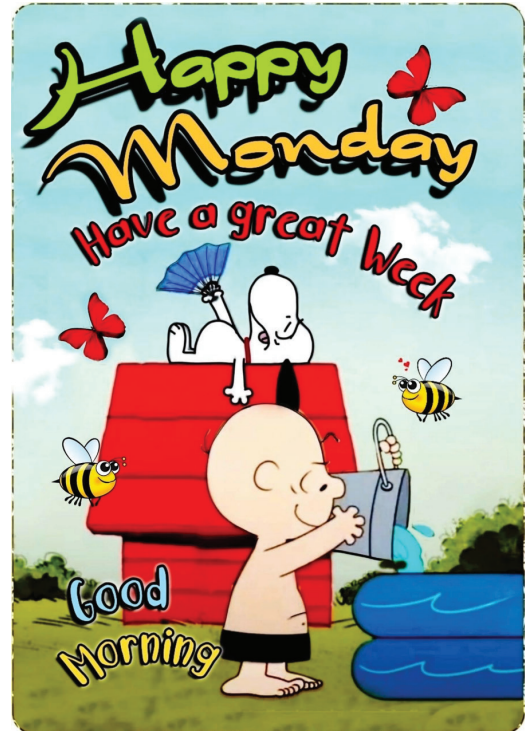


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Monday, Aug. 26

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, broccoli, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

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

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Community Center, potluck at noon

Tuesday, Aug. 27

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, corn, apple crisp, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Mini pancakes.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, potato wedges.

NEC Boys Golf Meet at Hankinson, N.D. (Tiospa Zina)

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Pantry Open, Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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

Wednesday, Aug. 28

Senior Menu: Roast turkey, dressing with gravy, 7-layer salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Quesadillas, corn.

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

Thursday, Aug. 29

Senior Menu: Baked cod, parsley buttered potatoes, creamy coleslaw, tapioca pudding mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Taco burgers, tri taters.

Volleyball at Hamlin (C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. with varsity to follow)

Friday, Aug. 30

Senior Menu: Ham salad on bun, cauliflower/pea/carrot salad, fresh fruit, cookie.

No School (Labor Day break)

Football hosts Moberg-Pollock, 7 p.m.

Basketball Golf Tourney fundraiser at Olive Grove

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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.

Extended Space-cation

Two astronauts stranded at the International Space Station will return aboard a SpaceX vehicle in February, NASA officials announced yesterday. The pair—Sunni Williams and Butch Wilmore—arrived aboard a Boeing Starliner in June for an eight-day mission but experienced a helium leak and malfunctioning thrusters endangering their return trip. The Starliner capsule will attempt an uncrewed return in September via autopilot.

The ISS is roughly the size of a five-bedroom house and can accommodate six crew plus visitors (nine are currently aboard the facility).

Both SpaceX and Boeing were awarded funding under a 2014 NASA award aimed at developing private transportation to the ISS. SpaceX has flown nine crewed NASA flights to the ISS since 2020, while Boeing has yet to complete a successful mission despite reportedly going \$1.5B over budget.

Israel-Hezbollah Tensions

Israel and Lebanese-based Hezbollah exchanged fire early yesterday in an escalated set of strikes following Israel's assassination of Hezbollah's senior commander, Fuad Shukr, last month.

Hezbollah says it launched 320 rockets, hitting 11 Israeli military targets in what it called the first phase of its retaliation for the death of Shukr. Shortly before the rockets began firing, Israel said 100 of its fighter jets carried out preemptive strikes to prevent a larger-scale attack, saying it destroyed thousands of rocket barrels at over 40 sites. Lebanon reported three fatalities; none were reported in Israel.

The strikes come as the Biden administration continues to pursue a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas amid tensions with Iran, which funds both Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran has promised to retaliate against Israel over the death of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh but suggested it could hold off in the event of a cease-fire deal.

Telegram, Intercepted

Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov was arrested Saturday at France's Bourget airport in Paris. The 39-year-old Russian-born billionaire was reportedly detained over the company's lack of content moderation.

Telegram is among the world's most popular social media apps, after Meta apps Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as well as YouTube, TikTok, and WeChat. The app's nearly 1 billion users can send encrypted messages in groups of up to 200,000 people. The app is popular among journalists, activists, and dissidents, but has also been used by extremist groups and people involved in drug trafficking and the distribution of child sexual abuse images.

Telegram markets itself as a haven for free speech and boasts fewer than 100 employees—significantly below the thousands of people employed at Meta, YouTube, and TikTok. The arrest comes as the European Union has begun implementing its Digital Services Act, imposing stricter rules on content moderation.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2024 US Open tennis championships kick off today in New York City.

"Inside Out 2" becomes first animated film to top \$1B at international box office; the film is the highest-grossing film of the year.

Florida tops Chinese Taipei 2-1 in extra innings to win 2024 Little League Baseball World Series title.

Babe Ruth's "called shot" jersey from the 1932 World Series sells for \$24.1M at auction, a record price for a piece of sports memorabilia.

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Science & Technology

Researchers identify mutations in the spike protein helping the SARS-CoV-2 virus infect the brain; discovery may shed light on the link between coronaviruses and neurological symptoms.

Europeans used coca leaves—the source of modern cocaine—as a stimulant as early as the 17th century; discovery was made from analysis of remains buried in a Milanese crypt.

Study finds tarantulas may have evolved their trademark hairiness as a defense against predatory army ants.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher Friday (S&P 500 +1.2%, Dow +1.1%, Nasdaq +1.5%) after Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's comments raise hopes of an interest rate cut next month.

Canada labor board orders 9,000 rail workers to return to work, engage in binding arbitration with country's two main railways; Teamsters union to appeal.

Grocery chains Kroger and Albertsons head to court to defend planned \$24.6B merger from anti-trust allegations, say merger will help better compete against Costco and Walmart.

Politics & World Affairs

ISIS-linked assailant who killed three people at festival in Solingen, Germany, surrenders to police.

French police arrest arsonist for targeting synagogue in southern France in terrorism-related investigation.

Sudan peace talks end without breakthrough in 16-month civil war; obstacles remain in efforts to reopen humanitarian aid corridors.

Hurricane Hone, a Category 1 storm, passes by Hawaii, bringing tropical storm conditions and up to 10 inches of rainfall.

Hurricane Glina, a Category 3 storm, could impact Hawaii in the coming week.

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2024 South Dakota HS Soccer Coaches Poll

Boys AA

1. Rapid City Stevens
2. Sioux Falls Lincoln
3. Watertown
4. Aberdeen Central
5. O'Gorman

Receiving Votes: Brookings, Sioux Falls Christian, Sioux Falls Jefferson, Sioux Falls Washington, Tea Area, Yankton

Girls AA

1. Rapid City Stevens
2. Harrisburg
3. Pierre T.F. Riggs
4. Sioux Falls Lincoln
5. O'Gorman

Receiving Votes: Aberdeen Central, Brandon Valley, Sioux Falls Roosevelt, Tea Area, Yankton

Boys A

1. Rapid City Christian
2. Vermillion
3. Belle Fourche
4. St. Thomas More
5. Dakota Valley

Receiving Votes: Freeman Academy, Groton Area, James Valley Christian

Girls A

1. West Central
2. Sioux Falls Christian
3. Groton Area
4. St. Thomas More
5. Dakota Valley

Receiving Votes: Belle Fourche

Names Released in Brule County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: Interstate 90, mile marker 272, one mile southwest of Pukwana, SD

When: 11:40 a.m., Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2007 Ford Mustang

Driver 1: Stephanie Lynn Elder, 57-year-old female from Mitchell, SD, no injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Vehicle 2: 1997 Ford F150

Driver 2: Leonard Alan Kocer, 64-year-old male from Wagner, SD, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Brule County, S.D.- A 64-year-old man died in a two-vehicle crash Wednesday morning near Pukwana, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Stephanie L. Elder, the driver of a 2007 Ford Mustang and Leonard A. Kocer, the driver of a 1997 Ford F150 were traveling westbound on Interstate 90 near mile marker 272. The Mustang collided with the rear of the F150, causing Kocer to lose control. The truck entered the north side ditch where it rolled, ejecting the driver. The driver of the Mustang also lost control and entered the north side ditch.

Kocer was transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased. Elder was uninjured. Both drivers were not wearing seatbelts.

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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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings finished the preseason with a resounding 26-3 victory against the Philadelphia Eagles. Like most teams, the Vikings used this final preseason game to evaluate the bottom of the roster, which means most players who have a roster spot locked down didn't play.

A look ahead to the Vikings' 2024 schedule (current odds are in parenthesis, according to www.vegasinsider.com)

Week 01 at New York Giants (+1) - Usually home teams get a three-point bump, so Vegas is saying the Vikings are a better team than the Giants, but are slight underdogs because the game is in NY. The Vikings will be looking to get a small measure of revenge against the Giants, since the last time the two teams tangled, the Giants came into Minnesota and eliminated the Vikings from the 2022 playoffs.

Week 02 vs San Francisco 49ers (+6.5) - According to Vegas, this will be the hardest matchup for the Vikings this year. However, the Vikings beat the 49ers last year 22-17 and will look to pull the upset again this year.

Week 03 vs Houston Texans (+4) - The Vikings and Texans have a ton of connections in this game. Danielle Hunter signed with the Texans in free agency and was replaced by former Texans' pass rusher Jonathan Greenard. Stefon Diggs, most known for his role in the Minneapolis Miracle, is also a Texan after being traded there this offseason (as is the QB who threw him the ball on that play, Case Keenum).

Week 04 at Green Bay Packers (+5.5) - The Vikings' players must be thrilled they won't be traveling to Green Bay in the winter. Over the past three seasons, the Vikings have won their first matchup against the Packers and then lost to them later in the season. Will that trend continue in 2024?

Week 05 vs New York Jets (+4) - This is technically a home game for the Vikings, but the two teams will be meeting in London for this matchup.

Week 06 - Bye week

Week 07 vs Detroit Lions (+3.5) - The Lions are a much better team than we are accustomed to seeing. They'll be looking to prove their 2023 run to the NFC Championship game wasn't a fluke.

Week 08 at Los Angeles Rams (+4.5) - This Thursday night game will be one of only two primetime games for the Vikings in 2024. The two teams last played in 2021, with the Rams winning 30-23.

Week 09 vs Indianapolis Colts (-1) - This is one of only three games in which the Vikings are favorites. The last matchup against the Colts saw the Vikings mount the largest comeback in NFL history when the Vikings were down 33-0 at halftime but came back to win 39-36 in overtime.

Week 10 at Jacksonville Jaguars (+4) - The Vikings and Jaguars have only played seven times before, and the Vikings have won six of those games.

Week 11 at Tennessee Titans (-1) - Vegas says this should be the easiest game for the Vikings this season. So, based on my decades of Vikings fandom, I can confidently say the team will likely find a way to lose this game in spectacular fashion.

Week 12 at Chicago Bears (+3) - This will be the Vikings' first glimpse of QB Caleb Williams, who the Bears took with the first overall pick this year. The Bears have never had a QB throw for 4,000 yards, will Williams be the one to break that trend?

Week 13 vs Arizona Cardinals (-2) - The last eight times these two teams have met, the home team has come away with the victory.

Week 14 vs Atlanta Falcons (+1) - Kirk Cousins returns to Minnesota in this late-season matchup. Unfortunately for the Vikings, this game starts at noon, which is when Cousins is at his best (there's a reason his nickname is the Noon Nightmare).

Week 15 vs Chicago Bears (+1) - Caleb Williams gets his first taste of the Skol chant in this December meeting of NFC North foes.

Week 16 at Seattle Seahawks (+3) - The Vikings and Seahawks have met eight times since 2012, and the Vikings have only won once.

Week 17 vs Green Bay Packers (+2) - Even if the Vikings are out of the playoff race at this point, we can expect the team to be at their best against their division rivals.

Week 18 at Detroit Lions (+5.5) - It will be interesting to see how the NFC North looks entering this game. Will the Lions have a playoff spot locked up and rest their players? Will the Vikings still be in the mix, needing a win to get in?

Prairie Doc Perspective

“When should I ask about lung cancer screening?”

Jonathan Rice, MD, PHD

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer (not counting skin cancer) in both men and women, only behind prostate in men and breast in women. Although it is the second most common, it remains the leading cause of cancer death in America. Approximately 1 in 5 cancer deaths a year are attributed to lung cancer. More Americans die every year of Lung cancer than colon, prostate and breast cancer combined. Lung cancer is considered a silent killer and is often diagnosed at a late stage, when treatment options are limited and survival rates are low. The greatest advancement in the care of lung cancer occurred in the early 2000s after the national lung cancer screening trial, which cemented the knowledge that early detection of lung cancer with low dose CT scans saves lives. Early detection through screening is crucial in improving outcomes for individuals at high risk of developing lung cancer.

Early stage lung cancer, when survivability is more favorable, is usually asymptomatic. In the early 2000s during the national lung cancer screening trial, this trial showed that in high risk individuals who obtained yearly CT scans improved their overall survivability due to the increased detection of earlier, more treatable stages of lung cancer. This trial showed that yearly low-dose computed tomography (CT) scan was the first radiographic test that consistently allowed early detection of lung cancer in high risk individuals. This early detection ultimately increased survivability due to earlier intervention of lung cancer at an earlier stage, prior to the lung cancer spreading to other places in the body.

Who is considered high risk and is eligible for lung cancer screening? Currently, the US Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual lung cancer screening with low-dose CT scan for any individual who is a current or previous smoker (who stopped smoking within the last 15 years) between the age of 50 to 80, and has a 20 pack year of smoking. A pack-year is calculated by multiplying the number of packs of cigarettes smoked per day by the number of years smoked. So if an individual smokes 2 packs of cigarettes a day, every year that individual has accumulated 2 pack years of smoking. Individuals who fall into this high-risk category should discuss lung cancer screening with a yearly low dose CT scan with their healthcare provider

Early detection through screening allows detection of lung cancer at an earlier stage and survivability of lung cancer is drastically higher when intervention occurs at an earlier stage. Studies have shown that individuals diagnosed with lung cancer at an earlier stage have a much higher chance of survival compared to those diagnosed at a later stage. Secondly, lung cancer screening with CT scan allows for detection of asymptomatic lung nodules or growths in the lungs that cannot be seen with chest X-ray. Finding these nodules early can allow for monitoring or treatment with surgery or radiation before they become more advanced and treatment options become more limited.

Lung cancer screening utilizes low-dose CT scans to take detailed images of the lungs and surrounding structures inside of the chest. These images can detect small lung nodules or abnormalities that may be early signs of lung cancer. If a suspicious nodule is found, a referral to a thoracic surgeon should occur where further testing such as a PET scan or biopsy may be recommended to determine if it is cancerous. It is important to note that not all nodules detected through screening are cancerous, and additional testing or monitoring with serial images may be needed to determine the nature of the nodule.

Lung cancer screening is an important tool in the fight against lung cancer, especially for individuals at high risk. Early detection through screening leads to earlier intervention and this increases the odds of survivability. If you or someone you know are a current or former smoker, it is important to discuss screening with low dose CT scan with your healthcare provider. Remember, early detection saves lives.

Jonathan D. Rice, MD, PhD is a board certified thoracic surgeon who focuses on thoracic oncology. He is an Assistant Professor of Surgery within the section of thoracic surgery at The University of Arizona College of Medicine Tucson. He has a passion for the advancement of robotic access to the chest and foregut. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust for 22 Seasons, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What's the most effective way to remove pesticide residues from fruits and vegetables that I buy at the supermarket?-- R.L.J., Kansas City, KS

For many decades now, pesticides have been a vital tool for farmers to ensure that their harvests aren't overgrown by weeds or eaten by pests. As a result, pesticides remain prevalent today, in spite of the many health risks that pesticide residues still pose to people consuming fruits and vegetables. It's worth noting that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has placed limits on the amount of pesticide residue found on produce—called "tolerances"—to ensure that people will most likely not be impacted by harmful "persistent organic pollutants" (POPs) such as glyphosate and atrazine. However, it's still important to make individual efforts to clean produce to further protect your personal health and safety.



A recent report found that 20% of 59 different produce categories posed significant health risks to consumers despite current pesticide limits.

Credit: Pexels.com.

A recent report from the American Chemical Society analyzed data provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and found that 20 percent of 59 different produce categories posed significant health risks to consumers despite current pesticide limits. The researchers developed new methods for finding and removing traces of pesticides from produce, as they found that traditional methods of cleaning produce were insufficient. Most notably, the report posits that pesticides go beyond the produce's surface to leach into the food, meaning that washing may not be as effective. Further research is needed to determine the full risks and implications of current pesticide limits. Regardless, all produce should be cleaned thoroughly before consumption.

