

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 1 of 73

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 Headline News](#)
- [4- Week 1 SD Football Coaches Association Poll](#)
- [5- That's Life by Tony Bender](#)
- [6- Adult mosquito control tonight](#)
- [7- Name Released in Fall River County Fatal Crash](#)
- [8- SD News Watch: Medicaid work requirements tied to presidential election](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: State board OKs study of potential 911 consolidation](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Scientists at underground lab announce progress in hunt for dark matter](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Where Kamala Harris stands on Big Ag is anybody's guess](#)
- [14- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- Subscription Form](#)
- [21- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [22- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [23- News from the Associated Press](#)

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.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

Everyone needs a

Hug..

A hug does

so many

things. It

brings joy

and

comfort for

those who

get them.

Hugs from me to you!

HAPPY TUESDAY



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 Mobridge-Pollock, 7 p.m.

Basketball Golf Tourney fundraiser at Olive Grove

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 2 of 73

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.

Pakistan Militant Attacks

The death toll from coordinated attacks in Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province has risen to at least 73 people since Sunday. Separatist militants reportedly struck multiple areas, including police stations, highways, and railway lines, in one of the most widespread assaults in recent years on the resource-rich region.

The separatist group, known as the Baluchistan Liberation Army, seeks to create a sovereign state in Baluchistan, separate from Pakistan's central government in Islamabad. Baluchistan is Pakistan's largest region by land mass, accounting for roughly 44% of the country's territory, and historically includes portions of Afghanistan and Iran. While the area is abundant in resources like oil and gas and minerals like gold and copper, it is one of Pakistan's poorest. As much as 70% of Baluchistan's population of 15 million people is estimated to live in poverty.

The Baluchistan Liberation Army is the largest ethnic insurgent group fighting against Pakistan's government and has been designated a terrorist organization by Pakistan, the US, and the UK.

NFL Private Equity Vote

The National Football League is expected to vote today on allowing private equity firms to purchase minority stakes in its teams. Certain private equity firms are expected to be permitted to own up to a 10% stake.

The vote comes as NFL team valuations continue to soar. In 2023, the average NFL franchise was worth \$5.1B, up 14% from the previous year, with the Dallas Cowboys topping the list at \$9B. The NFL previously restricted ownership to individuals and family trusts; however, the high franchise values make it so few individuals can afford team ownership. If owners approve the proposed changes, those wishing to sell stakes would apply to the league's finance committee, which would then vet applications before presenting for a vote at the next owners' meeting in October.

The NFL is the last remaining major US sports league to not allow private equity ownership. The NBA, NHL, MLB, and MLS allow ownership of up to 30%.

Parks and Check

The National Park Foundation announced yesterday it had received a \$100M grant, the largest for the US national parks system in the country's history.

The first US national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872. Since then, the system has expanded to over 430 areas covering national parks, memorials, rivers, trails, and more. In all, the National Park Service manages more than 85 million acres of protected lands, which span across every state in the US and are frequented by over 320 million visitors annually.

The grant—from an endowment created by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly—will fund several priorities, including conservation efforts in Florida and grants to facilitate more visits from young people. The donation was received by the National Park Foundation, a nonprofit created in the 1960s to support the national parks system through private donations; Congress appropriated \$3.3B to the parks in the 2024 fiscal year.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 3 of 73

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

NFL teams must cut rosters down to 53 players by 4 pm ET; see latest cuts for all 32 franchises. Dallas Cowboys to sign wide receiver CeeDee Lamb to four-year, \$136M deal, the second-largest non-quarterback deal ever.

Oasis to make announcement this morning, rumored to be of a reunion 15 years after the iconic British band broke up.

Boston Red Sox catcher Danny Jansen becomes first MLB player to play for both teams in a single game after facing the Toronto Blue Jays, resuming a rain-delayed game he started for Toronto in June before being traded to Boston in July.

Science & Technology

Apple announces date for its annual product event Monday, Sept. 9; company is expected to reveal iPhone 16, new Apple Watch and AirPods models.

World's most sensitive particle experiment narrows down candidates of what may make up dark matter, eliminating hypothetical particles known as WIMPs over a certain size.

Brain study reveals different clusters of neurons involved in processing language that operate at different speeds; researchers suggest some regions interpret individual words while others analyze context.

Business & Markets

> US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.3%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq -0.9%); Dow Jones hits all-time intraday high as S&P 500, Nasdaq fall from broad decline in tech shares.

Uber hit by record \$324M fine in Netherlands for sending Dutch user data to the US, breaching European Union's privacy laws.

Canada imposes 100% tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles, including those made by Tesla, matching US tariffs.

Red Lobster's new owners tap former PF Chang's CEO to lead the world's largest seafood chain as part of its bankruptcy exit plan.

Media veteran Edgar Bronfman Jr. drops bid for Paramount Global.

Politics & World Affairs

Russia strikes Ukrainian power grids in barrage of roughly 200 missiles and drones, killing at least seven people and wounding at least 47 others; attack appears to be one of Russia's biggest since the war began.

Chinese military aircraft reportedly breaches Japan's airspace in first-known incursion since records began in 1958.

Judge temporarily halts Biden administration policy offering permanent residency to certain immigrants without legal status in the US who are married to US citizens.

Jury selection begins in trial against mass shooting suspect accused of killing 10 people at a Boulder, Colorado, supermarket in March 2021.

Massachusetts towns on high alert over rare eastern equine encephalitis virus; virus is spread to humans from the bite of an infected mosquito, with an average of 11 human cases reported in the US annually,

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 4 of 73

Week 1 SD Football Coaches Association Poll

11AAA

Sioux Falls Lincoln- 164 pts (23 1st place votes)
Harrisburg- 162 pts
Brandon Valley- 161 pts
Bishop O'Gorman- 118 pts
Sioux Falls Jefferson- 82 pts
Receiving votes: Sioux Falls Washington, Sioux Falls Roosevelt

11AA

Pierre- 245 pts (44 1st place votes)
Tea- 199 pts
Yankton- 164 pts
Watertown- 102 pts
Aberdeen Central- 52 pts
Receiving votes: Brookings, Mitchell

11A

Dell Rapids- 201 pts (28 1st place votes)
West Central- 148 pts
Canton- 105 pts
Sioux Falls Christian- 103 pts
Lennox- 45 pts
Receiving votes: Rapid City Christian, Dakota Valley

11B

Winner- 150 pts (23 1st place votes)
Elk Point-Jefferson- 135 pts
Sioux Valley- 102 pts
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central- 51 pts
Wagner- 18 pts
Receiving votes: Hot Springs, Beresford, Bridge-water-Emerly/Ethan

9AA

Parkston- 165 pts (25 1st place votes)
Hamlin- 129 pts
Elkton/Lake Benton- 100 pts
Hanson- 83 pts
Viborg-Hurley- 52 pts
Receiving votes: Kimball/White Lake, Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian

9A

Howard- 160 pts (27 1st place votes)
Wall- 113 pts
Warner- 85 pts
Wolsey-Wessington- 62 pts
Harding County/Bison- 35 pts
Receiving votes: Ipswich, Platte-Geddes

9B

Avon- 173 pts (34 1st place votes)
Corsica-Stickney- 89 pts
Dell Rapids St. Mary- 66 pts
Faulkton- 57 pts
Canistota- 32 pts
Receiving votes: Herried/Selby Area, Sully Buttes

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 5 of 73

Big easy again

I couldn't control my face when we landed. Big smile.

I inhaled the familiar air, heavy with humidity and ghosts. Like breathing moss. Hello, old girl. I'm back. Greetings from the prairie. Turn off the news. Ignore the messages. And rules, what rules?

We barely made the plane. We'd dawdled. A wrong turn. A train. A cop flashed his lights as we sped toward the airport, but didn't pull us over. The planets align.

I clung desperately to the ankles of a ticket agent, while my accomplice parked.

Hold the plane, darlin'. The Big Easy is expecting us. Don't want to disappoint.

It's impossible to draw New Orleans in precise lines. It's Dali upside down. It's Jackson Pollack. Who knows what's right side up? Paint spilled and lines blurred. Picasso in his Blues Period. Impressionists. Degas after seven glasses of absinth. Peter Max doing cartwheels down the hall.

In the Carousel Lounge, a tall, handsome black man stood riveted by the singer.

Nayo Jones was slinky, supple, immensely gifted, and the band was tight. "Like a young Ella," the beaming man with a drink in his hand said to me.

We high-fived for no other reason than we were there communing together, united in one thought: We all wanted to take her home. She was that adorable. She snaked when the song was sultry. She put her hands on her hips when the song demanded sass. The trumpet player painted fantastic things that are still floating in my head.

My accomplice danced in her chair, smiling broadly, teeth flashing. Conventioneers in suits and skirts pretended to be hanging on each other's every word.

A young couple lounged against the wall. He had perfect hair. Brown-complected, Indonesian, perhaps. Impeccably-tailored, red-checked shirt Big smart grin, his hand on the knee of the stunner in the black dress with eyelashes that could tickle you from across the room. Ivanka, we dubbed her.

They shared steamy looks, never talked. I wondered why she seemed indifferent to the music. In time, she fluttered her eyes at him and splayed her legs across the settee, striking a pose that means the same thing in every culture. She leaned toward him and her hands fluttered animatedly. I understood. Sign language. My God, they were beautiful.

The tall man had moved to the stage by then, close to the singer. Smitten. We were all hopelessly shipwrecked by this siren.

In the coming days, we slurped oysters, quaffed summer shandy, and drank in the sound of street musicians channeling Louie. There were dark Voodoo bluesmen and everyone seemed to do a version of "Killing Me Softly." What black-mailable thing could Roberta Flack possibly have on New Orleans? Are they with the Russians, too?

At the Hotel Monteleone, where F. Scott Fitzgerald, Capote, Hemingway, Stephen Ambrose and Tennessee Williams once roamed the halls like night creatures, we talked about writing. I think it was Faulkner who put his hand on my shoulder, leaning in, nodding in silent agreement.

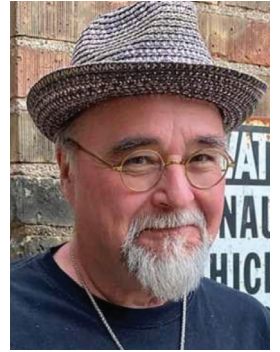
The paint drips and smears. Some new recipe every day.

The wisp of a trombone player on Frenchman's Street didn't so much play the thing it as dance with it. Around the corner, The Soul Project, the hardest-working band ever. The door by the stage was flung open to the street and that's where we stood. Magic Wanda played bass. Sturdy, wearing high tops and a funk attitude, we wanted to take her home, too. All of them, really.

You could get a contact high from the skunky-sweet smoke of illegal things. Illegal in the sense it's a \$40 fine if they decide it's worth the bother. Women danced provocatively, as the sax player blasted away.

My accomplice danced in the street, long mane flowing, head thrown back, shimmying beside the open door. My God, she was beautiful.

On Saturday, we stood with tens of thousands for Stevie Wonder, who implored us to love someone. And, if our hearts were big enough, to love everyone. "But don't fall for the bullshit!" Worthy of a bum-



That's Life

by Tony Bender

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 6 of 73

per sticker these days, or even a tattoo. A splendid hispanic tot couldn't help herself and bounced in her stroller to "Superstition," much to the glee of her parents.

We did as much as we could — couldn't ever do it all, anyway. Not and live.

On Sunday, we reluctantly packed our bags, checked our smart phones for the dumb news, still indifferent to what had transpired while time stopped in the French Quarter.

Tee shirts for the kids. Earrings for mom for Mother's Day. Cigars, hot sauce and refrigerator magnets. And memories. We brought them all back home after all.

Except Faulkner. He's working on some new thing. Room 680. There's a "Do Not Disturb" sign hanging on the knob. But you can conjur him up with a mint julep.

No one's ever too busy in the Big Easy.

© Tony Bender, 2017



**The City of Groton will be doing adult
mosquito control tonight,
starting at 8 p.m.**

Name Released in Fall River County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: 27697 W. Oral Road, two miles west of Oral, SD
When: 6:09 p.m., Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2004 Harley Davidson Softail
Driver 1: Derald Neil Bledsoe, 65-year-old male from Oral, SD, fatal injuries
Helmet Use: No

Fall River County, S.D.- A 65-year-old man died in a single motorcycle crash Wednesday evening near Oral, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Derald N. Bledsoe, the driver of a 2004 Harley Davidson Softail, was traveling east on West Oral Road. The motorcycle left the roadway and traveled through the ditch, separating the driver from the motorcycle. Bledsoe sustained fatal injuries from the crash.

