described as the "worst damn best thing I've ever done in my life."

"The reason why it was the worst is because it's the most painful thing I've ever done. But in terms of best, I'm happy to say that I'm an Olympic open water swimmer, dual-sport athlete and a contact-sport athlete now as well," he said, smiling all the way through his rather convoluted reasoning.

Few athletes enjoyed their Olympic experience as much as Wiffen, who became Ireland's first swimming gold medalist since 1996.

He held court several times in the mixed zone, bantering playfully with the media and making a pitch for more followers to his YouTube channel. He seemed to thoroughly relish the idea of becoming a sporting hero in his homeland while inspiring others to follow his lead.

But there were more immediate plans after wrapping up his final race in Paris.

"Well, right now, I'm going to go party for three days," Wiffen said.

After that, he'll return to Dublin for the homecoming Monday of the Irish Olympic team — "I'll be on the open-top bus going around," he promised — followed by an extended vacation that will include stops in Barcelona and Bali, Italy.

"I'm going all over basically on a big travel, and it's gonna be a lot of fun," Wiffen said.

Then it's back to work. He plans to compete at the world championships in Singapore next summer, looking to defend the 800 and 1,500 free titles he won at the February championships in Doha, Qatar. That was the meet where Wiffen first served notice of the Olympic success to come.

"I mean, my neck is a little bit sore from all those medals that I've got," he quipped, sounding more playful than boasting.

One thing that's not in his plans: another open water race.

Wiffen couched his retirement announcement ever so slightly, saying "never say never." But he's pretty sure this was it.

"It will be my last race," Wiffen said. "But I love watching open water, and I think it's a great sport. And

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to be honest, I think it could get a lot better. It's gonna keep progressing and progressing. It's gonna become like one of the best sports at the Olympics."

He just won't be a part of it.

His future lies at the pool.

"I'm amazed for myself," Wiffen said. "I set my sights on becoming an Olympic champion, and I did that."

AP Summer Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/2024-paris-olympic-games>

Today in History: August 10, derecho rakes the Midwest

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 10, the 223rd day of 2024. There are 143 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 10, 2020, a powerful derecho struck several Midwest U.S. states, causing four fatalities and an estimated \$11 billion in damage, making it the costliest thunderstorm in modern U.S. history.

Also on this date:

In 1792, during the French Revolution, mobs in Paris attacked the Tuileries (TWEE'-luh-reez) Palace, where King Louis XVI resided. (The king was later arrested, put on trial for treason, and executed.)

In 1821, Missouri became the 24th state admitted to the Union.

In 1945, a day after the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Imperial Japan conveyed its willingness to surrender provided the status of Emperor Hirohito remained unchanged. (The Allies responded the next day, saying they would determine the Emperor's future status.)

In 1969, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca were murdered in their Los Angeles home by members of Charles Manson's cult, one day after actor Sharon Tate and four other people were slain.

In 1977, postal employee David Berkowitz was arrested in Yonkers, New York, accused of being "Son of Sam," the gunman who killed six people and wounded seven others in the New York City area.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed a measure providing \$20,000 payments to still-living Japanese-Americans who were interned by their government during World War II.

In 1993, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was sworn in as the second female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2006, British authorities announced they had thwarted a terrorist plot to simultaneously blow up 10 aircraft heading to the U.S. using liquid explosives made to look like soft drinks.

In 2018, Richard Russell, a 29-year-old airline ground agent, stole a commercial plane from Sea-Tac International Airport near Seattle; he flew for 75 minutes, performing dangerous stunts while being chased by military jets before crashing into a remote island in Puget Sound, killing himself.

In 2019, Jeffrey Epstein, accused of orchestrating a sex-trafficking ring and sexually abusing dozens of underage girls, was found unresponsive in his cell at a New York City jail; he was later pronounced dead at a hospital. (The city's medical examiner ruled the death a suicide by hanging.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor James Reynolds is 78. Rock singer-musician Ian Anderson (Jethro Tull) is 77. Country musician Gene Johnson (Diamond Rio) is 75. Singer Patti Austin is 74. Actor Daniel Hugh Kelly is 72. Folk singer-songwriter Sam Baker is 70. Actor Rosanna Arquette is 65. Actor Antonio Banderas is 64. Rock musician Jon Farriss (INXS) is 63. Singer Julia Fordham is 62. Journalist-blogger Andrew Sullivan is 61. Actor Chris Caldovino is 61. Singer Neneh Cherry is 60. Singer Aaron Hall is 60. Former boxer Riddick Bowe is 57. Actor Sean Blakemore is 57. R&B singer Lorraine Pearson (Five Star) is 57. Singer-producer Michael Bivins is 56. Actor-writer Justin Theroux is 53. Actor Angie Harmon is 52. Country singer Jennifer Hanson is 51. Actor-turned-lawyer Craig Kirkwood is 50. Actor JoAnna Garcia Swisher is 45. Singer Cary Ann Hearst (Shovels & Rope) is 45. Actor Aaron Staton is 44. Actor Ryan Eggold is 40. Actor Charley Koontz is 38. Actor Lucas Till is 34. Reality TV star Kylie Jenner is 27. Actor Jeremy Maguire is 13.