There are varied opinions on the best methods for removing pesticide residues from produce, and no method is 100 percent effective. Rinsing produce is somewhat helpful for cleaning off dirt and germs, but soaking their fruits and vegetables in warm vinegar or salt solutions may be better; however, some sources claim that exposure to these solutions may allow chemicals to form more complex, equally dangerous chemical compounds, so always follow soaking with thorough rinsing. Finally, peeling or boiling produce can be highly effective in removing residues, though you will suffer a loss of nutrients.

Of course, the only way to significantly reduce your exposure to food-borne synthetic chemicals is by buying organic, as organic foods are not grown with the assistance of hazardous pesticides. You might have to pay a little more, but isn't your health and peace of mind worth it?

.. EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota ranks fourth in 2024 grassland conservation enrollments

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 25, 2024 10:00 AM

South Dakota landowners enrolled almost 159,000 acres this year — nearly 250 square miles — into a federal conservation program that pays them to use management practices promoting healthy grasslands.

That ranks the state fourth in Grassland Conservation Reserve Program sign-ups this year, following Nebraska, Colorado and New Mexico, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Large grasslands pull carbon dioxide down into the soil, where it doesn't contribute to global warming. Healthy grasslands can also retain moisture and are naturally adapted and resilient to wildfire.

Landowners who enroll must maintain the grassland, not farm it, but sustainable livestock grazing is allowed. Limited hay baling is also permitted. The USDA inspects to ensure enrolled acres are managed to promote plant and animal biodiversity.

In addition to new sign-ups, as of April, about 1,800 South Dakota landowners had ongoing Grassland CRP contracts with the USDA, translating to about 1.48 million acres enrolled with annual rental payments totaling \$23.67 million. The average annual payment per acre is about \$16.

Across all USDA conservation reserve programs, 14,150 South Dakota landowners have contracts with the USDA, encompassing nearly 2.4 million acres. Annual CRP payments in South Dakota — including the grasslands and other CRP programs — total \$137.29 million, with an average payment per acre of \$57.40.

Nationwide, this year's nearly 1.44 million acres of grassland enrollments brings the total of acres enrolled in all USDA land conservation programs to almost 27 million acres, the department's statutory cap.

Zach Ducheneaux is the administrator for USDA's Farm Service Agency, which oversees the programs. He's also a South Dakota rancher and a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

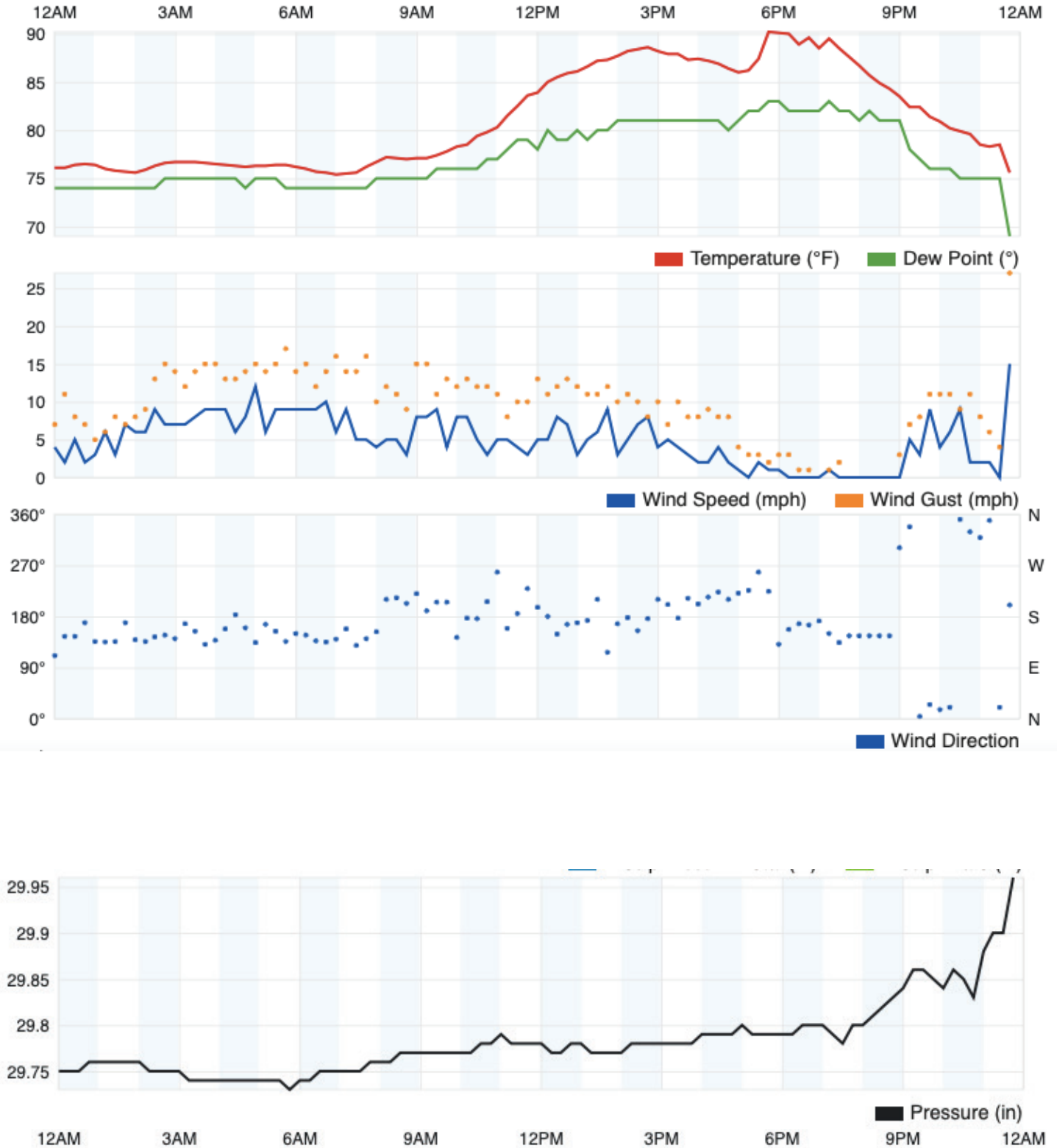
Ducheneaux said in a statement that the enrollment news "is a testament to the commitments made by the farmers, ranchers and landowners we serve to mitigate the impacts of climate change by conserving, protecting and enhancing our natural resources."

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.

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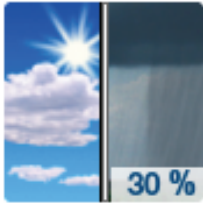
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 79 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Chance
Showers

Tonight



Low: 58 °F

Heavy Rain

Tuesday



High: 75 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 56 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 84 °F

Sunny then
Slight Chance
T-storms



Severe Weather Threat

August 26, 2024
5:15 AM

This afternoon through the overnight hours

Timing/Location

Showers and thunderstorms across the entire area today. Greatest severe weather threat will be for locations along and east of a line from Sisseton to Gettysburg to Philip after 4 PM CDT.

Primary Threats for the **ORANGE** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High

Max Hail Size

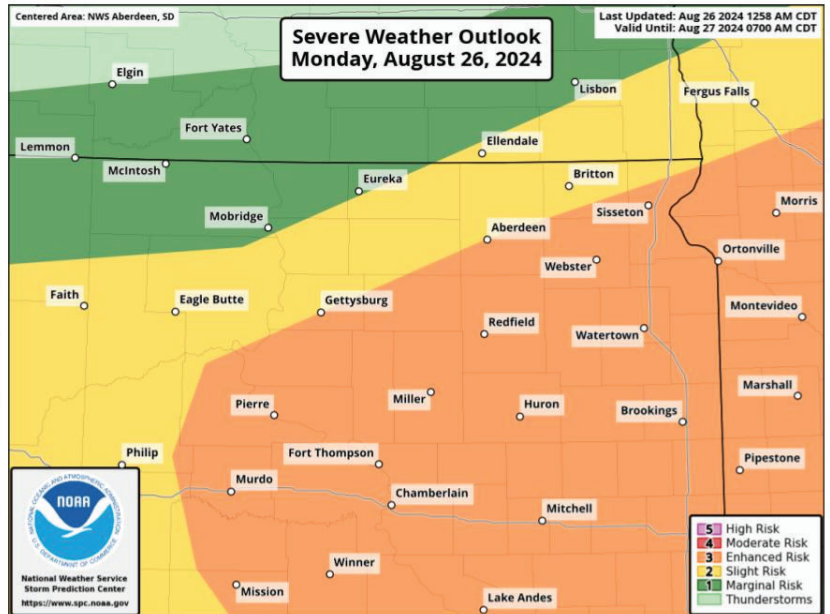
Dimes Quarters Golfball **Baseball**

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph 60-70 mph **70-80 mph** > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Severe storms are expected to impact central and eastern SD this afternoon and continue into the overnight hours before moving into western MN. Hail in excess of 2 inches in diameter is possible in central and eastern SD as are a few tornadoes and wind gusts over 75 mph.

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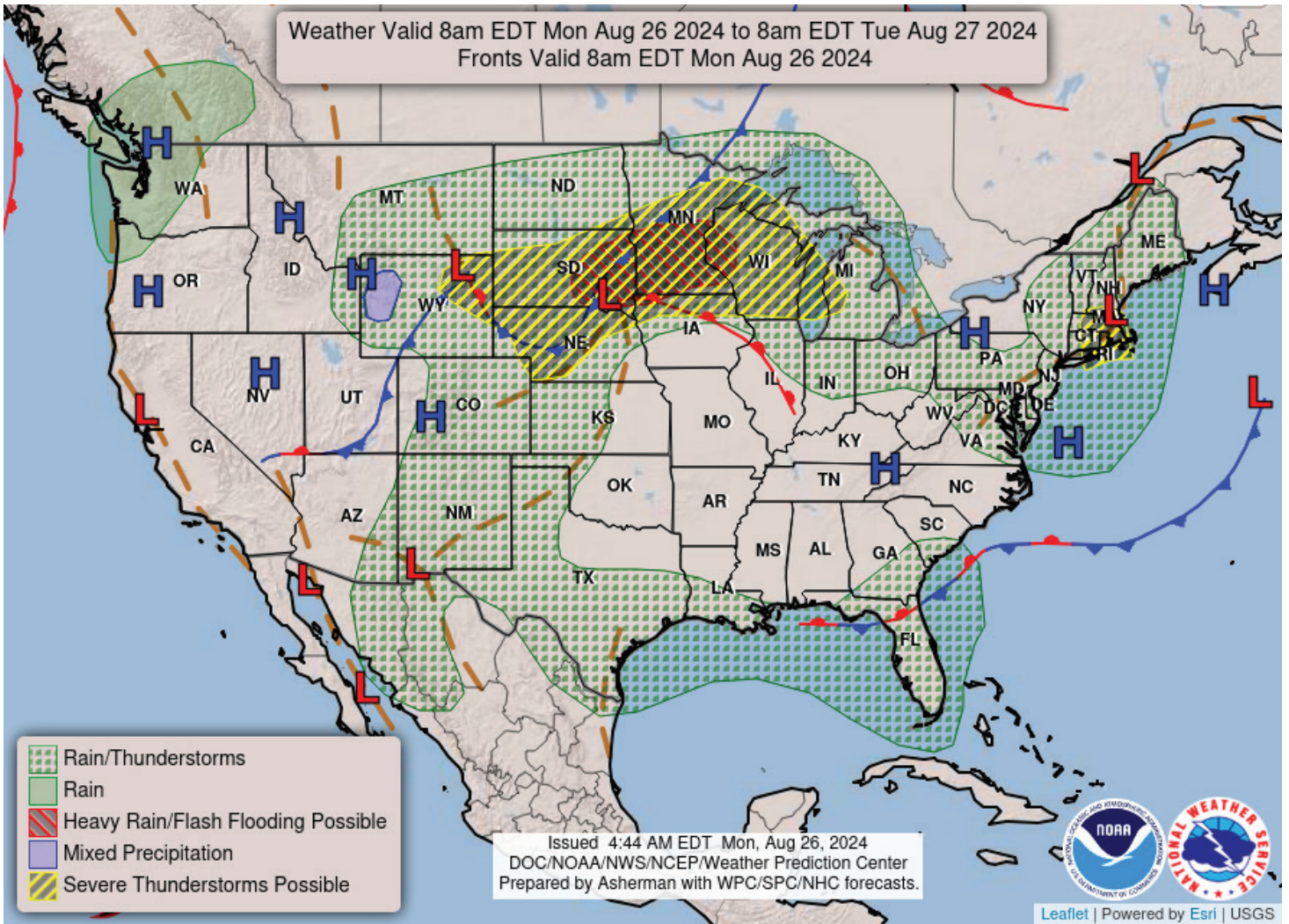
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90 °F at 5:54 PM
Low Temp: 75 °F at 6:59 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 5:40 AM
Precip: : 0.16 since midnight

Day length: 13 hours, 35 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1991
Record Low: 34 in 1914
Average High: 81
Average Low: 54
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.89
Precip to date in Aug.: 4.29
Average Precip to date: 15.99
Precip Year to Date: 19.18
Sunset Tonight: 834 in 1914
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:47:18 am



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Today in Weather History

August 26, 1983: Heavy rainfall up to four and a half inches fell in the town of Mahto, Corson County, flooding basements. Hail, up to three inches in diameter, caused significant damage to roofs and broke numerous windows.

August 26, 1998: Massive rainfall of 3 to over 6 inches fell across far eastern Corson, most of Campbell and Walworth counties during the evening hours of the 26th. The heavy rain caused flooding on many roads along with some highways through the night and into the morning hours on the 27th. Near Selby, high winds, heavy rain, and some hail caused damage to sunflowers and moved a barn three feet off the foundation. In Selby, wind-driven rain pushed water through some ceilings and into basements. An old barn near Glenham was also blown down by the strong winds. Some rainfall amounts include 3.50 inches at Herried, 3.80 inches at Java, 4.20 inches at Selby, 4.50 inches 3N of Selby and just southeast of Mclaughlin, 5 inches at Glenham, 5.75 inches 8N of Mobridge, and 6.35 inches 1.5 miles southeast of Glenham.

1854 - A tornado struck downtown Louisville around noon on Sunday, August 27th, 1854. It first touched down near 25th Street, southwest of downtown and lifted at the intersection of 5th and Main Streets. Although the tornado was only on the ground for a little over two miles, the twister claimed at least 25 lives. Many of those who perished were killed in the Third Presbyterian Church, where 55 people were gathered for Sunday church services. Straight-line winds that accompanied the tornado did significant damage to the Ohio River, where at least one boat sunk.

1864: A train running from Cincinnati to Chicago was derailed by a tornado in Dearborn County, Indiana, or 75 miles southeast of Indianapolis. Two passenger cars were lifted from the tracks and dropped in a ravine which injured 30 people.

1893 - The first of three great hurricanes that year struck South Carolina drowning more than 1000 persons in a tidal surge at Charleston. (David Ludlum)

1964 - Hurricane Cleo battered Miami and the South Florida area. It was the first direct hit for Miami in fourteen years. Winds gusted to 135 mph, and the hurricane caused 125 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1970 - Elko, NV, was deluged with 3.66 inches of rain in just one hour, establishing a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1976: A weak tornado touched down briefly in the Hockley Hills near Kiana, AK, about 29 miles north of the Arctic Circle. This tornado is the most northerly report of a tornado on record. Kiana is 545 miles northwest of Anchorage, Alaska.

1987 - Washington D.C. soared to a record hot 100 degrees, while clouds and rain to the north kept temperature readings in the 50s in central and southeastern New York State. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Afternoon thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Thunderstorms in eastern New Mexico produced wind gusts to 75 mph near the White Sands Missile Range, and produced three inches of rain in two hours near the town of Belen. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in southeastern Nebraska, eastern Kansas and Missouri. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail south of Belleville KS, and tennis ball size hail south of Lincoln NE. Thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 70 mph at Saint Joseph MO. Thunderstorms in North Dakota deluged the town of Linton with six inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: Hurricane Andrew made a second landfall near Burns Point, LA as a Category 3 hurricane. Morgan City, LA recorded sustained winds of 92 mph with a peak gust of 108 mph. Hammond, LA was deluged with 11.92 inches of rain. As Andrew moved inland and weakened, it spawned 47 tornadoes from this date through the 28th from the South to the Mid-Atlantic States.