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

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



Medicaid work requirements tied to presidential election

An attempt by Republican lawmakers to add work requirements for South Dakotans covered under Medicaid expansion will hinge on two election outcomes in November.

First, voters will decide on Amendment F, a legislative effort to allow employment criteria to be used for able-bodied adults to receive Medicaid benefits as part of the 2022 expansion approved by South Dakota voters.

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps cover medical costs for qualified individuals with limited income and resources.

Even if voters approve the change to the state constitution, it will take a victory by Republican Donald Trump in the presidential election to move the plan forward. That's because changes to Medicaid eligibility need to be cleared through the federal government.

When Trump was in office from 2017-2021, his administration approved work requirement plans for 13 states. Most required working-age recipients who don't have children or other dependents to be employed at least 80 hours a month to stay covered, with exemptions such as full-time schooling or community service.

When Democrat Joe Biden took office in 2021, the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services blocked such requests and rescinded state plans approved under Trump, many of which were tied up in the court system at the time.

State Rep. Tony Venhuizen, a Sioux Falls Republican who helped spearhead Amendment F, told News Watch that Democrats keeping the White House would almost certainly delay implementation of Medicaid work requirements in South Dakota for at least four years.

"Biden has disallowed them. I assume (Democratic nominee) Kamala Harris would do the same," said Venhuizen. "There has really not been enough time to fully implement these plans in any state."

Contrast in political philosophies

Work requirements are already part of the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps.

Adding the criteria to able-bodied Medicaid health care recipients highlights a fundamental difference between conservative and liberal political philosophies, not just in South Dakota but across the country.

Conservatives view work requirements as a means of putting certain individuals on a path to greater self-sufficiency and less reliance on government programs. Liberals see the requirements as an impediment to eligible citizens getting the medical assistance they need.

Unlike Medicare, which provides health care for the elderly, Medicaid focuses on low-income individuals and covers services such as hospital visits, preventative care, X-rays and family planning.

The Affordable Care Act in 2010 expanded Medicaid to include nearly all adults with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level, which translates to an annual gross salary of about \$21,000 for an individual or \$43,000 for a family of four.

But the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2012 that states could reject the expansion and still get federal funding for traditional Medicaid costs.

South Dakota was one of the Republican-led states that resisted expansion, which meant childless adults without a disability were ineligible for Medicaid coverage regardless of income level. Many also didn't qualify for ACA subsidies to help obtain private coverage unless their income was at least 100 percent of the poverty level.

The number of these residents who "fell through the cracks" of health care coverage in South Dakota was estimated at 42,500 for five-year planning by the Legislative Research Council. Nearly 30 percent of the uninsured in South Dakota in 2022 were Native American, according to U.S. Census data, compared to about 8 percent of the population that is Native American.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 9 of 73

South Dakota became one of 40 states to expand Medicaid when voters approved the 2022 constitutional amendment with 56% of the vote.

Matter of 'dignity and humanity'

The wording of the amendment passed in 2022 said that the state "may not impose burdens or restrictions that are greater than those imposed on any other person eligible for Medicaid benefits under South Dakota law."

"That sounds reasonable enough," said Venhuizen, a former chief of staff under Gov. Kristi Noem and former Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "But keep in mind that traditional Medicaid covers the elderly, children, the disabled and pregnant women, all subject to income guidelines, and you would never apply a work requirement to those groups. It wouldn't make any sense. So (Amendment F) doesn't enact a work requirement. It just removes a prohibition. Right now, our constitution says that we can't even consider this, and I think that's wrong."

State Rep. Kady Wittman, a Sioux Falls Democrat who has pushed for more support for low-income and homeless populations, sees the amendment as an attempt to water down what South Dakota voters passed two years ago.

"I voted for Medicaid expansion before I was a state legislator, so I'm deeply offended by the insinuation that I did not understand what I was voting for," Wittman, who is running for re-election in District 15, told News Watch.

She added that work requirements add unnecessary administrative burdens and have not proven to boost employment numbers in states where they've been enacted.

South Dakota currently has the nation's lowest unemployment rate at 2%.

"I think there's an inherent conflict between promoting personal responsibility and also making sure that we have equitable access to essential services and support," Wittman said. "When jobs that are available don't offer sufficient hours or wages to meet basic needs and we're restricting access to Medicaid, that's a huge problem. If you look at rural isolation and economic hardships in smaller communities, I feel like our role in government should be to uphold the dignity and humanity of people we serve. And work requirements show a lack of compassion and support."

Study: Work program failed in Arkansas

A Harvard University study published in 2020 found that Medicaid work requirements in Arkansas, the first state to implement such a plan in 2018, caused thousands of low-income adults to lose coverage without increasing employment numbers.

"By April 2019, when a federal judge put the policy on hold, 18,000 adults had already lost coverage," said the report in the New England Journal of Medicine. "Most of those coverage losses were reversed in 2019 after the court order."

Administrative complexities and lack of awareness about reporting requirements explained some of the falloff, said the study. Researchers found that of those who lost coverage, "50% reported serious problems paying off medical debt, 56% delayed care because of cost, and 64% delayed taking medications because of cost."

A federal district judge discontinued the program after state residents sued, and an appeals court unanimously upheld the decision in 2020.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal but later ruled the case moot after Biden took office and his administration reversed Trump-era approvals for work requirement plans.

Venhuizen, running unopposed for re-election in District 13, pointed out that the Arkansas program was in effect less than a year before being cut short.

"It didn't have very long to get off the ground before it was ended, so I don't know that the experience was all that informative," he said. "What I would say is that South Dakota has a reputation for doing an excellent job administering programs like this, and we already have a work requirement for SNAP, so I think concerns about the administration of this are pretty overblown."

Medicaid enrollment trails projections

Concerns about the cost and administrative stress of Medicaid expansion in South Dakota, which took effect in July 2023, have so far been unfounded.

As of June, the total number of Medicaid expansion enrollees was 24,241, well short of the projected 35,000 at the one-year mark by state legislators and the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff told Appropriations Committee members in May that enrollment numbers are hard to predict and swayed by economic trends. Venhuizen, who serves on the committee, added that "these are working-age adults, so most only show up at the hospital when they're sick or injured, and that's when they sign up (for Medicaid)."

Federal dollars absorb a large percentage of the cost. When the 2022 amendment was drafted, the Legislative Research Council estimated the total cost of expansion over the first five years at \$1.5 billion, of which the state's share would be \$166.2 million.

Total savings to the state's general fund – from federal matching and incentive funds and fewer reimbursement payments to hospitals for treating uninsured patients – was estimated at \$162.4 million over that five-year period, putting the state's net financial obligation at \$3.8 million.

"It will cost us less to expand Medicaid than it cost to buy the governor a new airplane," Democratic state Sen. Reynold Nesiba told News Watch at the time, referring to the state's 2021 purchase of a \$4.5 million Beechcraft King Air 350. "The failure of South Dakota to take this step is one of the most short-sighted economic decisions we have ever made."

Nesiba, who is not running for re-election, has derided Medicaid work requirements as government bureaucracy designed to "deny health care to people who otherwise qualify for it."

Asked whether he considers work requirements a fiscal priority, Venhuizen stressed that Amendment F does not add employment criteria to Medicaid but rather puts South Dakota in position to legally do so at some point in the future.

That will likely require a Republican in the White House and enough political gumption from the state's dominant party in Pierre to make it happen.

"If you got to a point where you had a governor and a Legislature who wanted to do this, and who felt that the juice was worth the squeeze, and the federal administration was willing to entertain it, that's when you would talk about what it would look like," Venhuizen said.

"What exceptions are there? How will we administer this? What would be the projected savings? My motivation isn't really fiscal because I don't think doing this would save a great deal of money. It's more about just being consistent in our philosophy in South Dakota that any social program is about giving someone a hand up, not a long-term way of life."

The Associated Press contributed to this report, which was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact investigative reporter Stu Whitney at stu.whitney@sdnewswatch.org



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State board OKs study of potential 911 consolidation

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - AUGUST 26, 2024 5:27 PM

The South Dakota 911 Coordination Board commissioned a study Monday into the feasibility of consolidation among the 32 separately managed dispatch centers in the state.

Some state senators pressed the issue of consolidation during the 2024 legislative session, hoping to encourage regionalization in exchange for an increase in the phone-customer surcharge that funds 911 operations. The Legislature and Gov. Kristi Noem approved a 911 surcharge increase of 75 cents, from \$1.25 to \$2, with a 2026 sunset clause in order to review the increase.

The projected annual revenue from the \$2 per line monthly surcharge is about \$19.95 million, which public safety officials said was needed to sustain adequate 911 responses statewide. The surcharge is collected by phone companies, which then give the revenue to the state, which keeps some to fund its statewide 911 coordination efforts and gives the rest to local governments for their 911 call centers.

The study will be conducted by 911 Authority, which has worked with the state for years on South Dakota's "Next Generation 911" system, which is meant to keep redundancies in place in case 911 systems are disrupted. 911 outages have happened twice in 2024.

Jim Lockard, senior project consultant for 911 Authority, told 911 board members the study would be completed by the end of this year. The company will charge the state \$70,000 for the study, according to a written proposal.

The study will analyze call data and volume, technology use, staffing and facility needs, as well as costs. Lockard said 911 Authority would suggest another model to increase efficiency if its findings suggest consolidation is not the best option.

"Some could be factors for consolidation, some could be reasons not to consolidate," Lockard said. "Sitting here today, I can't tell you that it's going to be a necessary and a good thing for South Dakota."

Board member Duane Sutton, a Brown County commissioner, said the study would be a "valuable tool" when presenting needs and proposing legislation to make the \$2 surcharge permanent next session.

House Speaker Hugh Bartels, R-Watertown, introduced the surcharge legislation last winter.

"I think this study might help," Bartels said. "I think there are some areas of the state that should consolidate."

While some dispatch centers cover several counties (Bartels' local dispatch center in Watertown spans five counties), some dispatch centers cover one county.

Although the 911 board authorized the study, the board does not have the authority to consolidate dispatch centers. That'll likely take legislative action, said Bartels, who is not seeking reelection in November.

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

Scientists at underground lab announce progress in hunt for dark matter

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - AUGUST 26, 2024 3:48 PM

Scientists at a deep underground lab in South Dakota say they've made an advancement in their quest to understand dark matter.

The invisible substance is estimated to make up 85% of the mass in the universe, but it's never been directly detected. A leading dark matter candidate is weakly interacting massive particles, known as WIMPs.

Scientists conducting an experiment in the Sanford Underground Research Facility said Monday in a news release that they have results limiting what WIMPs could be.

"If you think of the search for dark matter like looking for buried treasure, we've dug almost five times deeper than anyone else has in the past," said Scott Kravitz, the deputy physics coordinator for the experiment and a professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

The Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory leads the experiment. The project is in a cavern nearly a mile underground at the former Homestake Gold Mine in Lead.

The centerpiece of the experiment is the world's most sensitive dark matter detector, the LUX-ZEPLIN, which is a tank filled with 10 metric tons of liquid xenon. Scientists hope to detect light produced from a WIMP colliding with a xenon nucleus in the tank. Deep underground, the detector is shielded from cosmic rays coming from space.

Scientists participating in the experiment say they've found no evidence of WIMPs above a mass of 9 gigaelectronvolts/c² (for comparison, the mass of a proton is slightly less than 1 GeV/c².) The experiment's sensitivity to faint interactions helps researchers reject potential WIMP dark matter models that don't fit the data, leaving fewer places for WIMPs to hide.

"If WIMPs had been within the region we searched, we'd have been able to robustly say something about them," said Chamkaur Ghag, spokesperson for the detector project and a professor at University College London.

The new results were presented at two physics conferences Monday: TeV Particle Astrophysics 2024 in Chicago, and LIDINE 2024 in São Paulo, Brazil. A scientific paper will be published in the coming weeks.

The detector is a collaboration of roughly 250 scientists from 38 institutions in the United States, United Kingdom, Portugal, Switzerland, South Korea and Australia.

Earlier this month, a separate project also located in the Sanford Underground Research Facility celebrated a milestone of its own. Excavation was completed in a cavern that will house massive argon detectors for the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment. Studying neutrinos could help scientists learn why matter exists, how black holes form, and if neutrinos are connected to dark matter or other undiscovered particles.

COMMENTARY

Where Kamala Harris stands on Big Ag is anybody's guess

by Dave Dickey, Investigate Midwest.jpeg

For the nation's chicken farmers, the last nine months have been breathtaking.