2013 - Numerous severe thunderstorms brought large hail along with wind gusts from 60 to 90 mph to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Numerous trees were downed along with many structures damaged. Eighty mph winds near Polo in Hand County snapped off two large cottonwood trees. Ninety mph winds snapped numerous trees off at their base along with destroying a garage and tipping several campers over onto their side at Cottonwood Lake near Redfield.



FAITHFUL MEANS CONSISTENT

Imagine what it would be like to go to bed at night and wonder if the sun would be there to greet us in the morning. Or, to fear that the sun would stand still and scorch the earth because the universe lost its way. Or, to see a drought begin and worry that the rain will never come again.

We live in an orderly, predictable universe. It's the way God created and planned it to be. It is, simply stated, a picture of a God who is faithful, dependable, reliable and trustworthy. Who He was yesterday He will be today and when the sun sets this evening, it will not go into hiding. It will rise again tomorrow because of the enduring faithfulness of a sovereign God.

Faithfulness is important because it gives us the assurance of stability and structure. It creates trust and the possibility of planning. Though we may not desire some of the "contents" that come with predictability, at least we can prepare for them.

God's covenant with the children of Israel gave them the assurance of His faithfulness. Other gods were created by men but our God is the One who created man. He promised to guide, guard and grant us mercy, grace and salvation because of His great love for His creation.

"Wisdom" speaks of this God, to be sure. But, to be faithful to Him in all things and pass this wisdom on to children as mothers and mentors is something our God ordained to be an important priority in Christian homes. "She speaks with God's wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue." There is little doubt in God's mind: Mothers matter!

Prayer: Father, we pray for Your strength and dignity to fill all who are called by You to be mothers and mentors. Lead them by Your Spirit to be God-centered. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: She speaks with God's wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. Proverbs 31:26

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:
08.23.24

28 30 44 66 69 2

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$575,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 18 Hrs 4
DRAW: Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.24.24

3 19 21 28 32 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$7,640,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 19 Mins
DRAW: 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.25.24

8 17 19 29 31 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 17 Hrs 34 Mins
DRAW: 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.24.24

8 9 22 24 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 34
DRAW: Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.24.24

1 26 32 64 65 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 18 Hrs 3 Mins 13
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.24.24

5 15 21 24 43 17

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$44,000,000

NEXT 18 Hrs 3 Mins 13
DRAW: 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

Israel-Hamas war latest: Israel launches more strikes on Lebanon, state media and witnesses say

By The Associated Press undefined

After a short-lived calm following a heavy exchange of strikes between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, fighting resumed Monday.

State media and witnesses reported that Israeli strikes targeted the Lebanese border village of Tair Harfa and in the area of the coastal city of Sidon on Monday afternoon. A car was hit in the latter strike. It was not immediately clear whether there were casualties.

On Sunday, Israel launched dozens of strikes on southern Lebanon that it described as a preemptive operation, saying it had averted a major attack planned by Hezbollah in retaliation for the killing of one of its top commanders, Fouad Shukur, in an Israeli strike in Beirut last month.

Shortly afterward, Hezbollah launched a barrage of hundreds of drones and rockets, which it said was in retaliation for the killing of Shukur. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah claimed drones had hit an Israeli military intelligence site near Tel Aviv. Israel said no military target was hit. Neither offered evidence.

Hezbollah declared its retaliatory operation was over and neither side launched strikes overnight.

Here's the latest:

Iran's foreign minister vows 'definitive' retaliation against Israel

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's foreign minister again has referenced his country's planned retaliation over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Abbas Araghchi said late Sunday he made the remark in a conversation with Italy's foreign minister, Antonio Tajani, by telephone.

"Iran reaction to Israeli terrorist attack in Tehran is definitive, and will be measured & well calculated," Araghchi wrote on the social platform X. "We do not fear escalation, yet do not seek it—unlike Israel."

From Tajani's side, he said he "called for restraint and to pursue a constructive approach, in order to stop the cycle of military actions in the region, which only risks bringing more suffering."

"It is important that Iran exercises moderation towards Hezbollah in order to avert an escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, where Italian soldiers of the UNIFIL contingent are operating, and towards the Houthis in order to avoid an increase in tensions in the Red Sea area, where Italy plays a leading role in the (European Union's) Aspides mission," he said in a statement.

Their call came after Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, long backed by Iran, traded heavy fire early Sunday but backed off from sparking a widely feared all-out war.

Israel says more polio vaccines are delivered to Gaza

Polio vaccines for more than 1 million people have been delivered to Gaza, Israel's military said Sunday, after the first confirmed case of the disease in the territory in a quarter-century.

It was not immediately clear how, or how quickly, the more than 25,000 vials of vaccine would be distributed in Gaza, where ongoing fighting and unrest have challenged humanitarian efforts during more than 10 months of war.

Other polio cases are suspected across the largely devastated territory after the virus was detected in wastewater in six different locations in July.

Aid groups plan to vaccinate more than 600,000 children under age 10 and have called for an urgent pause in the war to increase vaccinations. The World Health Organization and the United Nations children's agency have said that, at a minimum, a seven-day pause is needed.

The U.N. has aimed to bring 1.6 million doses of polio vaccine into Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are crowded into tent camps lacking clean water or proper disposal of sewage and garbage. Families sometimes use wastewater to drink or clean dishes.

Gunmen kill 31 people in 2 separate attacks in southwestern Pakistan; 12 insurgents also killed

By ABDUL SATTAR and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan killed at least 31 people in two separate attacks on Monday and security forces killed 12 insurgents, officials said, in one of the deadliest days of violence in the restive Baluchistan province, with reports of other shootings and destruction in the area.

Twenty-three people were fatally shot after being identified and taken from buses, vehicles and trucks in Musakhail, a district in Baluchistan, senior police official Ayub Achakzai said. The attackers burned at least 10 vehicles before fleeing.

In a separate attack, gunmen killed at least nine people, including four police officers and five passersby, in Qalat district also in Baluchistan, authorities said.

Insurgents blew up a railway track in Bolan, attacked a police station in Mastung and attacked and burned vehicles in Gwadar, all districts in Baluchistan. No casualties were reported in those attacks.

Baluchistan has been the scene of a long-running insurgency in Pakistan, with an array of separatist groups staging attacks, mainly on security forces. The separatists have been demanding independence from the central government in Islamabad. Although Pakistani authorities say they have quelled the insurgency, violence in Baluchistan has persisted.

The attack in Musakhail came hours after the outlawed Baluch Liberation Army separatist group warned people to stay away from highways as they launched attacks on security forces in various parts of the province.

But there there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest killings.

In a statement on Monday, the BLA only said it inflicted heavy losses on security forces in attacks in the province. Pakistan's military and government did not immediately comment on that claim. The group often provides exaggerated figures of troop casualties.

Separatists are known to ask people for their ID cards, and then abduct or kill those who are from outside the province. Many recent victims have come from neighboring Punjab province.

Uzma Bukhari, a spokesperson for the Punjab provincial government, denounced the latest killings on Monday, saying the "attacks are a matter of grave concern" and urging the Baluchistan provincial government to "step up efforts to eliminate BLA terrorists."

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement that security forces in Baluchistan responded to the latest attacks on Monday, killing 12 insurgents. He said authorities would reveal who was behind the latest attacks after completing an investigation, but noted that "terrorists and their facilitators will have no place to hide" in the country.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Naqvi in separate statements called the attack in Musakhail "barbaric" and vowed that those behind it would not escape justice.

Later, Naqvi also condemned the killings in Qalat

In May, gunmen fatally shot seven barbers in Gwadar, a port city in Baluchistan.

In April, separatists killed nine people after abducting them from a bus on a highway in Baluchistan, and the attackers also killed two people and wounded six in another car they forced to stop. BLA claimed responsibility for those attacks at the time.

Syed Muhammad Ali, an Islamabad-based security analyst, said the latest killings of non-Baluch people are an attempt by separatists to harm the province economically.

Ali told The Associated Press that most such attacks are carried out with the aim to economically weaken Baluchistan, noting that "the weakening of Baluchistan means the weakening of Pakistan."

He said insurgent attacks could hamper development work being done in the province.

Separatists in Baluchistan have often killed workers and others from the country's eastern Punjab region as part of a campaign to force them to leave the province, which for years has experienced a low-level

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insurgency.

Most such previous killings have been blamed on the outlawed group and others demanding independence from the central government in Islamabad. The Pakistani Taliban also have a presence in the province, and they are closely connected to the BLA.

In a separate attack on Monday in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a roadside bomb killed four people and wounded 12 others in North Waziristan district, said local administration official Abid Khan.

The Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, is a separate group but allied with the Afghan Taliban, who seized power in Afghanistan in 2021 as U.S. and NATO troops were in the final stages of their pullout from the country after 20 years of war.

Hone weakens to tropical storm while sweepng past Hawaii, dumping enough rain to ease wildfire fears

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and JULIE WALKER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hone passed south of Hawaii and weakened from a hurricane to a tropical storm on Sunday, dumping so much rain that the National Weather Service called off its red flag warnings that strong winds could lead to wildfires on the drier sides of the islands.

Meanwhile, the eastern Pacific saw a new threat emerge as Tropical Storm Hector formed, packing top sustained winds of 45 mph (75 kph). There were no coastal watches or warnings in effect as Hector churned far out at sea, the National Hurricane Center said.

Hone (pronounced hoe-NEH) had top winds of 70 mph (110 kph) Sunday night as it swirled slowly past Hawaii about 180 miles (290 kilometers) southwest of Honolulu and 185 miles (300 kilometers) south of Lihue, according to an 11 p.m. advisory from the Central Pacific Hurricane Center.

Jon Jelsema, a senior forecaster at the Central Pacific Hurricane Center, said earlier Sunday that tropical storm force winds were blowing across the island's southeast-facing slopes, carrying up to a foot (30 centimeters) or more of rain.

Floods closed Highway 11 between Kona and Hilo, and a higher-altitude alternative, the Cane Road, was closed by flooding as well, isolating properties like the Aikane Plantation Coffee Co. outside Pahala, where owner Phil Becker said his 10-inch (25-centimeter) rain gauge overflowed in the deluge.

"We've got quite a lot of flood damage, the gulches are running full speed ahead and they're overflowing the bridges, so we're trapped down here, we can't get in or out," Becker said Sunday.

Becker said his plantation is off the grid, powered with batteries charged by solar electricity, and his family is safe, so they have no reason to evacuate. The weather may even prove beneficial: "We've been in a drought situation so the coffee is probably loving all this rain," he said.

Hurricane Gilma, meanwhile, weakened to a still-major Category 3 hurricane Saturday night, but it was far east of Hawaii and forecast to weaken into a depression before it reaches the islands. Gilma was expected to remain a hurricane through Tuesday and at 11 p.m. Sunday was 1,260 miles (2,025 kilometers) east of Hilo with top winds of 100 mph (155 kph).

Shelters were opened as Hurricane Hone blew in and beach parks on the eastern side of the Big Island were closed due to dangerously high surf, Hawaii County Mayor Mitch Roth said.

Jelsema offered a vivid metaphor for the rainfall: "As the rain gets pushed up the mountain terrain it wrings it out, kind of like wringing out a wet towel," he said.

"It's been really soaking those areas, there's been flooding of roads. Roads have been cut off by high flood waters there in the windward sections of the big island, and really that's the only portion of the state that's had much flooding concern at this point," he said.

Hone, whose name is Hawaiian for "sweet and soft," poked at memories still fresh of last year's deadly blazes on Maui, which were fueled by hurricane-force winds. Red flag alerts are issued when warm temperatures, very low humidity and stronger winds combine to raise fire dangers. Most of the archipelago is already abnormally dry or in drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

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The Aug. 8, 2023, blaze that torched the historic town of Lahaina was the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century, with 102 dead. Dry, overgrown grasses and drought helped spread the fire.

Calvin Endo, a Waianae Coast neighborhood board member who lives in Makaha, a leeward Oahu neighborhood prone to wildfires, has worried for years about dry brush on private property behind his home. He's taken matters into his own hands by clearing the brush himself, but he's concerned about nearby homes abutting overgrown vegetation.

"All you need is fire and wind and we'll have another Lahaina," Endo said as the storm approached. "I notice the wind started to kick up already."

The cause of the Lahaina blaze is still under investigation, but it's possible it was ignited by bare electrical wire and leaning power poles toppled by the strong winds. The state's two power companies, Hawaiian Electric and the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative, were prepared to shut off power if necessary to reduce the chance that live, damaged power lines could start fires, but they later said the safety measures would not be necessary as Hone blew past the islands.

Roth said a small blaze that started Friday night in Waikoloa, on the dry side of the Big Island, was brought under control without injuries or damage.

'Barcelona or die.' For Senegalese dreaming of Europe, the deadly Atlantic route is not a deterrent

By MARK BANCHEREAU Associated Press

THIAROYE-SUR-MER, Senegal (AP) — Salamba Ndiaye was 22 when she first tried to get to Spain, dreaming of a career as a real estate agent. Without her parents' knowledge, she made it onto a small fishing boat known as a pirogue, but the Senegalese police intercepted the vessel before it could leave.

A year later Ndiaye tried again, successfully making it off the coast but this time a violent storm forced the boat to stop in Morocco, where Ndiaye and the other passengers were sent back to Senegal.

Despite her two failed attempts, the 28-year-old is determined to try again. "Right now, if they told me there was a boat going to Spain, I would leave this interview and get on it," she said.

Ndiaye is one of thousands of young Senegalese who try to leave the West African country each year to head to Spain, fleeing poverty and the lack of job opportunities. Most head to the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago off the coast of West Africa, which is used as a stepping stone to continental Europe.

Since the beginning of the year, more than 22,300 people have landed on the Canary Islands, 126% more than the same period last year, according to statistics released by Spain's Interior Ministry.

Earlier this year, the EU signed a 210 million euro deal with Mauritania to stop smugglers from launching boats for Spain. But the deal has had little effect on migrant arrivals for now.

The Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will visit Mauritania, Senegal and Gambia this week to tackle irregular migration. The West African nations are the main launching pads for migrants traveling by boat.

The Atlantic route from West Africa to the Canary Islands is one of the deadliest in the world. While there is no accurate death toll because of the lack of information on departures from West Africa, the Spanish migrant rights group Walking Borders estimates the victims are in the thousands this year alone.

Migrant boats that get lost or run into problems often vanish in the Atlantic, with some drifting across the ocean for months until they are found in the Caribbean and Latin America carrying only human remains.

But the danger of the route is not a deterrent for those like Ndiaye, who are desperate to make a better living for themselves and their families in Europe. "Barsa wala Barsakh," or "Barcelona or die" in Wolof, one of Senegal's national languages, is a common motto of those who brave the deadly route.

"Even if we stay here, we are in danger," said Cheikh Gueye, 46, a fisherman from Thiaroye-sur-Mer, the same village on the outskirts of Senegal's capital that Ndiaye is from.

"If you are sick and you can't pay for treatment, aren't you in danger? So, we take our chances, either we get there, or we don't," he added.

Gueye also attempted to reach Europe though the Atlantic route but only made it to Morocco following bad weather, and was sent back to Senegal.

Like many inhabitants of Thiaroye-sur-Mer, he used to make a decent living as a fisherman before fish stocks started to deplete a decade ago due to overfishing.

"These big boats have changed things, before even kids could catch some fish here with a net," Gueye said, pointing at the shallow water.

"Now we have to go more than 50 kilometers out before we find fish and even then we don't find enough, just a little," he adds.

Gueye and Ndiaye blame the fishing agreements between Senegal and the European Union and China, which allow foreign industrial trawlers to fish in Senegalese waters. The agreements impose limits on what they can haul in, but monitoring what the large boats from Europe, China and Russia harvest has proven difficult.

Ahead of the Spanish prime minister's visit to Senegal on Wednesday, Ndiaye's mother, Fatou Niang, 67, says the Senegalese and Spanish governments should focus on giving young people in the West African country job opportunities to deter them from migrating.

"These kids don't know anything but the sea, and now the sea has nothing. If you do something for the youth, they won't leave," Niang says.

"But if not, well, we can't make them stay. There's no work here," she said.

Trump is expected to tie Harris to chaotic Afghanistan War withdrawal on 3rd anniversary of attack

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump on Monday is expected to tie Vice President Kamala Harris to the chaotic Afghanistan War withdrawal on the third anniversary of the suicide bombing that killed 13 service members.

Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, is expected to visit Arlington National Cemetery to pay his respects to the service members killed in the bombing outside the Kabul airport. Trump will then go to Michigan to address the National Guard Association of the United States conference.

Monday marks three years since the Aug. 26, 2021, suicide bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport, which killed 13 American service members and more than 100 Afghans. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Since President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid, Trump has been zeroing in on Harris, now the Democratic presidential nominee, and her roles in foreign policy decisions. He specifically highlights the vice president's statements that she was the last person in the room before Biden made the decision on Afghanistan.

"She bragged that she would be the last person in the room, and she was. She was the last person in the room with Biden when the two of them decided to pull the troops out of Afghanistan," he said last week in a North Carolina rally. "She had the final vote. She had the final say, and she was all for it."

The relatives of some of the 13 American service members who were killed appeared on stage at the Republican National Convention last month, saying Biden had never publicly named their loved ones. The display was an implicit response to allegations that Trump doesn't respect veterans and had previously referred to slain World War II soldiers as suckers and losers — accusations denied by Trump.

Under Trump, the United States signed a peace agreement with the Taliban that was aimed at ending America's longest war and bringing U.S. troops home. Biden later pointed to that agreement as he sought to deflect blame for the Taliban overrunning Afghanistan, saying it bound him to withdraw troops and set the stage for the chaos that engulfed the country.

A Biden administration review of the withdrawal acknowledged that the evacuation of Americans and allies from Afghanistan should have started sooner, but attributed the delays to the Afghan government and military, and to U.S. military and intelligence community assessments.

The top two U.S. generals who oversaw the evacuation said the administration inadequately planned for the withdrawal. The nation's top-ranking military officer at the time, then-Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen.

Mark Milley, told lawmakers earlier this year he had urged Biden to keep a residual force of 2,500 forces to give backup. Instead, Biden decided to keep a much smaller force of 650 that would be limited to securing the U.S. embassy.

Alaska landslide kills 1 person and injures 3 in Ketchikan, authorities say

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — One person was killed and three were injured by a landslide that prompted a mandatory evacuation in the Alaska city of Ketchikan, authorities said.

Three people were transported to Ketchikan Medical Center following the landslide, which struck around 4 p.m. Sunday and damaged homes and infrastructure, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and City of Ketchikan said in a joint statement Sunday.

Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy declared an emergency for Ketchikan, while Borough Mayor Rodney Dial and city Mayor Dave Kiffer issued a separate emergency declaration.

"Friends, is with a heavy heart we relay that a landslide in the city has taken a life, caused several injuries, damaged homes and impacted our community," Dial said in the statement.

Kiffer said the loss of life was "heartbreaking, and my heart goes out to those who lost their homes."

"In my 65 years in Ketchikan, I have never seen a slide of this magnitude. With the slides we have seen across the region, there is clearly a region-wide issue that we need to try to understand with the support of our State geologist," Kiffer said.

Two of the victims were admitted to the hospital and one was treated and released. All other individuals have been accounted for, the statement said.

Multiple homes were impacted by the landslide and a mandatory evacuation was ordered for residents of Third Avenue and nearby streets, while a shelter was set up at Ketchikan High School, the borough and city said.

A potential secondary landslide area was identified to the south of the original slide location and crews were standing by, the statement said.

Power was restored to some affected areas by 8:15 p.m. Other areas will remain without power while the landslide is cleared and broken power poles are replaced, the borough and city said.

Various local and state agencies responded to the landslide in the southeastern Alaska city located about 297 miles (478 kilometers) south of Juneau, the state capital.

A Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Response Specialist and federal Department of Transportation personnel are expected to travel to Ketchikan on Monday, Dunleavy said.

"I have directed state agencies to make available all resources and staff for the response effort," Dunleavy said, noting the city was receiving assistance from the State Emergency Operations Center.

Protesters against judiciary overhaul plan urge Mexican president to 'respect democracy'

By MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Protestors took to the streets across Mexico on Sunday in the latest opposition to President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's proposed judicial overhaul and other moves by the governing party that critics say will weaken democratic checks and balances.

Demonstrators rallied in Mexico City as well as in Michoacan, Puebla, Leon, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Veracruz and other states to voice worries about changing the judiciary, particularly making judgeships subject to election. Many protesters are also upset by a proposal to do away with independent regulatory agencies.

In the capital, throngs of people, many of them federal court workers and judges on strike, ended their march outside the Supreme Court building in the heart of the city, waving flags reading "Judicial independence" and "Respect democracy."

"Right now, we're protesting the reforms, but it's not just the reforms," said lawyer Mauricio Espinosa.

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"It's all of these attacks against the judicial branch and other autonomous bodies. What it does is end up strengthening the executive, the next president."

Following big electoral victories in June by the president's Morena party and its allies, the government has pushed for sweeping changes to Mexico's judicial system, long at odds with López Obrador, a populist who has openly attacked judges and ignored court orders.

His proposal includes having judges elected to office, something analysts, judges and international observers fear would stack courts with politically biased judges with little experience.

That was the concern for Espinosa, who said judges "will have to raise money to campaign, find someone to have their backs. So their sentences will no longer be 100% independent."

The proposed changes would require approval by Mexico's Congress, where the governing coalition has the majority.

And electoral authorities on Friday allocated Morena and allied parties 73% of the seats in the lower house of Congress, though they won a significantly smaller 60% of the vote. That would give the governing bloc the two-thirds majority in Chamber of Deputies needed to push through constitutional changes with little or no compromise.

The coalition will be a few seats short of a two-thirds majority in the Senate, but it could feasibly win the needed votes from a smaller party.

While the new legislators don't take office until Sept. 1, a congressional committee on Friday already began pushing forward another contentious initiative — the elimination of seven autonomous bodies, including the National Institute of Transparency.

Morena argues Mexico's independent oversight and regulatory bodies are a waste of money. It says oversight responsibilities should be given to government departments instead, essentially allowing them to police themselves.

The collective moves by the president and his party have fueled concerns about undermining democratic institutions. But for many in the crowds, the overhaul of the judiciary represents the greatest threat.

Federal court employees and judges are on strike, the value of the peso has slumped and international financial firms have voiced concerns. At midweek, U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar warned that electing judges is a "risk" for Mexico's democracy and "threatens the historic commercial relationship" between the two countries.

López Obrador, who leaves office Sept. 30, and President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, a Morena member, rejected Salazar's comments. López Obrador called the comments "disrespectful of our national sovereignty," and Sheinbaum said Saturday that while there will always be dialogue between the U.S. and Mexico, "there are things that only correspond to Mexicans."

Its economy and infrastructure battered, can Lebanon afford a war with Israel?

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The ferocious exchange of fire by Hezbollah and the Israeli military is raising fears of a regional war beyond the tense border.

The risks for Lebanon are far greater than in 2006, when a monthlong war with Israel ended in a draw. Lebanon has struggled with years of political and economic crises that left it indebted, without a stable electricity supply, a proper banking system and with rampant poverty.

And with Hezbollah's military power significantly greater, there are concerns that a new war would be far more destructive and prolonged.

Can Lebanon afford any of it?

Planning for a 2006 war repeat — or worse

Since Hezbollah and Israel began firing rockets and drones at each other a day after the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza on Oct. 7, the conflict has been mostly limited to border towns. But with the threat of a wider war, Lebanon has scrambled to equip hospitals with supplies and prepare public schools

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to open up to people seeking shelter.

A rare Israeli airstrike in southern Beirut last month that killed a top Hezbollah commander set off a flurry of meetings between humanitarian organizations and the Lebanese government, said Laila Al Amine, who heads the Beirut office of international relief organization Mercy Corps. It's one of some 60 organizations helping the government with its relief efforts.

The government and U.N. agencies prepared a comprehensive response plan this month outlining two possible scenarios: a limited escalation that would resemble the 2006 war, with an estimated 250,000 people displaced, and a worst-case scenario of "uncontrolled conflict" that would displaced at least 1 million people.

The U.N.-drafted plan, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, projects a monthly cost of \$50 million in case of a limited escalation and \$100 million if an all-out war breaks out.

The Lebanese government said that funding for the emergency will come from creditors and humanitarian aid organizations. But the authorities have struggled to find money to care for 100,000 currently displaced and an estimated 60,000 people living in conflict areas, which is costing about \$24 million a month.

Environment Minister Nasser Yassin, who is spearheading relief operations, told reporters after an emergency government meeting Sunday that the morning attacks won't change the plan.

"It already presents scenarios of all the possibilities that could happen, among them is an expansion of the hostilities," said Yassin.

Indebted and cash-strapped Lebanon desperate for aid money

Decades of corruption and political paralysis have left Lebanon's banks barely functional, while electricity services are almost entirely in the hands of private diesel-run generator owners and fuel suppliers. Public service institutions rely on aid groups and international donors to function at a barebones level. Lebanese who once lived in relative comfort are receiving food and financial aid to survive.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic further battered the economy, and the Beirut port explosion flattened several neighborhoods in the heart of the capital. Lebanon's banks and the ruling elite have resisted painful reforms as a condition for an International Monetary Fund bailout while the infrastructure continued to wither and living conditions worsened.

Tourism, which officials had relied on to help rebuild the economy, has also taken a hit since the border conflict with Israel.

And unlike in 2006, Lebanon is hosting more than 1 million Syrian refugees who fled the conflict in their country. Health Minister Firas Abiad told the AP earlier this month that the Lebanese health system is ill-equipped to treat the additional population in the event of an all-out war, as international funding for Syrian refugees continues to decline.

In April, Yassin said the country had only half the money needed to respond to the conflict and ensuing humanitarian needs.

Lebanon faces tougher logistics

In 2006, Israel bombed the runways of Lebanon's only airport, putting it largely out of commission, and imposed an air and sea blockade. Its bombardment crippled critical infrastructure and flattened neighborhoods, with damage and losses worth \$3.1 billion, according to the World Bank.

But aid groups eventually were able to send supplies through the country's ports and at times through the airport using the remaining limited runway space. In their assessment of the war, the U.N. said that their relief efforts was not in response to a humanitarian crisis. "People did not die from poor sanitation, hunger or disease. They died from bombs and shells," U.N. OCHA said in a report a month after the war.

Many Lebanese were able to flee to neighboring Syria, where an uprising in 2011 plunged the country into a civil war. It's unclear how easy crossing the border would be this time, both for civilians and aid groups.

It is also unclear whether the Beirut port, still not fully rebuilt after the devastating blast in 2020, would have sufficient capacity in case of a wider war. Its damaged grain silos collapsed in 2022, and the country relies on minimal food storage due to the financial crisis.

"Lebanon apparently has stocks of food and fuel for two-three months, but what happens beyond this duration?" Al Amine said. "We only have one airport and we can't transport things through our land bor-

ders. It would be difficult to bring items into the country.”

An empowered Hezbollah

In 2006, Hezbollah reportedly had some 15,000 rockets in its arsenal, “but more recent unofficial estimates suggest this number has multiplied by almost 10 times,” said Dina Arakji, associate analyst at U.K.-based risk consultancy firm Control Risks.

The group has also “acquired more advanced weaponry, including precision missiles and variants of Iranian arms, as well as Chinese and Russian weaponry,” she said.

Hezbollah, which relies on a network of Iran-backed allied groups that could enter the conflict, has also substantially expanded its drone arsenal and capabilities, against which Israeli air defenses are less effective.

Lebanese officials and international diplomats hope that an elusive cease-fire agreement in Gaza will bring to calm in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah has said it will halt its attacks along the border if there is a cease-fire in Gaza.

How women of color with Christian and progressive values are keeping the faith — outside churches

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

Brandi Brown has yet to find a Black church near her Southern California home that feels right for her. So when she wants to talk about God, she relies on someone over a thousand miles (1,600 kilometers) away.

Like her, Ellen Lo Hoffman, who lives just outside Seattle and is Chinese American, is a progressive Christian. They have known each other through a Christian fellowship for six years. But for the past three years, Hoffman has supported Brown, a former minister, through monthly virtual chats.

“How Black women and how women of color experience God is different than how other people experience God,” said Brown, who is Black. “If I imagine myself, like, sitting on a bench trying to talk to God, Ellen is there too — to sit on the bench with me and point out observations and allow me to interpret things that I’m experiencing.”

For some Christian progressives, the lack of acknowledgement by their churches or ministries of the 2020 racial reckoning was the final push to go elsewhere. Some women of color have been disappointed and upset by evangelical Christian churches — both predominantly white and multiracial — whose leaders failed to openly decry racism or homophobia. Traditional pastors and other leaders often see congregants’ concerns through a patriarchal lens, leaving many feeling dismissed or overlooked. Still, others said they felt alienated by evangelical supporters of former President Donald Trump, with whom they disagree on politics.

Many are now finding solace and reaffirming their faith on their own terms through what they call “spiritual directors,” who are not necessarily priests, pastors, counselors or therapists, but can help others explore thoughts about God or broader concepts around a higher power.

With nearly 24 years of ministry leadership experience, Hoffman has been a self-employed spiritual director for the past seven years. The 2014 death of Michael Brown by a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer was a pivotal moment for her. She gathered staff members of color, as the associate regional director of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, in a discussion.

Hoffman came away vowing to be a better ally.

So when the murder of George Floyd and anti-Asian hate crimes soon dominated national conversation, Hoffman wanted to do more than march in protests and facilitate bystander training. She said she noticed that a lot of people of color needed “care in the midst of racial trauma.” So with her husband, she created Soul Reparations, a nonprofit providing free spiritual support to women.

“With the people that I was already meeting with, the impact of the racial trauma in 2020 was constantly coming up,” Hoffman said. “And then the people who were reaching out looking for a spiritual director was all women of color looking for spaces to process.”

The sessions are intimate one-on-one chats in person or over Zoom. It’s the client who drives the conver-

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sation. Often, there's no Bible talk or preaching from Hoffman. The discussions can be more philosophical.

"Simply allowing them to tell their story, giving them space to share their pain — is really healing for them and it restores a sense of identity," Hoffman said. Churches, religious leaders and officials don't get to "have the last word" on how women choose to express their Christianity.

She has since recruited seven other women of color to serve as directors. In total, they have helped roughly 70 women, including queer women, over the past three years. The demand hasn't waned. Recently, Hoffman had to close a 60-person waitlist.

That number doesn't surprise Jessica Chen, of Los Angeles, who virtually meets with Hoffman monthly.

"I do see this kind of movement of women of color who've left kind of the traditional church environment to create these spaces for other women of color," Chen said. "So, sort of reimagining what community can look like for women of color, I think that's very much needed."

Only in the last few years did Chen consider she might be limiting herself by only hearing male pastors who have a specific perspective that's been "universalized," she said. While her last church was diverse and multigenerational, she felt like she wasn't growing as a person.

"I want to hear from Black women, Asian women, Indigenous folks ... queer folks. What has your faith experience been and how can I learn from your experiences as well?" Chen said. "And I think that makes our understanding and relationship with God or spirituality a lot richer."

In 2020, Rebekah James Lovett, of Chicago, tried to broach the subject of social justice with her evangelical pastor. She stayed up till 4 a.m. crafting a written plea to him. The pastor met with her but she came away feeling like he was simply placating her.

Raised in Christianity by Indian immigrant parents, she said she came to a realization, "I can't ever go back" to white, male-dominated churches that don't consider other viewpoints.

She felt liberated — but also a bit rudderless. Then she heard Hoffman speak on a podcast, "Reclaiming My Theology."

"The idea of going to a woman who also is pastorally trained was interesting to me," Lovett said. "Christianity as we've been sold it is built on this sense of certainty that somebody has the answer and you just have to look to the Bible and it's all right there. Whereas for Ellen, there's this invitation to wonder. That was never there before."

After adding her name to the waitlist, Lovett became a regular client of Hoffman's in fall 2021.

Hoffman's rates for spiritual direction range from \$85-\$100 per session — or, in some cases, are free. Her paying clients, or "directees," don't seem to mind. They liken it to a regular check-up or therapy session.

"I do feel like it is a wellness practice as well as a spiritual practice. It's something that keeps me centered," Brown said. "I'm not trying to reach a goal. My only desire is to, deepen my personal relationship with God."

Many have left churches across the U.S. over the past few decades. Around 30% of Americans identify as "the nones" or people with no organized religion affiliation, according to a 2023 AP-NORC poll. They include atheists, agnostics and people who are "nothing in particular."