Poultry producers have been gamed, we might as well say plucked, for decades by chicken companies. Ever since the 1948 Chicken of Tomorrow contest, Big Poultry has found ways to increase its profitability at the hands of many individual farmers.

In July of 2021, President Joe Biden signed an executive order noting the inequities:

"Consolidation in the agricultural industry is making it too hard for small family farms to survive. Farmers are squeezed between concentrated market power in the agricultural input industries — seed, fertilizer, feed, and equipment suppliers — and concentrated market power in the channels for selling agricultural products. As a result, farmers' share of the value of their agricultural products has decreased, and poultry farmers, hog farmers, cattle ranchers, and other agricultural workers struggle to retain autonomy and to make sustainable returns."

But it is one thing to point out the problems and quite another to fix them. What is notable is the way in which the Biden Administration is attempting to level the playing field between chicken farmers and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 13 of 73

their Big Poultry overlords.

Thus far, USDA has proposed not one, not two, but three separate rules in the Federal Register directly targeting the nation's chicken companies.

Last November, USDA finalized a rule amending the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 by requiring live poultry dealers to disclose to chicken farmers information regarding their tournament systems, including ranking metrics that determine settlement payments. In a nutshell, the rule requires poultry companies to be more transparent regarding what specific investments contract poultry growers might need to make to be successful.

And then earlier this year, USDA proposed the Poultry Grower Payment Systems and Capital Improvement rule. The rule would end a Big Poultry practice of deducting from a chicken farmer's base pay for work chicken companies deem inadequate. The rule still would allow Big Poultry to hand out performance bonuses, but under the rule those payouts can't come through withholding money from producers finishing at the bottom of a tournament.

The rule also would require Big Poultry to specifically document how they make fair comparisons between individual growers. The comment period for the rule closed on Aug. 9.

And most recently, USDA has published the proposed Fair and Competitive Livestock and Poultry Markets rule. The rule would amend the Packers and Stockyards Act by specifically defining unfair practices as "conduct that harms market participants and conduct that harms the markets." The rule would make it far easier for individual chicken farmers to sue Big Poultry without first having to show a "competitive injury."

Public comment on the rule closes later this month.

It can't be stressed enough how laser focused the Biden Administration has been on updating the Packers and Stockyards Act in the name of competitive competition and equality. But with inauguration day less than five months away, USDA will need to move with uncommon speed to publish final rules. And it goes without saying that the November elections will have a lot to say about what happens after inauguration day.

I have no doubts that if Donald Trump wins back the presidency that there will be an effort to undo whatever progress the Biden Administration has made to help chicken growers. After all, the first Trump administration withdrew an interim final rule, written by the Obama administration, that would have protected livestock producers from exploitation.

All of which begs the question: Where does Democrat presidential nominee Kamala Harris stand on agriculture issues, in general, and this frontal assault on Big Poultry, in particular? Up to now agricultural issues have not been in Harris' wheelhouse.

Harris' endorsement by the United Farm Workers is illustrative, but not definitive on how she views Big Ag. UFW sees its mission as advocating for "legislative and regulatory reforms for farm workers covering issues such as overtime, heat safety, other worker protections, and pesticides." In other words, protecting the little guy. Would Harris feel the same?

More telling might be if Harris takes a stand on California Proposition 12, a law upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, which set production standards for meat companies wishing to sell pork within the confines of the Golden State. Since Prop 12 became law, Big Ag has been desperately trying to overturn the law, either through further court litigation or through Congress. The Biden Administration supported overturning Prop 12. Would Harris take a different tact, perhaps calling for Prop 12 and similar laws to stand?

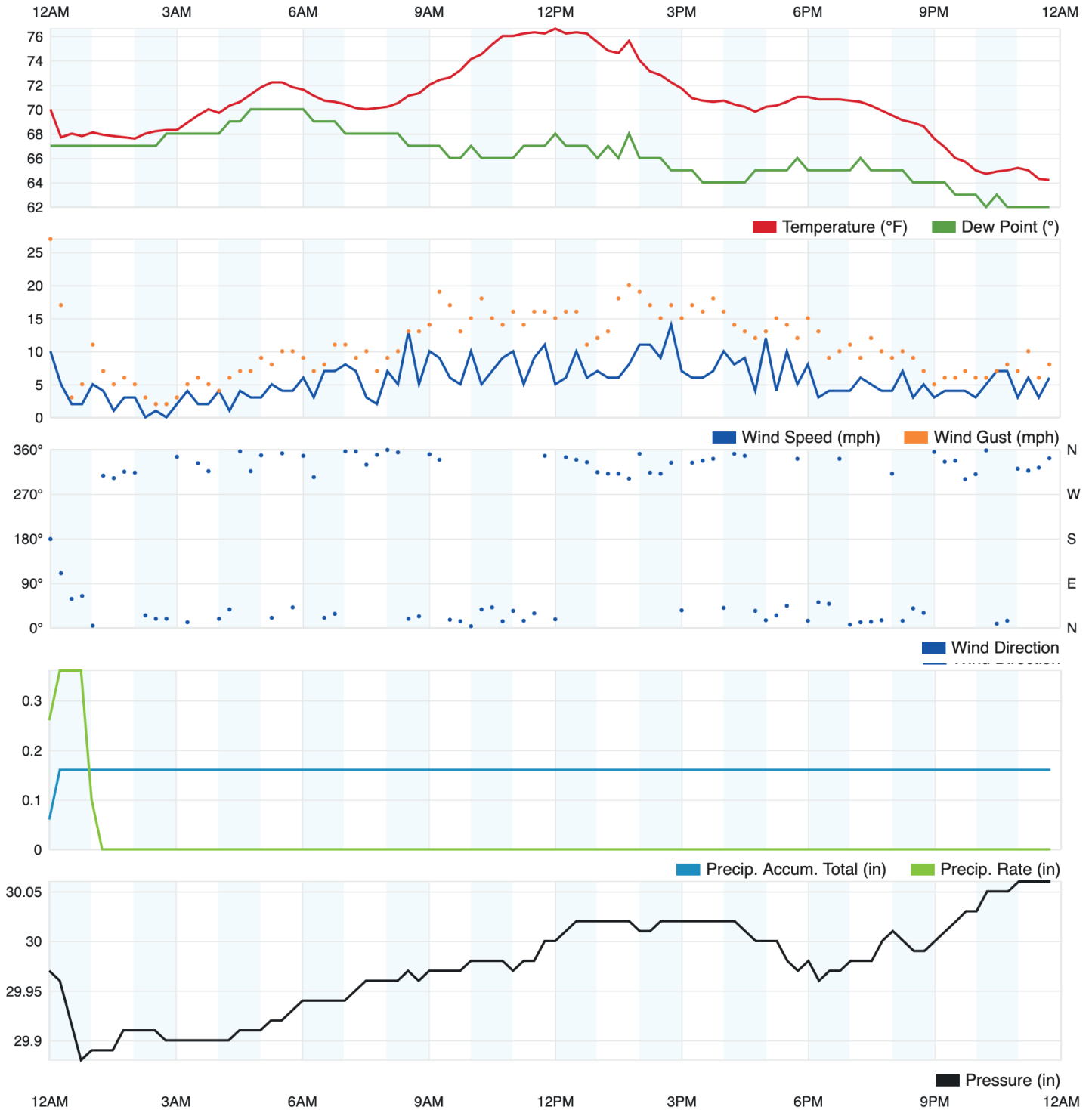
No one really knows. You can expect Big Ag to make it job one over the next few months to understand where Harris comes down on all things agriculture. But I'm not sure the industry will have anything close to a full picture of Harris on ag issues before the November election. Not much of a track record and few days to fill in the blanks.

David Dickey served tours in the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy, is a 1988 graduate of the University of Illinois College of Media, and spent 28 years at the University of Illinois NPR member station WILL-AM 580. During the last 13 years of his career at WILL, he served as the station's director of agricultural programming. He started contributing on a freelance basis to Investigate Midwest in 2015. His focus is on national agricultural issues that often cross over into state agricultural or local agricultural policy.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 14 of 73

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 15 of 73

Tuesday



High: 75 °F

Gradual
Clearing

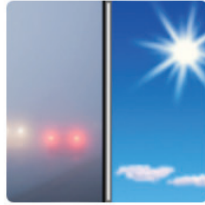
Tuesday Night



Low: 53 °F

Mostly Clear

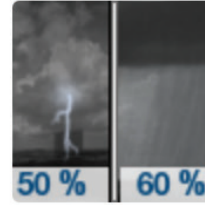
Wednesday



High: 84 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 63 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Showers
Likely

Thursday



High: 77 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

Today



Highs: 74-79°F
Lows: 54-60°F

Morning clouds
decreasing through the
day



Wednesday



Highs: 78-95°F
Lows: 54-67°F

Thunderstorms in the
evening lasting into the
overnight hours

Thursday



Highs: 75-81°F
Lows: 52-57°F

Mainly showers decreasing
through the day, a few
non-severe thunderstorms
possible

We're going to be slightly cooler than normal today, but dry. Wednesday, west river counties will be on the warmer side with highs in the 90s. Thunderstorms are expected to develop over central SD Wednesday evening and move east into eastern SD in the late evening to early overnight hours. Some showers are expected to continue into Thursday morning and move dissipate through the day.

Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 16 of 73



Wednesday Severe Weather Threat

August 27, 2024
3:49 AM

Wednesday evening through the overnight hours

Timing/Location

Storms will develop over central SD Wednesday evening and move east into eastern SD into the early overnight hours.

Primary Threats for the **YELLOW** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High

Max Hail Size

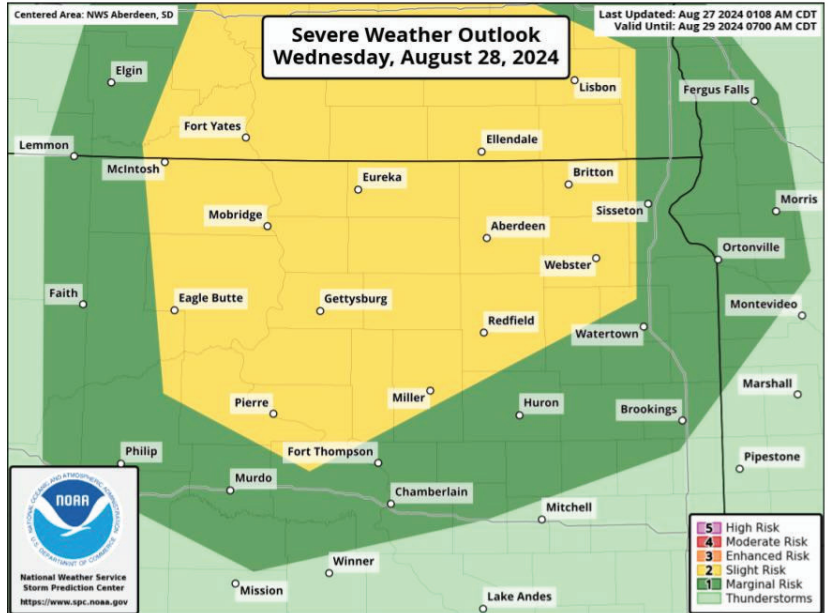
Dimes **Quarters** Golfball Baseball

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

There is a SLIGHT risk (2 out of 5) for severe storms Wednesday evening into the overnight hours. Storms are expected to develop over central SD in the early evening and move east into the early overnight hours. Main threats are 1" diameter hail and 60+ mph winds.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 17 of 73