The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, who last year became the first woman and woman of color elected general minister and president of the socially liberal United Church of Christ, agrees churches are often patriarchal. They "continue to be exclusive and bring narratives of hatred, diminishing the human spirit and decrying people's humanity," she said. While UCC congregations have become more racially and ethnically diverse, Thompson wants to see that diversity reflected at the top as well.

"We continue to include the voices of all in the leadership — as best we can — paying attention to those whose presence and voices have been historically underrepresented in the life of the UCC," Thompson said in an email.

Spiritual direction has actually reinvigorated Brown to not give up on looking for a church.

"I'm excited about joining a church that talks about justice, that cares about LGBTQ+ people," Brown said. "I want to be a part of a community."

Member of British journalist team dies after Russian missile hits hotel in eastern Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A British safety adviser working with a team of Reuters journalists was killed when a Russian missile struck a hotel in the Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, the news agency confirmed.

Ryan Evans, 38, was staying at the Hotel Sapphire with colleagues in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region when it was hit by a Russian missile Saturday night.

Two other members of the six-person Reuters crew were hospitalized with injuries.

Local officials said the hotel was struck by an Iskander-M Russian ballistic missile, leaving the reporters with blast injuries, concussions and cuts on the body.

Associated Press reporters at the scene described the hotel as "rubble," with excavators being used to clear debris hours after the attack.

Besides the hotel, a nearby multistory building was also destroyed, Donetsk regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin said.

Ukraine's eastern Kharkiv region also came under Russian fire, resulting in multiple civilian injuries, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov wrote on the Telegram messaging app Sunday.

In Kharkiv's Chuhuiv region, five people were injured, including a 4-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl, after two houses were hit by a Russian strike.

In Kharkiv city, eight people were wounded when a two-story house was set on fire by a Russian attack.

In Russia, five people died in Ukrainian shelling in of the border region of Belgorod, officials said Sunday.

Twelve other people were wounded in the Russian village of Rakitone, 38 kilometers (23 miles) from the Ukrainian border, including a 16-year-old girl reported to be in critical condition, said regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov on Sunday. Another man also died in a separate drone attack on the border village of Solovevka, he wrote later on social media.

Israel says more polio vaccines are delivered to Gaza, where aid groups seek pause in fighting

By The Associated Press undefined

Polio vaccines for more than 1 million people have been delivered to Gaza, Israel's military said Sunday, after the first confirmed case of the disease in the territory in a quarter-century.

It was not immediately clear how, or how quickly, the more than 25,000 vials of vaccine would be distributed in Gaza, where ongoing fighting and unrest have challenged humanitarian efforts during more than 10 months of war.

Other polio cases are suspected across the largely devastated territory after the virus was detected in wastewater in six different locations in July.

Aid groups plan to vaccinate more than 600,000 children under age 10 and have called for an urgent pause in the war to increase vaccinations. The World Health Organization and the United Nations children's agency have said that, at a minimum, a seven-day pause is needed.

The U.N. has aimed to bring 1.6 million doses of polio vaccine into Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are crowded into tent camps lacking clean water or proper disposal of sewage and garbage. Families sometimes use wastewater to drink or clean dishes.

Polio is highly contagious and transmits mainly through contact with contaminated feces, water or food. It can cause difficulty breathing and irreversible paralysis, usually in the legs. It strikes young children in particular and is sometimes fatal.

The new statement by the Israeli military body responsible for Palestinian civilian affairs said five trucks with special refrigeration equipment for vaccine storage were brought into Gaza on Friday in coordination with the U.N. The vaccines arrived Sunday.

The statement said vaccinations will be conducted by international and local medical teams at "various

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locations" in Gaza, in coordination with Israel's military as part of "routine humanitarian pauses" to allow people to reach health centers.

The statement said more than 282,000 vials of the polio vaccine have been brought into Gaza since the war began in early October.

The territory's health care system has been devastated, and workers are overwhelmed. Only about a third of Gaza's 36 hospitals and 40% of its primary health care facilities are functioning, according to the U.N. But the WHO and UNICEF say their vaccination campaign will be carried out in every municipality in Gaza, with help from 2,700 workers.

Before the war, 99% of Gaza's population was vaccinated against polio. That figure is now 86%, according to the WHO.

Lake Mary, Florida, rallies to beat Taiwan 2-1 in 8 innings to win Little League World Series title

By AMANDA VOGT Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (AP) — Lathan Norton was sick and didn't play on Saturday at the Little League World Series. But on Sunday he scored the winning run in the championship.

Lathan raced home from second base on an overthrow at first as Lake Mary, Florida, rallied to beat Taiwan 2-1 in eight innings and claim the title.

"It was the greatest feeling ever," said Lathan, who had a fever of 102 on Saturday but recovered before the championship. "I still haven't had time to let it all sink in, but it feels like the most amazing thing ever."

Taiwan clung to a 1-0 lead from the first inning until Florida's last at-bat. The Southeast region representatives outhit Taiwan and had a runner on third in three separate innings, but couldn't get a run across.

Then, in the bottom of the sixth, Florida got runners on first and second and DeMarcos Miseses, who struck out in his previous two at-bats, delivered. Hitting the gap in shallow left, he gave Chase Anderson enough time to sprint home and tie the game.

In the eighth, Lathan was placed by rule on second base to start the inning. Hunter Alexander bunted and the throw to first went into the outfield. Florida players poured out of the dugout while the Taiwan players crumpled.

"I was just thinking, 'Stay fair, stay fair,'" Hunter said. "After that ball goes past me, I say, 'Let's go!'"

Taiwan drew two straight walks to start the game. After a bunt moved the runners over and a pop out, Hu Yen-Chun hit a ball toward third, which ricocheted off James Feliciano. Chiu Wei-Che scored easily. But it was Taiwan's only run.

This is the first championship in nine tries for Florida, which also came from behind in its 10-7 semifinal win over Texas on Saturday, scoring five runs in its final at-bat.

"We came here to do something. We came here to do a job, and today we accomplished that job," Florida manager Jonathan Anderson said. "We took a loss to Texas, we battled all the way back and here we are to talk about how we won this whole thing."

Taiwan was a dominant team at the LLWS from 1969, when it won its first championship, to 1996, when it claimed its 17th. But it had only made the title game once since, in 2009, a loss to California, before Sunday. Lee Cheng-Ta managed both that team and this year's club, Kuei-Shan Little League from Taoyuan, Taiwan. Last season, he led the same team — with a completely different roster — to a third-place finish.

Coaches for Taiwan, representing the Asia-Pacific region, declined to attend the postgame news conference.

Walz's exit from Minnesota National Guard left openings for critics to pounce on his military record

By RICHARD LARDNER, JONATHAN MATTISE, TRENTON DANIEL and STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — John Kolb, a retired Minnesota National Guard colonel, knew Tim Walz by reputation as an “excellent leader” who adroitly guided the enlisted troops in his field artillery battalion. But Kolb was stunned by what he saw when Walz left the military and entered politics.

Walz retired from the National Guard in 2005 to run for Congress just before his unit received an order to mobilize for the war in Iraq. Then during the campaign, Walz overstated the rank he held at the point he left the service.

“That is not the behavior I would expect out of a senior noncommissioned officer,” Kolb said in an interview.

Those two sides of Walz's service have been in the spotlight now that the Minnesota governor is the Democratic nominee for vice president. Supporters have lauded Walz's 24 years of service in the National Guard, where he rose through the enlisted ranks and received an honorable discharge.

“What I know about Tim Walz is he did his job diligently,” said retired Minnesota National Guard Brig. Gen. Jeff Bertrang. “He was in charge of troops under him, and he made sure they were taken care of.”

Republicans have seized on criticism by Guard veterans as a major line of attack on Walz and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris. Some of that criticism, like Kolb's, is measured. Others offer harsher appraisals.

It's far from clear whether Republicans can turn Walz's military record into a liability. His decades of service stand in contrast with former President Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee who received a series of deferments to avoid serving in Vietnam, including one attained with a physician's letter stating that Trump suffered from bone spurs in his feet.

Trump's running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, was a Marine Corps corporal, including six months as a military journalist in Iraq. After four years, he left the military for college and later a career in venture capital and as a best-selling author. Vance has led the criticism of Walz.

For many Democrats, the GOP salvos are an eerie reprise of the tactics used to sully their 2004 presidential candidate, John Kerry, by questioning his leadership as a swift boat commander in Vietnam, even though Kerry was a decorated combat veteran and his Republican opponent, President George W. Bush, did not fight in the war.

But the criticism stems not so much from Walz's service record but from how he has characterized his time in uniform and how he ended his tenure.

An Associated Press review of Walz's statements as a congressional candidate, congressman and governor shows that Walz has toggled between being precise and careless about key details.

Walz's supporters reject the criticism as politically motivated and say it denigrates the sacrifices he and other troops have made. The Harris campaign provided a letter signed by hundreds of veterans and military family members that said Vance's broadsides against Walz are not surprising given reports that Trump expressed disdain for those who served. Trump has denied the claim.

“After 24 years of military service, Governor Walz retired in 2005 and ran for Congress, where he was a tireless advocate for our men and women in uniform -- and as vice president of the United States he will continue to be a relentless champion for our veterans and military families,” the campaign said.

In a speech this past week at the Democratic National Convention, Walz said he “proudly wore our nation's uniform for 24 years.” He made no reference to his rank or the circumstances of his retirement, framing his service as part of a larger urge to “contribute” to the nation.

Distinction with a difference

“I'm a retired command sergeant major,” Walz said in 2006 as he campaigned to unseat the six-term Republican incumbent in Minnesota's 1st Congressional District.

But that statement was not true.

Walz served briefly as a command sergeant major, but that was not the rank he held at retirement. It

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is not clear whether Walz repeated the exact claim after he won the House race, but he did not object when colleagues put the honorific before his name during House debates to underscore his gravitas on military matters.

That distinction — serving as a command sergeant major, but not retiring in that position — may seem minor to civilians. But to those in uniform, it is not.

Rank is revered in the Army.

Known as an E-9 in military parlance, a command sergeant major is the pinnacle of achievement in the Army's enlisted corps. Command sergeants major are the backbone of a unit, acting as mentors and disciplinarians to the enlisted troops and trusted advisers to their commanding officers. Sergeants major often stay in their units for long stretches, providing a deep well of institutional knowledge. Commissioned officers typically move on to new posts every few years.

"There's a reason why there's so much angst about this among military members that maybe is lost on the rest of the population," Kolb said. "The rank of command sergeant major, that E-9 rank, is sacred. It's rare."

Walz was command sergeant major of the Minnesota Guard's 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery for less than a year, according to the Guard's personnel office. His rank was reduced for benefit purposes to master sergeant, a step below, when he left the Guard because Walz had not completed all the coursework necessary to hold the rank in retirement.

Facing questions about Walz's record, the Harris campaign replaced the phrase "a retired command sergeant major" from Walz's online biography with wording that says he served as one. But Walz's official biography on the Minnesota governor's website is still misleading. That biography places "retired from" a Guard battalion after the phrase "Command Sergeant Major Walz."

"He's a retired master sergeant," Kolb said. "And that's what he should say."

The campaign also acknowledged that Walz misspoke in a 2018 video posted on social media that recorded him saying "weapons of war that I carried in war." Vance seized on the comment to accuse Walz of lying about being in a combat zone when he never was. Walz and other Guard troops were sent to Italy in 2003 to provide base security in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the Pentagon's name for the war in Afghanistan.

Questions about Walz mischaracterizing his personal story have not been limited to military service. He is also facing scrutiny for how he has described his family's struggle with infertility. He has implied that he and his wife used in vitro fertilization to conceive, drawing a connection between their experience and efforts to limit the procedure. But they actually used intrauterine insemination treatments, a different process that has attracted less controversy.

Mia Ehrenberg, a campaign spokesperson, defended Walz's comments and denied that he had been misleading. She said Walz "talks how normal people talk" and was using "commonly understood shorthand for fertility treatments."

Leaving the Guard

By military standards, Walz's 24 years of service is substantial. He could have retired almost three years earlier. But it is the circumstances surrounding the retirement and how it overlapped with his political ambitions that have drawn scrutiny.

In January 2005, Walz attended a boot camp of sorts in Minnesota for people interested in careers in progressive politics. Walz, a teacher and avid pheasant hunter with blue-collar roots, stood out as a candidate who might win in the state's strongly Republican 1st Congressional District.

Minnesota Democratic party officials had already begun to take notice of Walz.

Mike Erlandson, the party's state chair at the time, recalled the enthusiasm one of his aides brimmed with after meeting with Walz in Mankato, a town about 70 miles southwest of Minneapolis where Walz taught high school geography.

"He came barging into my office at the state party, saying, 'Mike, this guy Tim is the real deal,' and was very excited about Tim Walz and the prospect of him running for Congress," Erlandson said.

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By February, Walz announced that he was considering a run for Congress. But thousands of miles away, the war in Iraq had entered its third year and hopes for a speedy U.S. withdrawal were evaporating. In mid-March, Walz's battalion was notified of a possible deployment to Iraq.

In a campaign news release, Walz said he would stay in the congressional race "whether I am in Minnesota or Iraq." He had a responsibility, the release said, to ready his battalion for war "but also to serve if called on."

Less than two months later, on May 16, 2005, Walz retired from the National Guard. His departure was not unusual. More than 730 senior enlisted soldiers with 24 years of service retired in 2005 when the U.S. was heavily engaged in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Defense Department statistics.

But Doug Julin, a Minnesota Guard command sergeant major senior to Walz, told CNN on Aug. 8 that Walz had assured him just weeks before that Walz would be going forward with the battalion. Julin, who did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press, said he was surprised to learn Walz left the Guard without first discussing the decision with him.

Kolb picked Tom Behrends, who has emerged as Walz's most biting critic, to replace Walz as the 1st Battalion's command sergeant major. The unit received an alert order for mobilization to Iraq in mid-July 2005 and a few months later headed to Mississippi for training. The unit shipped to Iraq in March 2006 where it would spend the next 16 months.

Later that year, Walz, unopposed in the Democratic primary, would pull off an upset, beating Republican Rep. Gil Gutknecht.

Questions about Walz's military record had percolated during that campaign. A letter to the editor in the Mankato Free Press newspaper from a person identified as Maj. Walter Gates said information about Walz's military career strongly suggested that Walz had fought in Iraq or Afghanistan. To which country did Walz "deploy downrange"? Gates asked.

Walz responded by saying the letter appeared to be an attempt to "slander my good name." Walz wrote, incorrectly, that he retired as a command sergeant major, but accurately specified that he served on three NATO training missions and in Italy. Walz was equally clear about his wartime service in a 2009 interview with the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project.

Gates did not respond to multiple messages from the AP so it is unclear what information he was referring to.

Walz, in the early 2005 campaign news release, did not mention Italy when he said he deployed for eight months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, phrasing that could imply he served in Afghanistan. A 2006 congressional campaign ad described Walz as a soldier who had served for two decades and was "ready when they attacked."

Joe Eustice, who took over for Behrends as the 1st Battalion's top enlisted soldier, said Walz was entitled to leave the Guard when he did.

"When you've given 24 years of your life, you get to decide, and your reasoning can be whatever you want it to be," said Eustice, who retired in 2014.

But he is troubled by Walz's statements after he left the Guard.

"He should answer to the fact that he said he carried a weapon in war and explain why he's been saying he's a retired sergeant major," Eustice said. "Those two things are not true, and he should know better."

A longtime foe

Almost two decades have passed since Behrends hurriedly took Walz's place as the 1st Battalion's senior enlisted soldier. Yet time has not eased Behrends' anger at his predecessor. As Walz's political career flourished, Kolb advised Behrends to let go of the resentment.

But Behrends could not. Not when he read and heard Walz inaccurately referred to as a retired command sergeant major – and Walz failed to set the record straight. After yet another local newspaper elevated Walz's retirement rank, Behrends wrote to the then-congressman.

"It saddens me that after your long career in the National Guard, that you did not fulfill the conditions of your promotion to command sergeant major," he told Walz. "I would hope that you haven't been using the rank for political gain, but that is how it appears."

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Behrends said he did not get a reply. When Walz ran for governor two years later, Behrends went public with much stronger criticism.

A self-described "down-home country boy," Behrends did not like Walz personally. They are at opposite ends of the political spectrum. Behrends is a conservative who donated \$250 to Trump's 2020 presidential campaign and supported Walz's Republican opponents in Minnesota.

While they were both still in uniform, Behrends grew weary of what he said were Walz's frequent monologues that at times veered into hot-button issues like abortion.

"It was like listening to a long-winded preacher," he said.