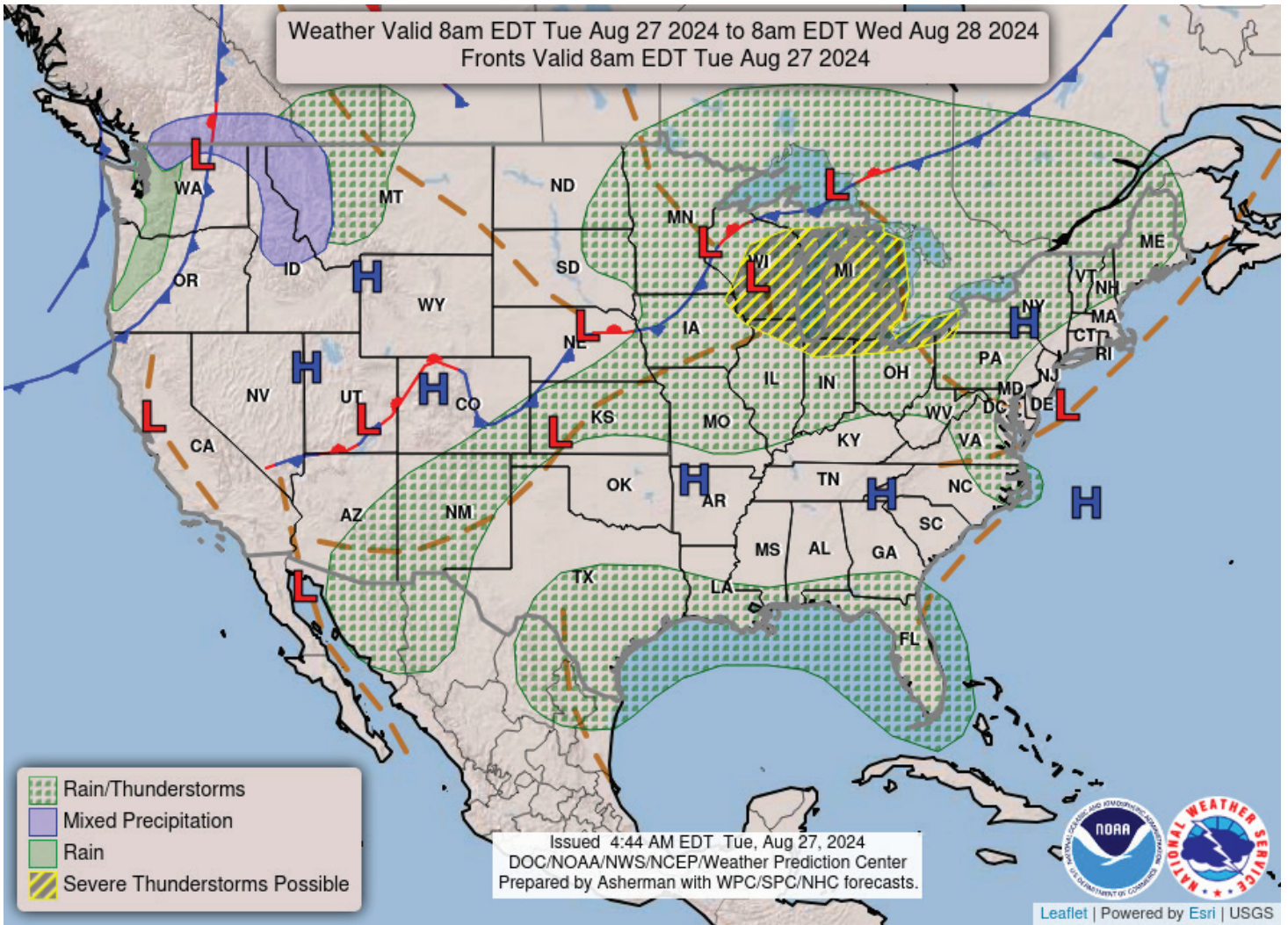
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 77 °F at 11:53 AM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 11:26 PM
Wind: 23 mph at 12:06 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 35 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1973
Record Low: 38 in 1967
Average High: 81
Average Low: 54
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.96
Precip to date in Aug.: 4.45
Average Precip to date: 16.06
Precip Year to Date: 19.34
Sunset Tonight: 834 in 1914
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:47:18 am



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 18 of 73

Today in Weather History

August 27, 1983: High winds tore through Glenham and Wakpala, destroying several structures and damaging crops. The worst damage occurred in Glenham, in Walworth County, where two mobile homes were damaged, the roof of a school torn off, and trees limbs down. A tall TV antenna was blown over, and a boat was blown off a trailer. High winds also tore through the Bowdle area, downing power lines and tree limbs. Numerous roofs were also damaged.

August 27, 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.

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.

1881: A Category 2 Hurricane made landfall between St. Simons Island and Savannah, Georgia, on this day. Landfall coincided with high tide and proved very destructive. The hurricane killed 700 people, including 335 in Savannah, making it the sixth deadliest hurricane in the United States.

1883: Krakatoa Volcano exploded in the East Indies. The explosion was heard more than 2500 miles away, and every barograph around the world recorded the passage of the airwave, up to seven times. Giant waves, 125 feet high and traveling 300 mph, devastated everything in their path, hurling ashore coral blocks weighing up to 900 tons, and killing more than 36,000 persons. Volcanic ash was carried around the globe in thirteen days producing blue and green suns in the tropics, and vivid red sunsets in higher latitudes. The temperature of the earth was lowered one degree for the next two years, finally recovering to normal by 1888.

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)

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)

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.



WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?

When Harlan Sanders turned forty, he realized that he could not point to anything in his life that could be considered a success. Whatever he attempted to do, failed. One day someone said to him, "Harlan, life begins at forty!" It jolted him in such a way that it awakened his faith, and he determined to begin again.

After a time of prayer, he decided to open a service station. Shortly after its opening, he added a luncheonette. One of his meals was fried chicken. To make it tastier he came up with a "special" batter and called it the Harlan Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken. People enjoyed it so much that they soon recommended it to their friends. It brought him fame and fortune, and the Governor of Kentucky made him a Kentucky Colonel. Soon people everywhere were buying the "Colonel's" Kentucky Fried Chicken.

By God's grace and the Colonel's faith, what had been a life of failure and frustration became a life with a future and personal fulfillment. But his new life did not begin at forty. It began when God became a major part of his life's "recipe."

When God becomes the main "ingredient" in our life, everything will become new. With Him as the centerpiece and His Word as our guide, we can overcome any obstacle or difficulty that stands in the way of our success.

Prayer: Let us always remember, Lord, that all things are possible when we trust in You and desire to honor You with the gifts and talents You have given us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 20 of 73

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months \$26.63
- 6 Months \$31.95
- 9 Months \$42.60
- 12 Months \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](https://venmo.com/paperpaul) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 21 of 73



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.24

28 30 44 66 69 2

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$575,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 56 Mins
DRAW: 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.24

23 38 42 43 44 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$7,790,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 11
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.24

12 18 24 40 44 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 26 Mins
DRAW: 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.24.24

8 9 22 24 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 26
DRAW: Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.24

19 50 55 58 66 15

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 55
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.26.24

2 4 23 68 69 15

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$54,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 55
DRAW: Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 22 of 73

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

Fair-goers scorched by heartland heat wave take refuge under misters as some schools let out early

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

FALCON HEIGHTS, Minn. (AP) — Visitors to the Minnesota State Fair sought relief from soaring temperatures under misters Monday while some Midwestern schools dismissed classes early or called off sports practices.

Highs approaching the century mark combined with oppressive humidity to made it feel like 105 to 115 degrees (40 to 46 Celsius) across the country's heartland, the National Weather Service said. It issued heat warnings or advisories for large swaths of Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

"There's going to be some records in play today," warned Ashton Robinson Cook, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

Several cities opened cooling centers, including in Des Moines, Iowa, where city buses were available to give people free rides to the sites. Experts urged those venturing outside to drink plenty of water.

"It is certainly steamy," said Dr. Haley Taormina, an emergency medicine physician for Regions Hospital EMS, while treating fair-goers in Minnesota for heat illnesses.

By 11 a.m., she already had seen firefighters cut rings off two people's fingers after they became swollen from the heat and salty fair food. Extra health care workers were assigned to the fair's medical stations, and air-conditioned city buses were parked nearby to give sweltering fair-goers a place to escape the heat.

On the fairgrounds, Blake Perkins, of Princeton, Minnesota, watched as his giggling 8- and 7-year-old daughters played under one of the water misters, plotting the rides they planned to go on next. "Thick and humid," was how he described the sticky conditions.

Mikosa Taylor, of St. Paul, sipped on a drink to keep hydrated.

"We are really trying to just make sure that we are staying cool and bringing kids inside when they need to be inside and standing by these misters when necessary," she said.

Brandie Jackson wore a battery-operated cooling fan around her neck while fanning herself with a piece of paper. But she is from Shreveport, Louisiana, so the heat and humidity wasn't unusual for her. "This is the norm," she said.

Meanwhile, Detroit's public schools implemented a 3-hour early release for students Monday and Tuesday because of scorching temperatures. The district said in a post on its webpage that it will decide Monday evening if the early release will be extended to Wednesday. Only 30% of the district's schools have air conditioning available, according to a spokeswoman.

The district has embarked on a 20-year facility master plan and expects that within five years nearly all of its schools will have new HVAC and air conditioning.

In the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Township, the temperature was in the high 80s as a T & J Landscaping crew worked Monday on a drainage issue outside a home. But it was Tuesday that company owner Tom Caramagno said he was more concerned about when the temperature was expected to reach into the 90s.

"Our typical challenge when we have these extreme temperatures is to make sure the guys hydrate themselves," Caramagno said. "If we don't have anything to hydrate, douse yourself with a hose, take breaks, get in the shade. We don't really look for the productivity on days like that, so really it's just putting out more of the emergency fires."

DTE Energy, which provides electricity for much of southeastern Michigan and the state's Thumb region, said the utility is monitoring energy loads on its circuits and making adjustments when needed to keep the power on for customers during times of heavy demand.

"Our teams in the System Operation Center as well as field crews are working around the clock to prepare for the high heat and possible pop-up storms predicted this week," DTE Energy said in an email.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 24 of 73

In Chicago, Mayor Brandon Johnson declared "Summer is over!" as students in the nation's fourth-largest school district headed back to class on Monday. Johnson, a former teacher and union organizer, visited a northwest side elementary school to ring in the occasion.

But with temperatures expected to climb to the mid-90s, Chicago officials said recess and physical education classes would be held indoors Monday and Tuesday. District officials also canceled outdoor athletic competitions scheduled for the start of the week.

All classrooms in the district's more than 600 schools have air-conditioning, but common spaces in older buildings, like hallways, often don't. District officials said if air-conditioning units malfunction, they would provide other cooling devices like chillers.

Separately, the city of Chicago opened more than 250 "cooling centers" to the public through Wednesday for residents to get relief.

In Indiana, all Gary Community Schools middle school athletic programs and events were canceled Monday and Tuesday, while all high school athletic teams have been instructed to practice — without exception — indoors, the northwestern Indiana district said Monday in an email.

By midweek, the heat will shift to the South and East, said Cook, the meteorologist with National Weather Service.

"The cool-off is coming," he said. "It's going to take a little bit of time."

Former North Dakota federal prosecutor who handled Peltier, Medina shootout cases dies

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — A former federal prosecutor who handled such prominent cases as the 1977 trial of Native American activist Leonard Peltier has died.

Lynn Crooks died on Sunday, the North Dakota U.S. Attorney's Office said. He was 83.

Crooks was an assistant U.S. attorney from 1969 to 2002, and led the prosecution team at Peltier's trial in Fargo, KFGO reported. Peltier was convicted in connection with the shooting deaths of two FBI agents in 1975 on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He was sentenced to life in prison and was recently denied parole.

Crooks also prosecuted Yorie Kahl and Scott Faul in connection with a fatal shootout in 1983 near Medina, North Dakota, that left two federal marshals dead. Kahl was the son of Gordon Kahl, who was part of the anti-government Posse Comitatus group and also was involved in the shootout.

Crooks served in various roles during his career, including as first assistant U.S. Attorney and acting U.S. attorney. In 2000, he told The Associated Press that his calling was to be a federal prosecutor.

"If I had the opportunity to go back and change it all, I wouldn't change a thing," Crooks said then. "I don't think there's any better job a lawyer could have."

In 2016, he supported a ballot initiative that added crime victim rights to North Dakota's state constitution.

North Dakota U.S. Attorney Mac Schneider issued a statement Monday praising Crooks.

"While North Dakota will remember Lynn for prosecuting challenging and consequential federal cases of national prominence, his colleagues will remember him as a kind and generous man who was never too busy to help a friend or mentor a young attorney," Schneider said.

He also lauded Crooks as "arguably the greatest prosecutor in the history of North Dakota."

Indian police fire teargas and water cannons at rally against rape and killing of trainee doctor

By BIKAS DAS Associated Press

KOLKATA, India (AP) — Police in India fired tear gas and water cannons to disperse thousands of protesters demanding the resignation of a top elected official in the country's east, accusing her of mishandling an investigation into a rape and killing of a resident doctor earlier this month.

The Aug. 9 killing of the 31-year-old physician while on duty at Kolkata city's R.G. Kar Medical College

and Hospital triggered protests across India, focusing on the chronic issue of violence against women in the country. Kolkata is the capital of West Bengal state.