Shortly before votes were cast in Minnesota's gubernatorial election, Behrends hung a large yellow banner from a grain bin on his farm that read, "Walz Is A Traitor." Behrends and a fellow retired command sergeant major, Paul Herr, paid to publish a letter in a Minnesota newspaper claiming that Walz had for years "embellished and selectively omitted facts and circumstances" about his military career.

In an interview, Behrends said his personal distaste for Walz and his liberal politics played no role in his decision to openly denigrate the vice presidential nominee. Behrends said he would have done the same to a friend if he believed that friend had stepped out of line.

Trump would veto legislation establishing a federal abortion ban, Vance says

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Republican vice presidential candidate JD Vance says Donald Trump would not support a national abortion ban if elected president and would veto such legislation if it landed on his desk.

"I can absolutely commit that," Vance said when asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" whether he could commit to Trump not imposing such a ban. "Donald Trump's view is that we want the individual states and their individual cultures and their unique political sensibilities to make these decisions because we don't want to have a nonstop federal conflict over this issue."

The Ohio senator also insisted that Trump, the former president who is the Republican nominee this year, would veto such legislation if it were passed by Congress.

"I mean, if you're not supporting it as the president of the United States, you fundamentally have to veto it," he said in an interview that aired Sunday.

Vance's comments come after Democrats spent night after night of their national convention in Chicago last week assailing Trump for his role in appointing the Supreme Court Justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to abortion in the United States and paving the way for bans and restrictions across Republican-led states.

But efforts to try to neutralize an issue that Democrats hope will galvanize voters this fall also risk alienating parts of Trump's base opposed to abortion rights.

"God have mercy on this nation if this is now the position of what was the Pro-Life Party," wrote Family Research Council president Tony Perkins in a post Sunday linking to a story on Vance's comments.

While Trump has repeatedly boasted about his role in overturning *Roe*, he has, in recent days, pushed back on Democrats' warnings that he will go even further to restrict access if he wins a second term.

"My Administration will be great for women and their reproductive rights," he wrote Friday on his Truth Social platform, appropriating language used by abortion rights activists and the left.

His comments drew a wave of criticism from anti-abortion advocates, including the editor of the conservative *National Review*, which published an article titled "Trump's Abandonment of Pro-Lifers Is Complete."

Trump repeated his claim hours later at an event in Las Vegas.

"I'm very strong on women's reproductive rights. The IVF (in vitro fertilization), very strong. I mean, we're leaders in it. And I think people are seeing that," he told reporters.

Democrats have responded to Trump with deep skepticism.

"American women are not stupid and we are not going to trust the futures of our daughters and granddaughters to two men who have openly bragged about blocking access to abortion for women all across

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this country," said Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren told NBC.

Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., brushed off a question asking how Trump would be "great" on reproductive rights.

"You need to ask him about that. What I would say is that President Trump was a very good pro-life president," he told CNN's "State of the Union."

"The pro-life community," Graham said, "is organized around the well-being of the child, giving the mother options other than an abortion." Graham said "that movement will continue after he's gone."

Trump has often struggled to talk about abortion. Before he entered politics, he had described himself as "very pro-choice." Earlier this year, he grappled with his stance on a federal abortion ban, suggesting at one point that he would support one at around 15 weeks of pregnancy, with exceptions in cases of rape, incest and when the life of the mother is at risk. He then settled on his current position: That restrictions should be left to individual states.

Trump has not said how he plans to vote on an upcoming ballot measure on Florida's six-week ban.

In an interview with CBS News earlier in the week, Trump said he had "no regrets" about his role in overturning *Roe v. Wade*. But after months of confusing statements, he said he would not use a federal law known as the Comstock Act to try to ban the distribution of medication that is used as an alternative to surgical abortions. That is something that some of his allies have urged and that Vance supported in the past.

"We will be discussing specifics of it, but generally speaking, no," he said. "I would not do that."

"It's going to be available and it is now. And as I know it, the Supreme Court has said: 'Keep it going the way it is.' I will enforce and agree with the Supreme Court, but basically they've said, keep it the way it is now," he said.

Abortion has been a powerful motivator for Democrats since the *Roe* decision in the summer of 2022, and the party expects it to continue to play a key role this year.

On stage at the Democratic convention, women told harrowing personal stories of having to carry unviable pregnancies to term and being denied miscarriage care, putting their future fertility at risk.

"This is what's happening in our country because of Donald Trump. And understand, he is not done," Vice President Kamala Harris said in her speech accepting her party's nomination.

Trump, who had been responding to the speech in real time, falsely insisted that, "Everybody, Democrats, Republicans, Liberals, and Conservatives, wanted *Roe v. Wade* TERMINATED, and brought back to the States."

"I do not limit access to birth control or I.V.F. - THAT IS A LIE, these are all false stories that she's making up," he wrote. "I TRUST WOMEN, ALSO, AND I WILL KEEP WOMEN SAFE!"

Behind the rhetoric, a presidential campaign is a competition about how to tell the American story

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic nomination "on behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on Earth." America, Barack Obama thundered, "is ready for a better story." JD Vance insisted that the Biden administration "is not the end of our story," and Donald Trump called on fellow Republicans to "write our own thrilling chapter of the American story."

"This week," comedian and former Obama administration speechwriter Jon Lovett said Thursday on NBC, "has been about a story."

In the discourse of American politics, this kind of talk from both sides is unsurprising — fitting, even. Because in the campaign season of 2024, just as in the fabric of American culture at large, the notion of "story" is everywhere.

This year's political conventions were, like so many of their kind, curated collections of elaborate stories carefully spun to accomplish one goal — getting elected. But lurking behind them was a pitched, high-stakes battle over how to frame the biggest story of all — the one about America that, as Harris put it,

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should be “the next great chapter in the most extraordinary story ever told.”

The American story — an unlikely one, filled with twists that sometimes feel, as so many enjoy saying, “just like a movie” — sits at the nucleus of American culture for a unique reason.

Americans live in one of the only societies that was built not upon hundreds of years of common culture but upon stories themselves — “the shining city upon the hill,” “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” “all men are created equal.” Even memorable ad campaigns — “Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet” — are part of this. In some ways, the United States — not coincidentally, the place where the frontier myth, Hollywood and Madison Avenue were all born — willed itself into existence and significance by iterating and reiterating its story as it went.

The campaigns understand that. So they are putting forward to voters two varying — starkly opposite, some might say — versions of the American story.

How the two parties are using stories

From the Republicans comes one flavor of story: an insistence that to “make America great again” in the future we must fight to reinvigorate traditional values and reclaim the moral fiber and stoutheartedness of generations past. In his convention speech last month, Trump invoked three separate conflicts — the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and World War II — in summoning American history’s glories.

To reinforce its vision, the GOP deployed the likes of musician Kid Rock, celebrity wrestler Hulk Hogan and Lee Greenwood singing “God Bless the USA.” Trump genuflected to the firefighting gear of Corey Comperatore, who had been killed in an assassination attempt on the candidate days earlier. Vance spoke of “villains” and offered up the Appalachian coming-of-age story he told in “Hillbilly Elegy.”

The Republicans, as they often do, leaned into military storylines, bringing forth families of slain servicemen to critique President Joe Biden’s “weak” leadership. And they made all efforts to manage their constituencies. Vance’s wife, Usha, who is of Indian descent, lauded him as “a meat-and-potatoes kind of guy” — a classic American trope — while underscoring that he respected her vegetarian diet and had learned how to cook Indian food for her mother.

“What could I say that hasn’t already been said before?” she said, introducing Vance. “After all, the man was already the subject of a Ron Howard movie.”

And the Democrats? Their convention last week focused on a new and different future full of “joy” and free of what Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg called “Trump’s politics of darkness.” It was an implied “Star Wars” metaphor if there ever was one.

It was hard to miss that the Democrats were not only coalescing around the multiracial, multicultural nation that Harris personifies but at the same time methodically trying to reclaim the plainspoken slivers of the American story that have rested in Republican hands in recent years.

The flag was everywhere, as was the notion of freedom. Tim Walz entered to the tune of John Mellencamp’s “Small Town,” an ode to the vision of America that Republicans usually trumpet. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota expounded upon the regular-guy traits that Walz embodies — someone who can change a car light, a hunter, a “dad in plaid.”

The former geography teacher’s football-coach history was mined as well, with beefy guys in Mankato West Scarlets jerseys fanning out across the stage to the marching-band strains of “The Halls of Montezuma.” They even enlisted a former GOP member of Congress to reinforce all the imagery by saying the quiet part loud.

“I want to let my fellow Republicans in on the secret: The Democrats are as patriotic as us,” said Adam Kinzinger, an Illinois Republican critical of Trump.

Bringing it all together

Watching the videos and testimonials at both conventions, one storytelling technique stood tall: what journalists call “character-driven” tales. Whether it’s advocating for abortion rights or warning about mass illegal immigration or channeling anger about inflation, “regular” Americans became the narrative building blocks for national concerns.

Historian Heather Cox Richardson put it this way about the DNC in her Substack, “Letters from an American,” this past week: “The many stories in which ordinary Americans rise from adversity through

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hard work, decency, and service to others implicitly conflates those individual struggles with the struggles of the United States itself.”

In the past generation, the tools of storytelling have become more democratic. We are all publishers now — on X, on TikTok, on Instagram, on Truth Social. And we are all storytellers, telling mini versions of the American story in whatever ways we wish. Perspectives that have been long silenced and suppressed are making their way into the light.

Putting aside questions of truth and misinformation for a moment, how can a unifying American story be summoned when hundreds of millions of people are now able to tell it differently and from their own vantage points? Democratization is beneficial, but it can also be chaotic and hard to understand.

“A people who cannot stand together cannot stand at all,” poet Amanda Gorman said in her remarks at the DNC. But with so many stories to sort through, is unity more difficult than ever? Is there even a single, unifying “American story” at all? Should there be?

In the end, that’s why this election is about storytelling more than ever. Because the loudest, most persuasive tale — told slickly with the industrial-strength communications tools of the 21st century — will likely win the day.

In the meantime, the attempts to commandeer and amplify versions of that story will continue to Election Day and beyond. As long as there is an American nation, there will be millions of people trying to tell us what it means — desperately, angrily, optimistically, compellingly. Stories are a powerful weapon, and a potent metaphor as well. As Walz said about leaving Trump and Vance behind: “I’m ready to turn the page.”

Double Duty: For Danny Jansen, playing for both teams in same game is chance at baseball history

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Boston Red Sox catcher Danny Jansen is enjoying his odd slice of baseball history as he prepares to become the first major league player to appear in the same game for both teams.

Jansen was in the lineup for the Toronto Blue Jays when they faced Boston on June 26, a game that was suspended because of rain and scheduled to be made up on Monday. In the meantime, he was traded to Boston, and Red Sox manager Alex Cora has said he will put Jansen in the lineup when the game resumes.

“Baseball has been around for so long, there’s so many things that’s happened in the game. So I was surprised when I found out I was the first,” Jansen said in the Red Sox clubhouse this weekend. “Any time you can be a part of this great game’s history, it’s pretty unique.”

A right-handed catcher who has spent his career as a backup, Jansen has never gotten enough plate appearances to even qualify for a batting title (though his .222 lifetime average is surely the bigger obstacle). Since the Red Sox acquired him on July 27 for three minor leaguers, he is batting .231 with two homers and five RBIs in 14 games.

But he could be on his way to the Hall of Fame — if only as a footnote — with an authenticator expected to be on hand on Monday to grab an artifact for the museum from the historic game.

“It’s a bit strange,” Jansen said. “But it’s one of those oddities of the game and it’s pretty cool. I’m still surprised that it hasn’t happened, but it’s a cool thing.”

Jansen was at the plate with a runner on first and one strike in the count when the umpires called out the tarps for the finale of Boston’s series against the Blue Jays in June. The game will be resumed at that point as part of a day-night doubleheader on Monday afternoon, Toronto’s first trip back to Fenway Park since then.

Jansen likely will be behind the plate at catcher when the Blue Jays send a pinch hitter to finish off his at-bat.

“It’s pretty fitting that Jano will be the first guy to do that. He’s that kind of guy. Weird stuff happens to him,” Toronto manager John Schneider said after Sunday’s game against the Angels.

“We talked with MLB yesterday; I’m sure Boston did, too,” Schneider said, noting that there are five players from the June 26 lineup that aren’t on the current active roster. “The biggest anxiety is with (as-

sociate manager DeMarlo Hale) now, because of typing up the lineup and how that's going to work. He's going to bring 14 markers and some Wite-Out."

The Red Sox have three players in the original lineup who aren't with the team, including Reese McGuire, who started the game at catcher; he was sent to Triple-A Worcester to make room for Jansen. But one thing is certain, because Cora already has said he will get Jansen in the first game of the doubleheader.

"He will play Game 1, by the way, for all the people who have been looking at history," the Red Sox manager said Friday. "You know what? Yeah, he's catching. Let's make history."

French authorities arrest Telegram CEO Pavel Durov at a Paris airport, French media report

By BARBARA SURK Associated Press

NICE, France (AP) — The founder and CEO of the messaging service Telegram was detained at a Paris airport on an arrest warrant alleging his platform has been used for money laundering, drug trafficking and other offenses, French media reported Sunday.

Pavel Durov, a dual citizen of France and Russia, was taken into custody at Paris-Le Bourget Airport on Saturday evening after landing in France from Azerbaijan, according to broadcasters LCI and TF1.

Investigators from the National Anti-Fraud Office, attached to the French customs department, notified Durov, 39, that he was being placed in police custody, the broadcasters said.

Durov's representatives couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

French prosecutors declined to comment on Durov's arrest when contacted by The Associated Press on Sunday, in line with regulations during an ongoing investigation.

French media reported that the warrant for Durov was issued by France at the request of the special unit at the country's interior ministry in charge of investigating crimes against minors. Those include online sexual exploitation, such as possession and distribution of child sexual abuse content and grooming for sexual purposes.

Telegram was founded by Durov and his brother in the wake of the Russian government's crackdown after mass pro-democracy protests that rocked Moscow at the end of 2011 and 2012.

The demonstrations prompted Russian authorities to clamp down on the digital space, adopting regulations that forced internet providers to block websites and cellphone operators to store call records and messages that could be shared with security services.

In the increasingly repressive environment, Telegram and its pro-privacy rhetoric offered a convenient way for Russians to communicate and share news. In 2018, Russian media watchdog Roskomnadzor moved to block Telegram over its refusal to hand over encryption keys, but ultimately failed to fully restrict access to the app.

Telegram continued to be widely used — including by government institutions — and the ban was dropped two years later. In March 2024, Roskomnadzor said that Telegram was working with the Russian government to a certain extent and had removed more than 256,000 posts with prohibited content at Roskomnadzor's request.

Telegram also continues to be a popular source of news in Ukraine, where both media outlets and officials use it to share information on the war, and deliver missile and air raid alerts.

In a statement posted on its platform, Telegram said it abides by EU laws including the digital services act, and its moderation is "within industry standards and constantly improving."

Durov, the company added, "has nothing to hide and travels frequently in Europe."

"It is absurd to claim that a platform or its owner are responsible for abuse of that platform," Telegram's post said. "Almost a billion users globally use Telegram as means of communication and as a source of vital information. We're awaiting a prompt resolution of this situation. Telegram is with you all."

A French judicial official suggested that Durov could appear before a judge later Sunday to determine whether he will remain in custody. The official wasn't authorized to be named publicly during an ongoing

investigation.

"If the person concerned is to be brought before a judge today, it is only in the context of the possible extension of his police custody measure — a decision that must be taken and notified by an investigating judge," the official said.

Western governments have often criticized Telegram for lack of content moderating on the messaging service, which experts say opens up the messaging platform for potential use in money laundering, drug trafficking and allowing the sharing of content linked to sexual exploitation of minors.

Compared to other messaging platforms, Telegram is "less secure (and) more lax in terms of policy and detection of illegal content," said David Thiel, a Stanford University researcher, who has investigated the use of online platforms for child exploitation, at its Internet Observatory.

In addition, Telegram "appears basically unresponsive to law enforcement," Thiel said, adding that messaging service WhatsApp "submitted over 1.3 million CyberTipline reports in 2023 (and) Telegram submits none."

In 2022, Germany issued fines of 5.125 million euros (\$5 million) against the operators of Telegram for failing to comply with German law. The Federal Office of Justice said that Telegram FZ-LLC hasn't established a lawful way for reporting illegal content or named an entity in Germany to receive official communication.

Both are required under German laws that regulate large online platforms.