The protesters say the assault highlights the vulnerability of health care workers in hospitals across India. Protesters from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party tried to break the police cordon and march to the office of Mamta Banerjee, whose Trinamool Congress party rules the West Bengal state, and demanded her resignation.

Modi's party is the main opposition party in West Bengal. Police had banned its rally and blocked the roads. Police officers wielding batons pushed back the demonstrators and fired tear gas and water cannons. Four student activists were arrested ahead of the rally, police said, accusing them of trying to orchestrate large-scale violence.

India's top court last week set up a national task force of doctors to make recommendations on the safety of health care workers at the workplace. The Supreme Court said the panel would frame guidelines for the protection of medical professionals and health care workers nationwide.

An autopsy of the killed doctor later confirmed sexual assault, and a police volunteer was detained in connection with the crime. The family of the victim alleged it was a case of a gang rape and more were involved.

In the days since, mounting anger has boiled over into nationwide outrage and stirred protests over violence against women. The protests have also led thousands of doctors and paramedics to walk out of some public hospitals across India and demand a safer working environment. The walkouts have affected thousands of patients across India.

Women in India continue to face rising violence despite tough laws that were implemented following the gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in Delhi in 2012.

That attack had inspired lawmakers to order harsher penalties for such crimes and set up fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases. The government also introduced the death penalty for repeat offenders.

Israel-Hamas war latest: Israeli strikes across Gaza kill 18, including 8 children, Palestinians say

By The Associated Press undefined

Palestinian officials say Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip have killed at least 18 people, including eight children.

The Civil Defense, first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government, said three children and their mother were killed in an airstrike late Monday in the Tufah neighborhood of Gaza City. It said three other people were missing after the strike.

Another strike late Monday hit a building in downtown Gaza City, killing a child, three women and a man, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

In southern Gaza, a strike on a home early Tuesday killed five people, including a man, his three children as young as 3 years old and a woman, according to a casualty list provided by Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, where the bodies were taken.

Another airstrike early Tuesday flattened a home west of Khan Younis, killing at least four people, including a child, according to Nasser Hospital, where the dead were taken. Footage shared online showed residents digging through the rubble. A man carried a wounded child to an ambulance, while two others carried a dead body wrapped in a blanket.

Palestinian health officials do not say whether those killed in Israeli strikes are civilians or fighters.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and accuses Hamas of putting them in danger by fighting in residential areas. But the military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

Gaza's Health Ministry says Israel's offensive has killed over 40,000 people in Gaza. The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 people.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 26 of 73

Here's the latest:

Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff meets with Israeli defense leaders

TEL AVIV, Israel — Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with top Israeli defense leaders on Monday, and visited the military's Northern Command headquarters.

Navy Capt. Jereal Dorsey, Brown's spokesperson, said the chairman met with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Israeli Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi in Tel Aviv, and he participated in operational updates with Israeli Defense Force senior leaders.

"The leaders reaffirmed the importance of the U.S.-Israeli strategic partnership while also discussing the most recent engagement across the Israeli-Lebanese border and the need to de-escalate tensions to avoid a broader conflict," said Dorsey.

He said they also discussed Israel's need to defend itself as well as the need to get more humanitarian support into Gaza and the importance of minimizing civilian casualties. Dorsey said they talked about Brown's recent meetings with other partners in the region. He visited Jordan and Egypt.

He said the U.S. "continues to coordinate with Israel and other allies and partners on ways to improve regional security and stability, protect U.S. forces in the Middle East, and deter a broader conflict."

Gallant's office said the Israeli defense chief thanked Brown for "his unequivocal commitment to Israel's security," including through the deployment of U.S. forces in the Middle East.

Israeli airstrike kills 5 Palestinians in the West Bank, health officials say

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Palestinian health officials say an Israeli airstrike has killed five Palestinians in the northern West Bank.

The military said late Monday that it struck an "operations room" used by militants in the Nur Shams refugee camp in the city of Tulkarem. Palestinian health officials said five bodies arrived at a nearby hospital. Neither Palestinian health officials nor the military immediately identified those killed.

It's the latest violence to occur in the West Bank, where around 640 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, most from Israeli raids into Palestinian cities and towns.

Israel continues to shrink the humanitarian zone in Gaza, UN says

UNITED NATIONS — Sixteen evacuation orders by Israel's military this month have squeezed Gazans into even smaller areas of the territory and the latest has shut the U.N. humanitarian operations center. However, the U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA is still providing health care and other assistance.

As a result of the orders, several hundred thousand already displaced Palestinians have been forced to move again, and the humanitarian zone declared by Israel has shrunk to about 11% of the entire Gaza Strip, Sam Rose, the senior deputy field director for the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees told reporters Monday.

"And this isn't 11% of land that is fit for habitation, fit for services, fit for life, really," Rose said in a briefing from Gaza,

He said it's precisely in this environment with lack of access to aid, services, water and health care that polio has recently reemerged in Gaza, "with a small number of cases that could spread very rapidly."

Rose said a U.N. campaign to vaccinate 95% of children under the age of 10 is scheduled to start on Saturday and involves over 3,000 people, including 1,000 from UNRWA, the largest primary health care provider in the Gaza Strip.

He expressed hope that humanitarian pauses needed for the campaign will be heeded by Israel, Hamas and other militants.

A senior U.N. official said Israel's latest evacuation order on Sunday included the U.N. operations center in Deir al-Balah, which was forced to close on short notice. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said the U.N. has been in contact with Israel about the latest order and improving humanitarian operations.

Rose said UNRWA services are continuing with national staff, estimating that 15,000 Palestinians received health services across Gaza on Monday.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 27 of 73

But he stressed that the ability of the U.N. humanitarian system to operate in Gaza "is becoming increasingly difficult."

He said an estimated one million Palestinians a month aren't getting the food they desperately need because of obstacles at crossing points, with only about 100 trucks with aid getting into Gaza every day instead of the 500 needed.

Associated Press writer Edith Lederer contributed to this report.

Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah hasn't hindered negotiations, US says

WASHINGTON — Intense fighting between Israel and Hezbollah over the weekend did not derail Gaza cease-fire talks in Cairo as a "working-level" group of negotiators remain in talks over technical aspects of a potential deal, the White House said on Monday.

A cease-fire is seen as the best hope for heading off an even larger regional conflict as Hezbollah has vowed retaliation against Israel for the killing of senior commander Fuad Shukr last month. Iran, meanwhile, has vowed revenge for the recent assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, who was killed in the Iranian capital of Tehran.

"There was not an impact on the talks in Cairo," White House national security John Kirby told reporters. "We're certainly glad to see that."

Kirby said progress was made during four days of high-level talks that concluded in Egypt on Sunday without a long sought-after cease-fire and hostage agreement.

But the parties agreed to continue talks between lower-ranked officials aimed at hatching out some of the differences that remain between Israel and Hamas.

Kirby said that the working group, in part, is trying to "flesh out" the proposed exchange that would take place involving hostages held in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners that Israel is holding.

But the two sides also are at odds over Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's insistence that Israel Defense Forces maintain a presence in two strategic corridors in Gaza, the Philadelphi corridor alongside Gaza's border with Egypt and the Netzarim east-west corridor across the territory.

White House Middle East adviser Brett McGurk was leading the U.S. delegation in the talks in Cairo on Monday, but was expected to soon depart as lower-level officials aim to work through some of the outstanding issues, Kirby said.

The talks are expected to last for several days.

Being Black in Germany has never been easy. Elections in eastern states could make it harder still

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

ERFURT, Germany (AP) — It was a balmy summer night in 2020, shortly after the lifting of Germany's first COVID-19 lockdown, and Omar Diallo and two friends from his home country of Guinea wanted to celebrate Eid al-Adha, the Muslim festival of sacrifice.

"We were enjoying life, playing music, walking through the city at night — we just wanted to be together again and have a good time," Diallo, 22, told The Associated Press in Erfurt, in the eastern state of Thuringia.

He was not prepared for how the day would end. Suddenly Diallo and his friends were confronted by three black-clad white men.

"They were shouting: 'What do you want here, f—— foreigners, get out!'" Diallo remembered.

"First there were three, then five, seven — they were surrounding us from all sides. We couldn't run away, and then they started chasing us," he said.

At some point Diallo managed to call the police, and when the officers finally arrived, the attackers ran away. One of his friends was beaten up so badly that he had to be hospitalized.

"I simply tried to survive," Diallo said. "I hadn't done anything wrong. It all happened only because of my skin color."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 28 of 73

Being Black in Germany has always meant exposure to racism, from everyday humiliations to deadly attacks. In eastern Germany, the risk can be even greater.

After World War II, West Germany became a democratic, diverse society but in East Germany, which was run by a communist dictatorship until the end of 1989, residents barely had any contact with people of different ethnicities and were not allowed to travel freely abroad.

Experts say that specifically in Thuringia, radical far-right forces have created an environment that's hostile toward minorities, including Black people.

Now, with the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, Black Germans and African migrants like Diallo are growing increasingly concerned.

Thuringia, which has a population of 2.1 million, holds state elections on Sept. 1, and the fiercely anti-immigration AfD is leading the polls, on 30%.

In 2023, the NGO Ezra, which helps victims of far-right, racist and antisemitic violence, documented 85 racist attacks in Thuringia, down only slightly from 88 attacks in 2022, which Ezra described as "an all-time high of right-wing and racist violence" in the state.

"In recent years, an extreme right-wing movement has formed in Thuringia, which has contributed to a noticeable ideological radicalization of its followers. Politically, the Alternative for Germany party is the main beneficiary," Ezra and a consortium of organizations tracking racism wrote in their annual report.

AFD's Thuringia branch is particularly radical and was put under official surveillance by the domestic intelligence service four years ago as a "proven right-wing extremist" group.

"Authoritarian and populist forces, which are becoming very strong here now, harbor a great danger in Thuringia," says Doreen Denstaedt, Thuringia's minister for migration, justice and consumer protection.

Denstaedt, the daughter of a Black father from Tanzania and a white German mother, was born and grew up in Thuringia.

The 46-year-old member of the Green party said that growing up in Communist East Germany, she was "always the only Black child." As a teenager, she was never allowed to go home on her own because of the risk of racist attacks, and she sometimes suffered racist slurs in her school.

"I actually experienced myself that people called me a foreigner, which really confused me at first, because I was born in Saalfeld" in Thuringia, Denstaedt said.

She fears that in the current political climate, racist narratives will become acceptable in the middle of society.

"My biggest concern is that people do not question (these prejudices), especially if they are not affected themselves," she said.

It's not exactly clear how many Black people live in Germany nowadays, as different ethnicities are not documented in official statistics, but estimates put the number of people of African descent at 1.27 million. More than 70% were born in Germany, according to Mediendienst Integration, which tracks migration issues in the country.

Germany's history of racial discrimination begins long before the Nazis began excluding, deporting and ultimately murdering Black people in the 1930s and 1940s.

The German Empire held numerous colonies in Africa from 1884 until the end of World War I. These included territories in present-day Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Namibia, Cameroon, Togo and Ghana.

The German government has only recently started dealing with the injustices committed during that period. In 2021, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier called on Germans to face the country's cruel colonial past, and in 2023, he apologized for colonial-era killings in Tanzania over a century ago.

Daniel Egbe, a 58-year-old chemist from Cameroon who moved to Thuringia in 1994 to study, says he's shocked how little Germans know about their colonial history. He says this ignorance may also factor into the unequal treatment of Black people.

"I've been teaching classes in school," Egbe told the AP. "I tell them a bit about myself and especially the fact that Cameroon was a German colony. Many students don't know anything about Africa or about the German past and it must be put on the map."

Egbe, who took German citizenship in 2003, founded AMAH, an organization that helps university students

and migrants from Africa when they experience discrimination in the city of Jena, in eastern Thuringia.

He's worried about the rise of the AfD but has no intention of leaving.

"We won't leave, we will do our part to change this society," he said. "People are mostly afraid of what and who they don't know. We have to change things through education."

As for Diallo, the Guinean who was attacked in Erfurt four years ago, he also vowed to help improve the situation for Black people in Germany.

Even though the attack traumatized him, it also empowered him to fight for justice, he said. A year ago, he enrolled in university in Munich to study law, but he still visits Erfurt frequently, where he supports Youth without Borders, a network of young migrants.

"I don't exactly know yet how I'm going to change Germany, but I know I will," he said.

Harris campaign releases new ad to highlight plans to build 3 million homes, reduce inflation

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris has a new advertising push to draw attention to her plan to build 3 million new homes over four years, a move designed to contain inflationary pressures that also draws a sharp contrast to Republican Donald Trump's approach.

Harris, the Democratic nominee for president, highlights her plan in a new minute-long ad that uses her personal experience, growing up in rental housing while her mother had saved for a decade before she could buy a home. The ad targets voters in the swing states including Arizona and Nevada. Campaign surrogates are also holding 20 events this week focused on housing issues.

In addition to increasing home construction, Harris is proposing the government provide as much as \$25,000 in assistance to first-time buyers. That message carries weight at this moment as housing costs have kept upward pressure on the consumer price index. Shelter costs are up 5.1% over the past 12 months, compared to overall inflation being 2.9%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Vice President Harris knows we need to do more to address our housing crisis, that's why she has a plan to end the housing shortage" and will crack down on "corporate landlords and Wall Street banks hiking up rents and housing costs," said Dan Kanninen, the campaign's battleground states director.

The Harris plan would create tax breaks for homebuilders focused on first-time buyers and expand existing incentives for companies that construct rental housing. Because local zoning often restricts the supply of homes, she would also double the available funding to \$40 billion to encourage local governments to remove the regulations that prevent additional construction.

Although Trump made his reputation as a real estate developer, real estate data show there was a shortage of available housing during his presidency that has continued.

That shortage became more problematic when inflation jumped as the country recovered from the pandemic and faced higher food and energy costs after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The high inflation damaged the approval ratings of President Joe Biden, who Republicans and some economists blamed for sparking the price runups with his pandemic aid.

Mortgage rates climbed to levels that were prohibitively high for many would-be buyers. At the same time, many existing homeowners held off on listing their properties for sale in ways that compounded the inflation challenge.

Trump has floated an array of ideas for lowering housing costs — including his suggestion in a June speech in Wisconsin that stopping illegal immigration would reduce demand for housing and bring down prices.

"I will also stop inflation by stopping the invasion, rapidly reducing housing costs," Trump said.

There is also the possibility of opening up more federal land for home construction. Economists supportive of Trump's agenda have suggested — despite deficits climbing during his presidency — that Trump would get federal spending under control if he was president again and that would lower interest rates.

Still, Trump's main play has been to claim that Harris can't pay for her housing agenda. That's even though he also attacks her for supporting tax increases and other revenue raisers proposed by Biden that

could in theory offset the costs.

"She has no clue how'd she paid for \$25,000 to every first-time homebuyer, including illegals," said Trump at an August 19 rally in York, Pennsylvania, claiming without clear evidence that her policy would support immigrants without legal status.

The Harris campaign plans to hold housing affordability events in the Pennsylvania cities of Lancaster, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, as well as the Arizona cities of Phoenix and Tucson.

There will also be events in the Nevada cities of Las Vegas and Reno and the North Carolina cities of Asheville and Charlotte, in addition to Savannah, Georgia.

The Paralympic Games are starting. Here's what to expect as 4,400 athletes compete in Paris

By CIARÁN FAHEY and TOM NOUVIAN AP Sports Writers

PARIS (AP) — Let the games begin again.

The Paralympic Games are set to open Wednesday as some 4,400 athletes with disabilities, permanent injuries or impairments prepare to compete for 549 medals across 22 sports over 11 days in Paris.

The French capital, which just hosted the Olympics, again provides the backdrop for what promises to be another spectacle, with many of the same venues hosting Paralympic competitions.

Historic square Place de la Concorde, which hosted skateboarding, breaking and 3x3 basketball during the Olympics, will host the opening ceremony.

Equestrian returns to Château de Versailles, which will host para equestrian events. The Grand Palais transitions from fencing to wheelchair fencing. Archery venue Invalides will host para archery.

The venue beside the Eiffel Tower, which hosted beach volleyball during the Olympics, will host blind soccer, an adaptation of the game for visually impaired players in teams of five with a ball containing rattles.

"We've got some monstrous iconic sites, and we're going to get an eyeful," France's para triathlon champion, Alexis Hanquiquant, said. "Paris is the most beautiful city in the world. I think we're going to have some pretty exceptional Paralympic Games."

Of the 22 Paralympic sports, only two do not have an Olympic equivalent — goalball and boccia. In goalball, teams of visually impaired or blind players take turns rolling a ball containing bells toward the opposing goal while the defending team's players act as goalkeepers. In boccia, players throw or roll leather balls as close as they can to a small ball called a jack.

Compared to the previous edition of the Paralympics in Tokyo, 10 medal events have been added to give female athletes and those with high-support needs more opportunities.

The Paralympic flame was lit Saturday in Stoke Mandeville, a village northwest of London widely considered the birthplace of the Paralympic Games, and was to make its way via a torch relay under the English Channel to cities all over France before lighting the cauldron during the opening ceremony on Wednesday.

Anticipation has been building with Parisians returning from their summer vacations — the city almost felt empty at the beginning of the month with many away at the coast. For locals who missed the Olympic action, the Paralympics are a second chance to catch some of the excitement.

The athletes — Paralympians — will be the focus of attention starting Thursday in the first day of competition, when there will be medals to be won in para taekwondo, para table tennis, para swimming and para cycling on the track.

As was the case for the Olympics, there will medals up for grabs on each of the 11 days of competition.

Many of the competing athletes have titles to defend.

Para shooter Avani Lekhara, the first Indian woman to win a pair of medals at a single edition of the Paralympics, returns to defend her 10-meter air rifle gold in the SH1 category from Tokyo.

The SH1 category is for rifle shooters with lower limb impairments like amputations or paraplegia who can hold their gun without difficulty and shoot from a standing or sitting position.

American multi-sport specialist Oksana Masters won a hand-cycle road race and time trial at the Tokyo Paralympics, and she will be looking to add to her career total of seven gold and 17 medals overall in both

summer and winter events.

Para powerlifter Sherif Osman of Egypt is going for his fourth gold medal, and Italian fencer Bebe Vio is vying for her third consecutive gold in wheelchair fencing. After contracting meningitis as a child, doctors amputated both her legs and her forearms to save her life.

Brazil is unbeaten in blind soccer going back to the first tournament in Athens in 2004, but France harbors hopes of an upset. The hosts kick off against China and Brazil plays Turkey on Sept. 1, a day before the teams meet for a potentially decisive match in Group A.

And there are other storylines.

Visually impaired Italian sprinter Valentina Petrillo will be the first transgender woman to compete at the Paralympics when she races in the heats for her classification in the women's 400 meters on Sept. 2.

American swimmer Ali Truwit is competing a year after losing her lower leg in a shark attack while snorkeling.

Teenage swimmer David Kratochvil is carrying Czech hopes of a medal after losing his sight because of a serious illness about 10 years ago. The 16-year-old Kratochvil used to play ice hockey but switched to the pool, where he set world records in the 50 and 200 meter backstroke last year.

Many more wait to be told over the next two weeks.

Former Malaysian leader Muhyiddin charged with sedition for allegedly mocking former king

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Former Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin was charged Tuesday with sedition over a speech he made that allegedly questioned the integrity of the country's previous king.

Muhyiddin, who led Malaysia from March 2020 until August 2021, pleaded not guilty in a court in northeast Kelantan state. According to the charge sheet, Muhyiddin made the seditious remarks last month during a by-election campaign in Kelantan.

Nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns as Malaysia's king for five-year terms under the country's rotating monarchy, which began when Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957. The monarchy plays a largely ceremonial role, but are revered by the nation's majority Muslims.

In his speech on Aug. 14, Muhyiddin had questioned why then-King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah didn't invite him to be prime minister following a hung Parliament in November 2022. Muhyiddin had claimed he had the backing of majority lawmakers.

Muhyiddin's Islamic nationalistic bloc received stronger-than-expected support from Malays, who account for two-thirds of Malaysia's 34 million people. Sultan Abdullah appointed then-opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister after Anwar cobbled up support from rival parties to form a unity government.

Sultan Abdullah from central Pahang state, who ended his reign on Jan. 30 this year, didn't comment on the case. But his son issued a strong rebuke to Muhyiddin, saying his remarks were dangerous and could divide the people and undermine the royal institution.

Muhyiddin was questioned by police following complaints against him. He had denied insulting the royalty, saying his remarks were factual and that he had handed in sworn oath of support by 115 lawmakers in the 222-member parliament.

Zaid Malek from Lawyers for Liberty, a human rights and law reform group, slammed the use of the colonial-era Sedition Act against Muhyiddin. He said questioning or criticizing the exercise of constitutional power by the king wasn't seditious.

The law, introduced by the British in 1948, criminalizes speech or actions with an undefined "seditious tendency," including that which promotes hatred against the government and monarchy or incites racial discord.

"The king is a constitutional monarch, and not a feudal ruler. His exercise of his power can thus be debated, questioned or criticized. This is the very bedrock of our system of constitutional monarchy," Zaid said. Anwar had backtracked on his pledge to repeal the Sedition Act, which has long been used to sup-

press dissenting voices, he added.

Muhyiddin, 77, faces up to three years in prison or a fine or both if found guilty. He is also still battling corruption and money-laundering charges that he claims are politically motivated.

Muhyiddin was the second former leader charged with crimes after ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak, who received multiple charges after losing a 2018 general election. Najib began a 12-year prison term in 2022, with several more graft trials underway.

Russian missiles and drones strike across Ukraine and kill at least 4 people

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Nighttime Russian drone and missile attacks struck across Ukraine, killing at least four people, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday, a day after a heavy barrage pounded energy facilities throughout the country.

Zelenskyy said the attacks included 81 drones, as well as cruise and ballistic missiles and that 16 people were injured. He did not say where the four deaths occurred, but two people died in a strike on a residential building in the industrial city of Kryvyi Rih, according to Oleksandr Vilkul, head of the city's military administration.

"We will undoubtedly respond to Russia for this and all other attacks. Crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished," Zelenskyy wrote on X.

In the Kyiv region, which had struggled with blackouts after Monday's onslaught, five air alerts were called during the night. The regional administration said air defenses destroyed all the drones and missiles but that falling debris set off forest fires.

After the Monday barrage across Ukraine of more than 100 missiles and a similar number of drones, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said "the energy infrastructure has once again become the target of Russian terrorists" and urged Ukraine's allies to provide it with long-range weapons and permission to use them on targets inside Russia.

President Joe Biden called Monday's Russian attack on energy infrastructure "outrageous" and said he had "reprioritized U.S. air defense exports so they are sent to Ukraine first." He also said the U.S. was "surging energy equipment to Ukraine to repair its systems and strengthen the resilience of Ukraine's energy grid."

The Russian Defense Ministry said the attacks used "long-range precision air- and sea-based weapons and strike drones against critical energy infrastructure facilities that support the operation of Ukraine's military-industrial complex. All designated targets were hit."

In Russia, meanwhile, officials reported four Ukrainian missiles were shot down over the Kursk region, where Russian forces are fighting Ukrainian troops that made a surprise incursion this month.

The fighting in the region has raised concerns about the nuclear power plant there. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi arrived in the Kursk region on Tuesday intending to inspect the plant, Russian news agencies reported.

US national security adviser Jake Sullivan visits Beijing in a bid to manage strained relations

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A top White House official arrived in China on Tuesday for talks on a relationship that has been severely tested during President Joe Biden's term in office.

Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser, was greeted at a Beijing airport by Yang Tao, the Chinese foreign ministry's chief for the North American and Oceanian department, and the U.S. ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns.

Sullivan has been Biden's point person for often unannounced talks with the Communist Party's top foreign policy official to try to manage the growing differences between Washington and Beijing.

The goal of his visit, which lasts through Thursday, is limited — to try to maintain communication in

a relationship that broke down for the better part of a year in 2022-23 and was only nursed back over several months.

No major announcements are expected, though Sullivan's meetings could lay the groundwork for a possible final summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping before Biden steps down in January.

It's important for the United States and China to avoid any crisis in the remaining months of the Biden administration, as it could set the tone for U.S.-China ties under the next one, said Da Wei, the director of the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

"The goal of this visit is not reaching new breakthroughs or progress but to continue the stable momentum of China-U.S. relations in the past year through strategic communication, and to avoid new crises in the next few months," he said.

Sullivan will hold talks with Wang Yi, the director of the Communist Party's Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office.

Wang is also the foreign minister. He had initially stepped down when he took the party post, a more senior position, but he returned about seven months later, in July 2023, after his successor was removed for reasons that have not been made public.

The Biden administration has taken a tough line on China, viewing it as a strategic competitor, restricting the access of its companies to advanced technology and confronting the rising power as it seeks to exert influence over Taiwan and the South China Sea.