Last year, Brazil temporarily suspended Telegram over its failure to surrender data on neo-Nazi activity related to a police inquiry into school shootings in November.

Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of social media site X who's called himself a "free speech absolutist" in the past, posted "#freePavel" in support of Durov following the arrest.

Russian government officials expressed outrage at Durov's arrest, with some highlighting what they said was the West's double standard on freedom of speech.

"In 2018, a group of 26 NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and others, condemned the Russian court's decision to block Telegram," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

"Do you think this time they'll appeal to Paris and demand Durov's release?" Zakharova said in a post on her personal Telegram account.

Officials at the Russian Embassy in Paris had requested access to Durov, Zakharova told Russian state news outlet RIA Novosti, but she added that French authorities view Durov's French citizenship as his primary one.

In a statement to the AP earlier this month, Telegram said that it actively combats misuse of its platform.

"Moderators use a combination of proactive monitoring and user reports in order to remove content that breaches Telegram's terms of service. Each day, millions of pieces of harmful content are removed," the company said.

The suspect in the Germany attack was motivated by Islamic State group ideology, prosecutors say

By DANIEL NIEMANN and DAVID MCHUGH Associated Press

SOLINGEN, Germany (AP) — A Syrian man on Sunday was ordered held on suspicion of murder and membership in a terrorist organization in connection with the Solingen knife attack that left three dead and eight wounded at a festival marking the city's 650th anniversary.

A judge at the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe ordered 26-year-old Issa Al H. held pending further investigation and a possible indictment after federal prosecutors said that he shared the radical ideology of the Islamic State extremist group — and was acting on those beliefs when he stabbed his victims repeatedly from behind in the head and upper body.

The ruling came after the suspect turned himself in, saying that he was responsible for the attack, police said. He is also suspected of attempted murder and serious bodily injury, prosecutors said. His last name wasn't released in line with German privacy rules.

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The suspect, wearing handcuffs and leg shackles, was taken Sunday from the police station in Solingen for the initial court appearance.

He "shares the ideology of the foreign terrorist organization Islamic State" and on the basis of his "radical Islamic convictions" decided "to kill the largest possible number of those he considers unbelievers" at the festival, the Office of the Federal Prosecutor said in a statement.

The suspect is a Syrian citizen who had applied for asylum in Germany, police confirmed to The Associated Press. The dpa news agency reported, without citing a specific source, that his asylum claim had been denied and that he was to have been deported last year.

On Saturday, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack, without providing evidence. IS said on its news site that the attacker targeted Christians, and that the perpetrator carried out the assaults Friday night "to avenge Muslims in Palestine and everywhere."

The attack comes amid debate over immigration before regional elections on Sept. 1 in Germany's Saxony and Thuringia regions where anti-immigration parties such as the populist Alternative for Germany are expected to do well. In June, Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed that the country would start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again after a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant left one police officer dead and four other people injured.

Friday's attack plunged the city of Solingen into shock and grief. A city of about 160,000 residents near the bigger cities of Cologne and Duesseldorf, Solingen was holding a "Festival of Diversity" to celebrate its anniversary.

People alerted police shortly after 9:30 p.m. local time Friday that a man had assaulted several people with a knife on the city's central square, the Fronhof. The three people killed were two men, ages 56 and 67, and a 56-year-old woman, authorities said. Police said that the attacker appeared to have deliberately aimed for his victims' throats.

The festival, which was due to have run through Sunday, was canceled as police looked for clues in the cordoned-off square. Instead, residents gathered to mourn the dead and injured, placing flowers and notes near the scene of the attack.

"Warum?" — meaning "why" — asked one sign placed amid candles and teddy bears.

Among those asking themselves the question was 62-year-old Cord Boettcher, a merchant from Solingen. "Why does something like this have to happen? It's incomprehensible and it hurts," Boettcher said.

IS declared its caliphate in large parts of Iraq and Syria about a decade ago, but now holds no control over any land and has lost many prominent leaders. The group is mostly out of global news headlines.

Still, it continues to recruit members and claim responsibility for deadly attacks around the world, including lethal operations in Iran and Russia earlier this year that killed dozens of people. Its sleeper cells in Syria and Iraq still carry out attacks on government forces in both countries as well as U.S.-backed Syrian fighters.

US Open 2024: Even the players aren't sure who will be at their best on New York's hard courts

By HOWARD FENDRICH and BRIAN MAHONEY AP Sports Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Tennis fans unable to decide who has the best shot at doing well at the U.S. Open have company as the year's last Grand Slam tournament is set to begin Monday. Even the players themselves aren't sure what to expect.

"We've seen people, all the time, surprise us every single week, every single tournament, every Slam. Sometimes there's no rhyme or reason why someone maybe does well," said Jessica Pegula, a six-time major quarterfinalist. "Sometimes it doesn't make any sense."

There is the usual uncertainty that comes in New York, thanks to the vagaries of injuries and the grind of a long season. One additional factor this time could be all of the surface-switching: Tennis at the Summer Olympics was played on courts at Roland Garros, also the French Open site. So players went from clay in Paris to grass at Wimbledon, then back to clay, before shifting to hard courts before the U.S. Open.

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"It's a strange year," British player Dan Evans said. "That's for sure."

Pegula, for one, handled that last transition just fine, going from the Olympics to a title at Toronto and a runner-up showing at Cincinnati. Her doubles partner in Paris, 2023 U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, played in three Olympics events, exiting early in each, then lost her second match in Toronto and her first in Cincinnati.

"Changing surfaces, it's tough, not just on your body, but mentally. ... But it's part of the job, and we'll adjust," said Tommy Paul, who won a bronze medal in doubles with Taylor Fritz for the U.S. in Paris and had a 1-2 record in Montreal and Cincinnati. "Maybe there's one player or two players that are burned out from the (Olympic) experience. But other than that, for the most part, everyone is pretty adjusted by now."

The woman who defeated Pegula in the Cincinnati final, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka, skipped the trip back to France for the 2024 Games but said she isn't all that convinced that having — or not having — normal preparation necessarily will dictate results the next two weeks.

"Everyone who came here, they think they are ready to win. I think it's not about who is ready. You can be ready 'better' than the rest of the group," said Sabalenka, a two-time champion at the Australian Open and runner-up to Gauff at last year's U.S. Open, "but at the end of the day, it's all about how hard are you ready to fight for it — especially on those days when you don't feel your best."

Another player not at the Olympics, Frances Tiafoe, reached the Cincinnati Open title match before losing to No. 1 Jannik Sinner, whose two positive steroids tests in March came to light less than a week ago.

Tiafoe, a 26-year-old from Maryland, finds the home crowds and high attention of the U.S. Open bring out his best, so he wanted to concentrate on getting ready for the site of his first Grand Slam semifinal in 2022.

"It's open for a lot of guys this year, for sure. ... It's always different in a Slam. The lights are a little brighter," he said. "We'll see what ends up happening. Personally, I just like where I'm at."

Then there are those such as defending U.S. Open champion Novak Djokovic, who won a gold medal at the Paris Games but didn't play a single hard-court tuneup event, or Carlos Alcaraz, the silver medalist whose only recent match on a hard court was a loss in Cincinnati.

"Obviously, I (would) have loved to have more matches (under) my belt on hard courts before the U.S. Open," said Alcaraz, who twisted his right ankle Saturday but seemed fine when he practiced Sunday. "But, I mean, it doesn't affect me at all."

Perhaps of more interest to someone such as Gauff or Djokovic is this statistic: It's been at least a decade since any woman or man won consecutive championships in Flushing Meadows.

Some figure predictions are hard to come by, generally.

"At the moment ... any given Sunday, anybody can win," said Bianca Andreescu, who beat Serena Williams to win the 2019 U.S. Open. "That's honestly the beauty of it, because it does bring that variety."

Recent Grand Slam results might not offer any clues, even if the players who won this season's trophies at the Australian Open (Sabalenka and Sinner), French Open (No. 1 Iga Swiatek and Alcaraz) and Wimbledon (Barbora Krejckova and Alcaraz) hope they do, of course.

"I don't really know where my level is, to be honest," said the eighth-seeded Krejckova, whose only singles matches since her triumph at the All England Club came at the Olympics.

The bottom line, it seems, is that it's anyone's guess what will unfold in New York.

"This (tournament) is a little bit of an anomaly," said Katie Boulter, who competed at the Summer Games for Britain. "You never know what can happen."

Kroger and Albertsons hope to merge but must face a skeptical US government in court first

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

The largest proposed grocery store merger in U.S. history is going to court.

On one side are supermarket chains Kroger and Albertsons, which say their planned merger will help them compete against rivals like Costco. On the other side are antitrust regulators from the Federal Trade

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Commission, who say the merger would eliminate competition and raise grocery prices in a time of already high food price inflation.

Starting Monday, a federal district court judge in Portland, Oregon, will consider both sides and decide whether to grant the FTC's request for a preliminary injunction. An injunction would delay the merger while the FTC conducts an in-house case against the deal before an administrative law judge.

Kroger, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, operates 2,800 stores in 35 states, including brands like Ralphs, Smith's and Harris Teeter. Albertsons, based in Boise, Idaho, operates 2,273 stores in 34 states, including brands like Safeway, Jewel Osco and Shaw's. Together, the companies employ around 710,000 people.

Here's what to know ahead of the hearing, which is expected to last until Sept. 13.

Why do Kroger and Albertsons want to merge?

Kroger and Albertsons – two of the largest grocery chains in the U.S. – announced in October 2022 that they planned to merge. The companies say the \$24.6 billion deal would hold down prices by giving them more leverage with suppliers and allowing them to combine their store brands. They say a merger also would help them compete with big rivals like Walmart, which now controls around 22% of U.S. grocery sales. Combined, Kroger and Albertsons would control around 13%.

Why does the FTC want to block the merger?

Antitrust regulators say the proposed merger would eliminate competition, leading to higher prices, poorer quality and lower wages and benefits for workers. In February, the FTC issued a complaint seeking to block the merger before an administrative judge at the FTC. At the same time, the FTC filed the lawsuit in federal court in Oregon seeking the preliminary injunction. The attorneys general of Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Wyoming all joined the federal lawsuit.

Will Kroger and Albertsons close some stores if they merge?

They say no. If the merger is approved, Kroger and Albertsons have agreed to sell 579 stores in places where their stores overlap. The buyer would be C&S Wholesale Grocers, a New Hampshire-based supplier to independent supermarkets that also owns the Grand Union and Piggly Wiggly store brands. Kroger and Albertsons initially planned to divest 413 stores, but the FTC said that plan would not have allowed C&S to be a robust competitor. Kroger and Albertsons agreed to divest additional stores in April. Washington has the most stores that would be divested, with 124, followed by Colorado with 91 and California with 63.

What happens if the Oregon judge issues a preliminary injunction?

If the preliminary injunction is approved, Kroger and Albertsons would likely appeal to a higher court, said Mike Keeley, a partner and antitrust chair at Axinn, Veltrop & Harkrider, a Washington law firm. The case could then move through the FTC's own judicial system, but since that can take a year or more, companies often abandon a deal before going through the process, Keeley said. Kroger sued the FTC this month, alleging the agency's internal proceedings are unconstitutional and saying it wants the merger's merits decided in federal court. In that case, filed in Ohio, Kroger cited a recent Supreme Court ruling that limited the power of the Securities and Exchange Commission to try some civil fraud complaints within the agency instead of in court.

What happens if the Oregon judge agrees with Kroger and Albertsons?

The FTC would likely appeal the ruling, but Keeley said it's rare for an appeals court to reverse a lower court's ruling on a merger, so the FTC might decide to drop the challenge. The case could still proceed through the FTC's administrative process. It's unclear what impact the presidential election could have on the case. The Biden administration has been particularly aggressive in challenging mergers that it considered anti-competitive, but lawmakers from both parties expressed skepticism about the merger in a 2022 hearing.

If the federal court lets the merger proceed, could state courts still prevent it?

Colorado and Washington have separately sued to block the merger in state courts. That's an unusual situation; normally states are co-plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit. But both states believe they have a lot at stake. Colorado has more than 200 Kroger and Albertsons stores, while Washington has more than 300.

Keeley said both states could seek their own injunctions from a different court if the FTC loses, but it would be surprising for another court to block the merger if Kroger and Albertsons are successful in the federal case.

Schools are competing with cell phones. Here's how they think they could win

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

Isabella Pires first noticed what she calls the "gradual apathy pandemic" in eighth grade. Only a handful of classmates registered for service projects she helped organize at her Massachusetts school. Even fewer actually showed up.

When she got to high school last fall, Isabella found the problem was even worse: a lackluster Spirit Week and classes where students seldom spoke.

In some ways, it's as if students "just care less and less about what people think, but also somehow care more," said Isabella, 14. Some teens, she said, no longer care about appearing disengaged, while others are so afraid of ridicule they keep to themselves. She blames social media and the lingering isolation of the post-COVID era.

Educators say their tried and true lesson plans are no longer enough to keep students engaged at a time of struggling mental health, shortened attention spans, reduced attendance and worsening academic performance. At the crux of these challenges? Addiction to cell phones. Now, adults are trying new strategies to reverse the malaise.

Cell phone bans are gaining traction, but many say they're not enough. They argue for alternative stimulation: steering students outdoors or toward extracurriculars to fill time they might otherwise spend alone online. And students need outlets, they say, to speak about taboo topics without fear of being "canceled" on social media.

"To get students engaged now, you have to be very, very creative," said Wilbur Higgins, lead English teacher at Dartmouth High School, where Isabella will be a sophomore this fall.

Lock them up

Cell phone pouches, lockers and bins have grown in popularity to help enforce device bans.

John Nguyen, a chemistry teacher in California, invented a pouch system because he was so distressed by bullying and fights on phones during class, often without adults interfering. Many teachers are afraid to confront students using phones during lessons, Nguyen said, and others have given up trying to stop it.

At Nguyen's school, students lock their phones in neoprene pouches during classes or even all day. A teacher or principal's magnetic key unlocks the pouches.

It doesn't matter how dynamic the lesson, said Nguyen, who teaches at Marina Valley High School and now markets the pouches to other schools. "There's nothing that can compete with the cell phone."

Do something (else)

Some schools are locking up smartwatches and wireless headphones, too. But the pouches don't work once the final bell rings.

So in Spokane, Washington, schools are ramping up extracurriculars to compete with phones after hours.

An initiative launching this month, "Engage IRL" — in real life — aims to give every student something to look forward to after the school-day grind, whether it's a sport, performing arts or a club.

"Isolating in your home every day after school for hours on end on a personal device has become normalized," Superintendent Adam Swinyard said.

Students can create clubs around interests like board games and knitting or partake in neighborhood basketball leagues. Teachers will help students make a plan to get involved during back-to-school conferences, the district says.

"From 3 to 5:30 you are in a club, you're in a sport, you're at an activity," instead of on a phone, Swinyard said. (The district has a new ban on phones during class, but will allow them after school.)

At a time of high absenteeism, he also hopes the activities will be the extra push some students need

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to attend school. In a Gallup poll conducted last November, only 48% of middle or high school students said they felt motivated to go to school, and only 52% felt they did something interesting every day. The poll was funded by the Walton Family Foundation, which also supports environmental journalism at AP.

Vivian Mead, a rising senior in Spokane, said having more after-school activities helps but won't work for everyone. "There's definitely still some people who just want to be alone, listen to their music, do their own thing, or, like, be on their phone," said Vivian, 17.

Her 15-year-old sister, Alexandra, said morning advisory sessions have improved participation in the drama club that keeps the sisters busy. "It forces everyone, even if they don't want to get involved, to have to try something, and maybe that clicks," she said.

Get outside

Thirteen middle schools in Maine adopted a similar approach, bringing students outdoors for 35,000 total hours during a chosen week in May.

It's empowering for students to connect with each other in nature, away from screens, said Tim Pearson, a physical education and health teacher. His students at Dedham School participated in the statewide "Life Happens Outside" challenge.

Teachers adapted their lessons to be taught outdoors, and students bonded in the open air during lunch and recess. At night, about half of Dedham's students camped, incentivized by a pizza party. Several students told Pearson they camped out again after the challenge.

"Whether they had phones with them or not, they're building fires, they're putting up their tents," Pearson said. "They're doing things outside that obviously are not on social media or texting."

Plea to parents

Parents must also make changes to their family's cell phone culture, some teachers say. At home, Ohio teacher Aaron Taylor bars cellular devices when his own children have friends over.

And when kids are at school, parents shouldn't distract them with check-in texts throughout the day, he said.