Already frosty relations went into a deep freeze after then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, a senior U.S. lawmaker, visited Taiwan in August 2022. Hopes of restoring ties were dashed the following February when a suspected Chinese spy balloon drifted across the U.S. before being shot down by the U.S. military.

At a meeting between Sullivan and Wang in Vienna in May 2023, the two countries launched a delicate process of putting relations back on track. Since then, they have met two more times in a third country, Malta and Thailand. This week will mark their first talks in Beijing.

China's Foreign Ministry said this week that relations with the U.S. remain at "a critical juncture." It noted that the two sides are talking on climate and other issues, but it accused the U.S. of continuing to constrain and suppress China.

Canada announced on Monday that it will match America's 100% import tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles, after being encouraged to do so by Sullivan during a meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Cabinet ministers the previous day.

Separatist group claims multiple attacks that killed over 40 people in southwestern Pakistan

By ABDUL SATTAR Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — A separatist group claimed responsibility for multiple attacks in southwestern Pakistan that killed more than 40 people but insisted it did not harm civilians, as authorities on Tuesday sent the bodies of 23 victims to their home districts for burial.

The outlawed Baluchistan Liberation Army group warned in a statement overnight into Tuesday of more attacks, saying that 800 of its well-trained fighters took part in the first phase of the shooting and bombing attacks that began late Sunday and ended on Monday.

It warned the second phase of the attacks would be "even more intense and widespread."

Twenty-three people and 14 security officials were among the dozens killed by insurgents in multiple attacks in the restive southwest, the highest one-day death toll in recent violence in the area.

The attacks drew nationwide condemnation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday there would be no peace talks with insurgents who took up arms against the state, killed innocent people and attacked security forces in Baluchistan.

He said the latest attacks in Baluchistan seek to harm Chinese-funded development projects under the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 34 of 73

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which includes building and improving roads and rail systems to link western China's Xinjiang region to Pakistan's southwestern Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea.

In recent years, BLA and other militants have also attacked Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects. Shafique Ullah, a local administration official, said 14 people from the eastern Punjab province and nine Baluch were among the 23 people killed by BLA after they were offloaded from their vehicles on a highway in Musakhail, a district in Baluchistan early Sunday.

The bodies were sent to their home districts on Monday, he said.

Funerals for the 14 security officials killed in the assaults were held in Baluchistan overnight.

The government has vowed to punish the attackers and their facilitators.

BLA has targeted security forces for years in small-scale attacks, but the latest violence indicated it was now much more organized.

Sarfraz Bugti, the chief minister in Baluchistan, told reporters in Quetta on Monday that operations against the insurgents were still underway, adding that "those who killed our innocent civilians and security with be dealt with a full force."

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.

Although Pakistan says it quelled the insurgency, violence has persisted in Baluchistan.

Wild week of US weather includes heat wave, tropical storm, landslide, flash flood and snow

FALCON HEIGHTS, Minn. (AP) — It's been a wild week of weather in many parts of the United States, from heat waves to snowstorms to flash floods.

Here's a look at some of the weather events:

Midwest sizzles under heat wave

Millions of people in the Midwest have been enduring dangerous heat and humidity.

An emergency medicine physician treating Minnesota State Fair-goers for heat illnesses saw firefighters cut rings off two people's swollen fingers Monday in hot weather that combined with humidity made it feel well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 degrees Celsius).

Soaring late summer temperatures also prompted some Midwestern schools to let out early or cancel sports practices. The National Weather Service issued heat warnings or advisories across Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Oklahoma. Several cities including Chicago opened cooling centers.

Forecasters said Tuesday also will be scorching hot for areas of the Midwest before the heat wave shifts to the south and east.

West Coast mountains get early snowstorm

An unusually cold storm on the mountain peaks along the West Coast late last week brought a hint of winter in August. The system dropped out of the Gulf of Alaska, down through the Pacific Northwest and into California. Mount Rainier, southeast of Seattle, got a high-elevation dusting, as did central Oregon's Mt. Bachelor resort.

Mount Shasta, the Cascade Range volcano that rises to 14,163 feet (4,317 meters) above far northern California, wore a white blanket after the storm clouds passed. The mountain's Helen Lake, which sits at 10,400 feet (3,170 meters) received about half a foot of snow (15 centimeters), and there were greater amounts at higher elevations, according to the U.S. Forest Service's Shasta Ranger Station.

Tropical storm dumps heavy rain on Hawaii

Three tropical cyclones swirled over the Pacific Ocean on Monday, including Tropical Storm Hone, which brought heavy rain to Hawaii, Hurricane Gilma, which was gaining strength, and Tropical Storm Hector which was churning westward, far off the coast of southern tip of Baja California.

The biggest impacts from Tropical Storm Hone (pronounced hoe-NEH) were rainfall and flash floods

that resulted in road closures, downed power lines and damaged trees in some areas of the Big Island, said William Ahue, a forecaster at the Central Pacific Hurricane Center in Honolulu. No injuries or major damage had been reported, authorities said.

Deadly Alaska landslide crashes into homes

A landslide that cut a path down a steep, thickly forested hillside crashed into several homes in Ketchikan, Alaska, in the latest such disaster to strike the mountainous region. Sunday's slide killed one person and injured three others and prompted the mandatory evacuation of nearby homes in the city, a popular cruise ship stop along the famed Inside Passage in the southeastern Alaska panhandle.

The slide area remained unstable Monday, and authorities said that state and local geologists were arriving to assess the area for potential secondary slides. Last November, six people — including a family of five — were killed when a landslide destroyed two homes in Wrangell, north of Ketchikan.

Flash flood hits Grand Canyon National Park

The body of an Arizona woman who disappeared in Grand Canyon National Park after a flash flood was recovered Sunday, park rangers said. The body of Chenoa Nickerson, 33, was discovered by a group rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, the park said in a statement.

Nickerson was hiking along Havasu Creek about a half-mile (800 meters) from where it meets up with the Colorado River when the flash flood struck. Nickerson's husband was among the more than 100 people safely evacuated.

The flood trapped several hikers in the area above and below Beaver Falls, one of a series of usually blue-green waterfalls that draw tourists from around the world to the Havasupai Tribe's reservation. The area is prone to flooding that turns its iconic waterfalls chocolate brown.

Brazilian moms are leading the charge to secure medical marijuana for sick kids

By GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The 4-year-old boy struggled to balance while walking through the living room. His mother's eyes attentively followed his every move. Then a seizure knocked him to the ground, the dull thud of his small body echoing through the home.

On this July morning in Guarujá, a coastal city in Brazil's state of Sao Paulo, Murillo quickly regained his senses as his mom, Janaína Silva, cradled him.

"From five minutes of agony, it's now just seconds," Silva said, recalling how only three months ago her son's seizures would have lasted much longer. Murillo was diagnosed as a baby with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, a type of epilepsy with multiple types of seizures that cause stiffening and dropping of the head and limbs.

His shorter — and less intense — seizures are a result of a steady dose of liquid cannabidiol (CBD) that Silva can acquire for free through the state public health system. It's a step the federal government has failed to take, as legislation to regulate medical cannabis at the national level has stalled in Congress for years.

In drugstores, a 30 milliliter bottle (1 fluid ounce) of the CBD that Murillo's pediatrician prescribed for his condition costs as much as 900 reais (\$180) — more than half Silva's monthly wages as an office assistant. Since June, she has spent zero on Murillo's CBD medication. Twice a day, she drips the oil into the boy's mouth, and each bottle lasts about 45 days.

Sao Paulo, Brazil's most populous state with over 44 million people, was the first to enact legislation making CBD available for free.

The law was a win for Brazilian moms who have led a decadelong campaign to secure access for their sick children. They have fought through civil disobedience, court petitions, marches and political pressure.

One of the mothers leading the charge is Maria Aparecida Carvalho, 56, a former bank employee. Her daughter, Clárian, was diagnosed at age 10 with Dravet Syndrome, a severe form of epilepsy that can cause

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 36 of 73

cardiorespiratory arrest and lead to sudden death. Her medication caused severe side effects — once she nearly needed hemodialysis from poisoning — and her seizures could last up to one hour. Carvalho and her husband took turns sleeping for fear they could lose their child in the night.

Then they heard of Charlotte Figi, an American girl suffering from the same disease who became the global poster child for medical cannabis. When Carvalho read about her in 2013, she rushed to tell her husband.

“The first thing I said to him was, ‘Let’s go get (cannabis) from drug dealers,’” said Carvalho.

Instead, she was able to obtain some CBD months later, when her daughter’s neurologist smuggled it inside her luggage when returning from an overseas trip. Later on, with the help of a lawyer, she obtained special court permission to start growing marijuana in her backyard in Sao Paulo city, and has been producing the extract for her daughter and 200 other patients.

Existing legislation in Brazil allows the use of cannabis for scientific and medicinal purposes, said Emílio Rodrigues, a lawyer and member of the National Council on Drug Policy. However, cultivating marijuana is still illegal, pushing the industry to import raw materials, such as cannabis oil, causing prices to rise dramatically.

When Caio França, a center-left state lawmaker met Neide Martins, a mother who struggled to secure CBD to treat her son’s rare form of epilepsy, he realized families needed help, particularly those unable to afford medication.

In 2019 França drafted the country’s first bill aiming to allow families to request medication through the public health care system. For three years, he worked to convince his overwhelmingly conservative counterparts, one by one, using testimonials from families who needed marijuana extract as the most effective alternative for their kids’ treatment.

“The political environment was uninformed and prejudiced against cannabis. It was surprising how little my fellow deputies knew about it,” França said.

The bill passed in late 2022, with nearly two-thirds support from the state’s legislature. It was signed into law in January 2023 by an unlikely figure: Gov. Tarcísio de Freitas, a former Cabinet member of former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro who is often floated as a possible new standard-bearer for the political right.

He restricted the bill to patients with three rare medical conditions, including Dravet and Lennox-Gastaut syndromes, citing research showing those were the only ones where cannabis use was proven effective.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, de Freitas said he has a nephew with Dravet who uses medicinal cannabis. Before, he said, the boy would wear a helmet in public, in case a sudden seizure should strike him down.

“Each seizure takes away a little bit of life. And it’s very sad to witness,” the governor said, clutching the podium in both hands. “And then, when you receive this bill, you think: Oh my... finally. This had to be done.”

Recreational marijuana is still prohibited in Brazil, but following years of deliberations, the Supreme Court in June decriminalized it for personal use, up to a maximum-allowed quantity. In response, Brazil’s conservative Congress started pushing for tougher drug legislation.

Even if Congress tightens drug laws for recreational use, that shouldn’t affect access for patients, said Rodrigues, the lawyer. A 2023 poll by Datafolha concluded that opinions about medical cannabis transcend the nation’s deep political polarization.

Use of medicinal cannabis in Brazil is on the rise. In 2023 more than 430,000 Brazilians received cannabis treatment, up nearly 130% from the previous year, according to a survey by Kaya Mind, a business intelligence firm.

Sidarta Ribeiro, a leading Brazilian neuroscientist and founder of the Brain Institute at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, said mothers of sick children have been at the forefront of the struggle. He recently published a book on the subject, titled “The Flowers of Good: the Science and History of Marijuana Liberation.”

“All of this came together over the past ten years to turn the tide, but the game is far from won,” said

Ribeiro.

Coming from a conservative family, Silva, Murillo's mom, says she used to be prejudiced against marijuana, but she changed her mind after seeing how it has benefited her son.

"It's a medication that can give him a better quality of life," she said.

Pope will visit the Istiqlal mosque in Indonesia on the first stop of an interfaith Asian trip

By EDNA TARIGAN and ANDI JATMIKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — When Pope Francis begins his Asia tour next week, one of his early stops will be at Indonesia's iconic Istiqlal mosque.

The 87-year-old head of the Catholic Church will hold an interfaith meeting with representatives of the country's six officially recognized religions as the populous Southeast Asian nation faces growing challenges to its tolerant image.

Francis, who has suffered a slew of health problems and has become increasingly reliant on a wheelchair, has a rigorous schedule during his four-nation visit. He will start his trip in Jakarta on Sept. 3, where he will meet Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

In Istiqlal mosque, the Argentine Jesuit, known for promoting religious dialogue, will meet delegates of Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Catholicism and Protestantism. Indonesia's constitution recognizes the latter two as separate religions. About 87% of the country's 280 million people are Muslim, however, it has the third-largest Christian population in Asia after the Philippines and China. Only 2.9% of the total population is Catholic.