"Students are so tied to their families," said Taylor, who teaches at Westerville North High School, near Columbus. "There's this anxiety of not being able to contact them, rather than appreciating the freedom of being alone for eight hours or with your friends."

Fight fears of being 'canceled'

Some say other forces behind teen disengagement are only amplified by the cell phone. The divisive political climate often makes students unwilling to participate in class, when anything they say can rocket around the school in a messaging app.

Taylor's high school English students tell him they don't talk in class because they don't want to be "canceled" — a term applied to public figures who are silenced or boycotted after offensive opinions or speech.

"I'm like, 'Well, who's canceling you? And why would you be canceled? We're talking about 'The Great Gatsby,'" not some controversial political topic, he said.

Students "get very, very quiet" when topics such as sexuality, gender or politics come up in novels, said Higgins, the Massachusetts English teacher. "Eight years ago, you had hands shooting up all over the place. Nobody wants to be labeled a certain way anymore or to be ridiculed or to be called out for politics."

So Higgins uses websites such as Parlay that allow students to have online discussions anonymously. The services are expensive, but Higgins believes the class engagement is worth it.

"I can see who they are when they're responding to questions and things, but other students can't see," Higgins said. "That can be very, very powerful."

Alarmed at her peers' disengagement, Isabella, Higgins' student, wrote an opinion piece in her school's newspaper.

"Preventing future generations from joining this same downward cycle is up to us," she wrote.

A comment on the post highlighted the challenge, and what's at stake.

"All in all," the commenter wrote, "why should we care?"

What to know about the heavy exchange of fire between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah on Sunday launched their heaviest exchange of fire after months of strikes and counterstrikes that have raised fears of an all-out war.

By mid-morning, the exchange of fire had ended, with both sides saying they had only aimed at military targets. The Israeli strikes killed three militants in Lebanon, and Israel's military said a soldier was killed by either an interceptor of incoming fire or shrapnel from one. But the situation remained tense.

Here's a look at where things stand:

What happened early Sunday?

Israel said around 100 warplanes launched airstrikes targeting thousands of rocket launchers across southern Lebanon to thwart an imminent Hezbollah attack. Hezbollah said it launched hundreds of rockets and drones aimed at military bases and missile defense positions in northern Israel and the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights.

Hezbollah called the attack an initial response to the targeted killing of one of its founding members and top commanders, Fouad Shukur, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut last month. It said its military operations for Sunday were concluded, but Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said they will "reserve the right to respond at a later time" if the results of Sunday's attack aimed at a military intelligence base near Tel Aviv aren't sufficient.

Israel's military said its intelligence base near Tel Aviv wasn't hit. Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said an initial assessment showed "very little damage" in Israel.

How likely is an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah?

Sunday's exchange of fire did not set off a long-feared war, and the heavy firepower and lack of civilian casualties might allow both sides to claim a sort of victory and step back. But tensions remain high.

Hezbollah began firing rockets and drones at Israel shortly after the outbreak of the war in Gaza, which was triggered by Hamas' surprise attack into Israel on Oct. 7. Hezbollah and Hamas are allies, each backed by Iran. Israel has responded with airstrikes, and the near-daily exchanges have escalated in recent months.

More than 500 people have been killed in Lebanon by Israeli strikes since Oct. 8, most of them fighters with Hezbollah and other armed groups but also more than 100 civilians and noncombatants. In northern Israel, 23 soldiers and 26 civilians have been killed by strikes from Lebanon. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of the tense border.

Israel has vowed to bring quiet to the border to allow its citizens to return to their homes. It says it prefers to resolve the issue diplomatically through U.S. and other mediators but will use force if necessary. Hezbollah officials have said the group does not seek a wider war but is prepared for one.

What would a war between Israel and Hezbollah look like?

Israel and Hezbollah fought a monthlong war in 2006 that left much of southern Beirut and southern Lebanon in ruins, and drove hundreds of thousands of people from their homes on both sides.

Everyone expects any future war to be far worse.

Hezbollah has an estimated 150,000 rockets and is capable of hitting all parts of Israel. It has also developed an increasingly sophisticated fleet of drones and has been experimenting with precision-guided missiles. A full-scale war could force hundreds of thousands of Israelis to flee, paralyze the Israeli economy and force the army, which is still engaged in Gaza, to fight on two fronts.

Israel has vowed a crushing response to any major Hezbollah attack that would likely devastate Lebanon's civilian infrastructure and economy, which has been mired in crisis for years. Beirut's southern suburbs, and towns and villages across southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah's main strongholds are located, would likely be flattened.

An Israeli ground invasion to root out Hezbollah could drag on for years. The militant group is far more advanced and better-armed than Hamas in Gaza, which is still putting up a fight after 10 months of intense Israeli bombardment and ground maneuvers.

Would a war draw in the United States, Iran and others?

An all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah could spiral into a region-wide conflict.

Iran is a patron of Hezbollah, Hamas and other militant groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Iran has vowed to carry out its own retaliatory strike over the killing of Hamas' top leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in a blast in its capital last month that was widely blamed on Israel. Israel has not said whether it was involved.

Iran-backed groups across the region have repeatedly attacked Israeli, U.S. and international targets since the start of the war in Gaza and could ramp them up in a bid to take pressure off Hezbollah.

The United States, meanwhile, has pledged ironclad support for Israel and moved a vast array of military assets to the Middle East in recent weeks to try and deter any retaliatory strike by Iran or Hezbollah. The USS Abraham Lincoln recently joined another aircraft carrier strike group in the region.

A U.S.-led coalition helped shoot down hundreds of missiles and drones fired by Iran toward Israel in April in response to an apparent Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals. Both sides downplayed an apparent Israeli counterstrike on Iran, and tensions gradually subsided.

What does this mean for Gaza cease-fire efforts?

The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent months trying to broker an agreement for a cease-fire in Gaza and the release of scores of hostages held by Hamas. Those efforts have gained urgency in recent weeks, as diplomats view such a deal as the best hope for lowering regional tensions.

Hezbollah has said it will halt its attacks along the border if there is a cease-fire in Gaza. It's unclear whether Hezbollah or Iran would halt or scale back their threatened retaliatory strikes over the killing of Shukur and Haniyeh, but neither wants to be seen as the spoiler of any cease-fire deal.

Despite the intense diplomacy, major gaps remain, including Israel's demand for a lasting presence along two strategic corridors in Gaza, a demand rejected by Hamas and Egypt. High-level talks were held in Egypt on Sunday.

'We were expendable': Downwinders from world's 1st atomic test are on a mission to tell their story

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) — It was the summer of 1945 when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan, killing thousands of people as waves of destructive energy obliterated two cities. It was a decisive move that helped bring about the end of World War II, but survivors and the generations that followed were left to grapple with sickness from radiation exposure.

At the time, U.S. President Harry Truman called it "the greatest scientific gamble in history," saying the rain of ruin from the air would usher in a new concept of force and power. What he didn't mention was that the federal government had already tested this new force on U.S. soil.

Just weeks earlier in southern New Mexico, the early morning sky erupted with an incredible flash of light. Windows rattled hundreds of miles away and a trail of fallout stretched to the East Coast.

Ash from the Trinity Test rained down for days. Children played in it, thinking it was snow. It covered fresh laundry that was hanging out to dry. It contaminated crops, singed livestock and found its way into cisterns used for drinking water.

The story of New Mexico's downwinders — the survivors of the world's first atomic blast and those who helped mine the uranium needed for the nation's arsenal — is little known. But that's changing as the documentary "First We Bombed New Mexico" racks up awards from film festivals across the United States.

It's now screening in the northern New Mexico community of Los Alamos as part of the Oppenheimer Film Festival. It marks a rare chance for the once secret city that has long celebrated the scientific discoveries of J. Robert Oppenheimer — the father of the atomic bomb — to contemplate another more painful piece of the nation's nuclear legacy.

The film, directed and produced by Lois Lipman, highlights the displacement of Hispanic ranching families when the Manhattan Project took over the Pajarito Plateau in the early 1940s, the lives forever altered in the Tularosa Basin where the bomb was detonated and the Native American miners who were never

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warned about the health risks of working in the uranium industry.

Their heart-wrenching stories woven together with the testimony of professors and doctors spurred tears in Los Alamos, as they have in Austin, Texas, Annapolis, Maryland, and every other city where the film has been screened.

Andi Kron, a long-time Los Alamos resident, was in awe of the cinematography but also horrified as she learned more.

"Just unbelievable," she said, noting that even people who have been involved in studying different aspects of the Trinity Test decades later remain unaware of the downwinders' plight.

Lipman and others hope to distribute the documentary more widely as part of an awareness campaign as downwinders push for the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to be reauthorized and expanded to include more people who have been exposed by nuclear weapons work carried out by the federal government.

Over the past 10 years, Lipman has followed Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium co-founder Tina Cordova as she has appeared before Congress, held countless town halls and shared meals and prayers with community members.

Lipman expressed her frustrations during the premiere in Los Alamos, noting that despite testimony about the injustices that followed the Trinity Test, the federal government has yet to acknowledge its failures in recognizing the damage that was done nearly 80 years ago.

As the film notes, there were about a half-million people — mostly Hispanics and Native Americans — living within a 150-mile (241.4-kilometer) radius of the blast. The area was neither remote nor unpopulated, despite government claims that no lived there and no one was harmed.

In the film, Cordova — a cancer survivor herself — tells community members that they will not be martyrs anymore. Her family is among many from Tularosa and Carrizozo who have had mothers, fathers, siblings and children die from cancer.

"They counted on us to be unsophisticated, uneducated and unable to speak up for ourselves. We're not those people any more," Cordova said. "I'm not that person. You're not those people."

The U.S. Senate passed a bill earlier this year that would finally recognize downwinders in New Mexico and in several other states where nuclear defense work has resulted in contamination and exposure. However, the bipartisan measure stalled in the U.S. House over concerns by some Republican lawmakers about cost.

Cordova and others turned out Wednesday in Las Cruces to demonstrate as U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson visited New Mexico to campaign for Republican congressional candidate Yvette Herrell. The downwinders have vowed to make it a campaign issue in the must-win district as well as in the dozens of other Republican districts around the U.S. that would benefit from an expansion of RECA.

At the film festival, Cordova told the audience that people for too long have been living separate lives, a poignant statement particularly for Los Alamos where science can sometimes be compartmentalized as experts work on solving specific aspects of bigger problems.

"There are no boundaries. We are not separate people. We all live in this state together and I would like to think that because of that we consider each other to be neighbors, friends, we're relatives with some of you," she said, thanking them for being there to hear another side of the story.

"We should be standing together for what is right," she said, prompting applause.

The audience included workers from Los Alamos National Laboratory, county officials and a state senator. Bernice Gutierrez was born in Carrizozo several days before the bomb was detonated. She had no words to describe how important she believes it is for the people in Los Alamos to learn about the downwinders.

"I think a lot of people were surprised," she said after the first screening. "They don't know the history."

The Trinity Site was on a short list for possible locations for testing the bomb. The others included two sites in California, one in Texas and another in Colorado. The flat, arid nature of the White Sands Missile Range won out, with scientists initially thinking that predictable winds would limit the spread of radiation.

That ended up not being the case as erratic weather often accompanies New Mexico's summer rainy season. Aside from shifting winds, rain the night after meant fresh fallout likely found its way into the

rainwater that was captured by residents' cisterns, according to a 2010 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC also noted that another path of exposure involved dairy cows and goats, which residents depended on for sustenance.

New modeling used by a team of researchers led by Princeton University showed in 2023 that nuclear explosions carried out in New Mexico and Nevada between 1945 and 1962 led to widespread radioactive contamination. The team reported that the world's first atomic detonation made a significant contribution to exposure in New Mexico and eventually reached 46 states, as well as Canada and Mexico.

Cordova said the federal government didn't warn residents before or after the detonation and continued for decades to minimize it because "we didn't matter, we were expendable."

"There's no excuse for it," she said.

2 separate bus crashes in Pakistan leave at least 36 people dead, officials say

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Two separate bus crashes hours apart in Pakistan on Sunday left at least 36 people dead and dozens more injured, officials said.

The first happened when a bus carrying Shiite Muslim pilgrims returning from Iraq through Iran fell from a highway into a ravine in southwest Pakistan, killing at least 12 people and injuring 32 others, police and officials said. The driver lost control on the Makran coastal highway when the brakes failed, while passing through Lasbela district in Baluchistan province, local police chief Qazi Sabir said.

Authorities in Baluchistan said that arrangements were being made to send the bodies of the pilgrims to Punjab province for burial. Maryam Nawaz, the chief minister in Punjab, expressed her condolences after the crash.

Hours later, 24 people were killed when a bus fell into a ravine in the Kahuta district of the eastern Punjab province, police and officials said, including two women and a child. Omar Farooq, a senior government official in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, said there were no survivors.

Initially, local police said that there were seven injured, but later doctors and government officials said that everyone onboard the bus died in the crash. Raja Moazzam, a rescue official, said most of the bodies had been identified.

According to residents, the bus crash happened early Sunday and locals initially took part in the rescue work, and ambulances of emergency service crews arrived later.

The bus was heading to the Pakistan-administered disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir — claimed in its entirety by both India and Pakistan — when it fell from the Panna bridge in the Kahuta district, said Sardar Waheed, a senior government official, adding that heavy machinery was used to lift the wreckage to ensure no one was trapped underneath.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in separate statements, offered their condolences and expressed sorrow over the two crashes. They asked authorities to ensure the provision of the best medical treatment for the injured pilgrims.

The crashes on Sunday occurred days after 28 Pakistani pilgrims were killed in a bus crash in neighboring Iran while heading to Iraq. A Pakistani military plane flew the bodies of the victims home on Saturday to be buried in the southern Sindh province.

Thousands of Shiites travel to Iraq's holy city of Karbala to commemorate Arbaeen — Arabic for the number 40 — to mark the death of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussein, who became a symbol of resistance during the tumultuous first century of Islam's history.

Bus crashes are common in Pakistan, mostly because of negligence by drivers, who often violate traffic rules.

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Today in History: August 26, De Gaulle leads victory march through Paris

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Aug. 26, the 239th day of 2024. There are 127 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 26, 1944, French Gen. Charles de Gaulle braved the threat of German snipers as he led a victory march in Paris, which had just been liberated by the Allies from Nazi occupation.

Also on this date:

In 1939, the first televised major league baseball games were shown on experimental station W2XBS: a double-header between the Cincinnati Reds and the Brooklyn Dodgers at Ebbets Field. The Reds won the first game, 5-2, the Dodgers the second, 6-1.

In 1958, Alaskans went to the polls to overwhelmingly vote in favor of statehood.

In 1968, the Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago; the four-day event that resulted in the nomination of Hubert H. Humphrey for president was marked by a bloody police crackdown on antiwar protesters in the streets.

In 1972, the summer Olympics opened in Munich, West Germany.

In 1978, Cardinal Albino Luciani (al-BEE'-noh loo-CHYAH'-nee) of Venice was elected pope following the death of Paul VI. The new pontiff, who took the name Pope John Paul I, died just over a month later.

In 1980, the FBI inadvertently detonated a bomb planted at Harvey's Resort Hotel in Stateline, Nevada while attempting to disarm it. (The hotel had been evacuated and no injuries were reported.)

In 1985, 13-year-old AIDS patient Ryan White began "attending" classes at Western Middle School in Kokomo, Indiana via a telephone hook-up at his home, as school officials had barred White from attending classes in person due to his illness.

In 2009, kidnapping victim Jaycee Dugard was discovered alive in California after being missing for more than 18 years.

In 2022, an affidavit released by the FBI showed that 14 of the 15 boxes recovered from former President Donald Trump's Florida estate contained classified documents, many of them top secret, mixed in with miscellaneous newspapers, magazines and personal correspondence.

Today's Birthdays: John Tinniswood, the world's oldest verified living man, is 112. Former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge is 79. R&B singer Valerie Simpson (Ashford & Simpson) is 78. Broadcast journalist Bill Whitaker is 73. Puzzle creator/editor Will Shortz is 72. Jazz musician Branford Marsalis is 64. Actor-singer Shirley Manson (Garbage) is 58. Actor Melissa McCarthy is 54. Latin pop singer Thalía is 53. Actor Macaulay Culkin is 44. Actor Chris Pine is 44. Comedian/actor/writer John Mulaney is 42. Country musician Brian Kelley (Florida Georgia Line) is 39. NBA guard James Harden is 35. Actor Dylan O'Brien is 33. Actor Keke Palmer is 31.