The mosque of Istiqlal, which means independence in Arabic, is the largest in Southeast Asia, covering over 22 acres (9 hectares). Its name is a constant reminder of the country's fight against Dutch colonialists who ruled it for nearly 350 years. Across from the mosque lies the Roman Catholic neo-Gothic Our Lady of The Assumption Cathedral in Jakarta. The proximity of the two houses of worship is symbolic of how religions can peacefully coexist, according to official websites.

The mosque and cathedral are linked by an underpass known as the "Tunnel of Friendship," about 28 meters (91 feet) in length and molded after a handshake gesture to symbolize religious tolerance. The pope is expected to walk through the tunnel.

Istiqlal mosque's Grand Imam Nasaruddin Umar told The Associated Press that Francis choosing Indonesia as the first stop of his Asian visit makes "the Muslim community proud." He also said they will use the pope's visit "to discuss the common ground between religious communities and emphasize the commonalities between religions, ethnicities and beliefs."

Umar acknowledged that an "increasingly plural society" like Indonesia can face more challenges, "but we need to know we live together under God."

While Indonesia's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, over the past several years, its perception as a moderate Muslim nation has been undermined by flaring intolerance, from the imprisonment of Jakarta's Christian governor for blasphemy, which resulted in a series of protests in 2016, to the canings of gay men in Aceh, a province that practices its version of Islamic Shariah law. There were also reports of violence against religious minorities, and some faith groups have been unable to secure building permits for places of worship.

Meanwhile, Cantika Syamsinur, a 23-year-old college student who had just finished praying in Istiqlal mosque and was on her way to the cathedral, said she welcomed the pope's visit and the interfaith meeting. "There are many religions in Indonesia and I hope we respect each other."

Francis will be the third pope to visit Indonesia. The trip was originally planned for 2020 but was called off because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Four years of waiting is quite long," said Susyana Suwadie who heads the cathedral's museum, adding she was overwhelmed by emotions as she awaited the pope's visit. "This important historic moment is finally happening."

Some are hopeful the pope's interreligious meeting will propel changes on a grassroots level. Thomas Ulun Ismoyo, a Catholic Priest who is also the spokesperson for the Pope Francis Visitation Committee in Indonesia, said that religious leaders in Indonesia play a very significant role because the masses listen to them. He said he hopes the pope's visit "will lead to something good" and advocate for a better world where humanity and social justice are prized. Andi Zahra Alifia Masdar, a 19-year-old college student in Jakarta, concurred: "We can be more accepting of each other, more tolerant, and able to live side by side, not always clashing."

Special counsel urges appeals court to reinstate classified documents case against Trump

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special counsel Jack Smith urged a federal appeals court Monday to reinstate the classified documents case against former President Donald Trump, saying a judge's decision that dismissed the prosecution was at odds with longstanding Justice Department practice and must be reversed.

Smith's team said U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon made a grievous mistake by ruling that Smith was unlawfully appointed by Attorney General Merrick Garland. That position, prosecutors wrote in a brief filed with the Atlanta-based appeals court, runs counter to rulings by judges across the country as well as "widespread and longstanding appointment practices in the Department of Justice and across the government."

If allowed to stand, they warned, it could "jeopardize the longstanding operation of the Justice Department and call into question hundreds of appointments throughout the Executive Branch."

"The Attorney General validly appointed the Special Counsel, who is also properly funded," prosecutors wrote. "In ruling otherwise, the district court deviated from binding Supreme Court precedent, misconstrued the statutes that authorized the Special Counsel's appointment, and took inadequate account of the longstanding history of Attorney General appointments of special counsels."

The appeal is the latest development in a prosecution that many legal experts have long considered a straightforward criminal case given the breadth of evidence, including surveillance video and an audio recording of Trump's own words, that Justice Department investigators accumulated during the course of the probe. But over the last year, the case has been snarled by delays as Cannon, a Trump-appointed judge, entertained assorted Trump team motions before ultimately dismissing the prosecution in a stunning decision that brought the proceedings to at least a temporary halt.

It's unclear how long it will take for the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to decide the matter, but even if it overturns Cannon's dismissal and revives the prosecution, there's no chance of a trial before the November presidential election. Trump, if elected, could appoint an attorney general who would dismiss the case. It's also possible that the appeal could reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a statement Monday, Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said "not only should the dismissal of the Lawless Indictment in Florida be affirmed, but be immediately joined by a dismissal of ALL the Witch Hunts."

The case, one of four federal and state prosecutions brought against Trump, includes dozens of felony charges alleging that Trump illegally retained classified documents from his presidency at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida and obstructed the government's efforts to get them back. Trump has pleaded not guilty.

At issue in the appeal is a provision of the Constitution known as the Appointments Clause, which requires presidential approval and Senate confirmation for certain public officials, including judges, ambassadors and "all other officers of the United States."

But the clause also includes an exception for what it says are "inferior officers" who can be appointed directly by the head of an agency. Smith, according to the Justice Department, fits that category and Garland was empowered to name him directly to the role of special counsel.

Smith was appointed special counsel in November 2022 by Garland to investigate Trump's handling of the documents as well as his efforts to undo the 2020 presidential election ahead of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 39 of 73

at the U.S. Capitol. Both investigations resulted in criminal charges, though the election subversion prosecution also faces an uncertain future following a U.S. Supreme Court decision last month that conferred broad immunity on Trump and narrowed the scope of the case.

Defense lawyers in the classified documents case had argued that Smith's appointment violated the Appointments Clause, a motion that prompted Cannon to hold a multi-day hearing in June. The judge sided with the defense, saying that no specific statute permitted Garland's appointment of Smith and noting that Smith was not selected by the president or confirmed by the Senate.

But prosecutors said Monday that no fewer than four statutes give the attorney general the power to appoint a special counsel like Smith — an authority they said has been recognized for decades by judges across the country.

"From before the creation of the Department of Justice until the modern day, Attorneys General have repeatedly appointed special and independent counsels to handle federal investigations, including the prosecution of Jefferson Davis, alleged corruption in federal agencies (including the Department of Justice itself), Watergate, and beyond," Smith's team wrote.

In recent years, the Justice Department, during both Democratic and Republican administrations, has relied on special counsels appointed from outside the agency to conduct investigations into everything from Russian interference on Trump's behalf during the 2016 election to President Joe Biden's handling of classified documents.

Cannon's ruling, prosecutors said, suggests that every special counsel who's been brought in from outside the Justice Department was invalidly appointed and that "Congress repeatedly overlooked the persistent pattern of errors."

"But," they added, "it also goes much further. If the Attorney General lacks the power to appoint inferior officers, that conclusion would invalidate the appointment of every member of the Department who exercises significant authority and occupies a continuing office, other than the few that are specifically identified in statute."

A three-judge panel of the same appeals court overturned Cannon in December 2022, ruling that she had overstepped her bounds during the documents investigation by appointing an independent arbiter to review the classified records seized by the FBI during the Mar-a-Lago estate.

Army private who fled to North Korea will plead guilty to desertion

By ERIC TUCKER and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Army private who fled to North Korea just over a year ago will plead guilty to desertion and four other charges and take responsibility for his conduct, his lawyer said Monday.

Travis King's attorney, Franklin D. Rosenblatt, told The Associated Press that King intends to admit guilt to a total of five military offenses, including desertion and assaulting an officer. Nine other offenses, including possession of sexual images of a child, will be withdrawn and dismissed under the terms of the deal.

King will be given an opportunity at a Sept. 20 hearing at Fort Bliss, Texas, to discuss his actions and explain what he did.

"He wants to take responsibility for the things that he did," Rosenblatt said.

In a separate statement, he added, "Travis is grateful to his friends and family who have supported him, and to all outside his circle who did not pre-judge his case based on the initial allegations."

He declined to comment on a possible sentence that his client might face. Desertion is a serious charge and can result in imprisonment.

The AP reported last month that the two sides were in plea talks.

King bolted across the heavily fortified border from South Korea in July 2023, and became the first American detained in North Korea in nearly five years.

His run into North Korea came soon after he was released from a South Korean prison where he had served nearly two months on assault charges.

About a week after his release from the prison, military officers took him to the airport so he could return

to Fort Bliss to face disciplinary action. He was escorted as far as customs, but instead of getting on the plane, he joined a civilian tour of the Korean border village of Panmunjom. He then ran across the border, which is lined with guards and often crowded with tourists.

He was detained by North Korea, but after about two months, Pyongyang abruptly announced that it would expel him. On Sept. 28, he was flown to back to Texas, and has been in custody there.

The U.S. military in October filed a series of charges against King under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including desertion, as well as kicking and punching other officers, unlawfully possessing alcohol, making a false statement and possessing a video of a child engaged in sexual activity. Those allegations date back to July 10, the same day he was released from the prison.

Judge in Texas orders pause on Biden program that offers legal status to spouses of US citizens

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — A federal judge in Texas on Monday paused a Biden administration policy that would give spouses of U.S. citizens legal status without having to first leave the country, dealing at least a temporary setback to one of the biggest presidential actions to ease a path to citizenship in years.

The administrative stay issued by U.S. District Judge J. Campbell Barker comes just days after 16 states, led by Republican attorneys general, challenged the program that could benefit an estimated 500,000 immigrants in the country, plus about 50,000 of their children. The states accused the administration of bypassing Congress for "blatant political purposes."

One of the states leading the challenge is Texas, which in the lawsuit claimed the state has had to pay tens of millions of dollars annually from health care to law enforcement because of immigrants living in the state without legal status.

President Joe Biden announced the program in June. The court order, which lasts for two weeks but could be extended, comes one week after the Department of Homeland Security began accepting applications.

"The claims are substantial and warrant closer consideration than the court has been able to afford to date," Barker wrote.

Barker was appointed by former President Donald Trump in 2019 as a judge in Tyler, Texas, which lies in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a favored venue for advocates pushing conservative arguments.

The judge laid out a timetable that could produce a decision shortly before the presidential election Nov. 5 or before a newly elected president takes office in January. Barker gave both sides until Oct. 10 to file briefs in the case.

The policy offers spouses of U.S. citizens without legal status, who meet certain criteria, a path to citizenship by applying for a green card and staying in the U.S. while undergoing the process. Traditionally, the process could include a years-long wait outside of the U.S., causing what advocates equate to "family separation."

The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately return an email seeking comment on the order.

"The court's decision tonight to halt the federal government from providing relief is devastating to the thousands of Texas families that could have benefited from this program," Jessica Cisneros, an attorney for the advocacy organization the Texas Immigration Law Council, said Monday.

Several families were notified of the receipt of their applications, according to attorneys advocating for eligible families who filed a motion to intervene earlier Monday.

"Texas should not be able to decide the fate of hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens and their immigrant spouses without confronting their reality," Karen Tumlin, the founder and director of Justice Action Center, said during the press conference before the order was issued.

The program has been particularly contentious in an election year where immigration is one of the biggest issues, with many Republicans attacking the policy and contending it is essentially a form of amnesty for people who broke the law.

Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton cheered the order.

"This is just the first step. We are going to keep fighting for Texas, our country, and the rule of law," Paxton posted on the social media platform X.

To be eligible for the program, immigrants must have lived continuously in the U.S. for at least 10 years, not pose a security threat or have a disqualifying criminal history, and have been married to a citizen by June 17 — the day before the program was announced.

They must pay a \$580 fee to apply and fill out a lengthy application, including an explanation of why they deserve humanitarian parole and a long list of supporting documents proving how long they have been in the country.

If approved, applicants have three years to seek permanent residency. During that period, they can get work authorization.

Before this program, it was complicated for people who were in the U.S. illegally to get a green card after marrying an American citizen. They can be required to return to their home country — often for years — and they always face the risk they may not be allowed back in.

The worldwide catastrophe of rising seas especially imperils Pacific paradises, Guterres says

By SETH BORENSTEIN and CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY AP Science Writer

NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga (AP) — Highlighting seas that are rising at an accelerating rate, especially in the far more vulnerable Pacific island nations, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued yet another climate SOS to the world. This time he said those initials stand for "save our seas."

The United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization Monday issued reports on worsening sea level rise, turbocharged by a warming Earth and melting ice sheets and glaciers. They highlight how the Southwestern Pacific is not only hurt by the rising oceans, but by other climate change effects of ocean acidification and marine heat waves.

Guterres toured Samoa and Tonga and made his climate plea from Tonga's capital on Tuesday at a meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, whose member countries are among those most imperiled by climate change. Next month the United Nations General Assembly holds a special session to discuss rising seas.

"This is a crazy situation," Guterres said. "Rising seas are a crisis entirely of humanity's making. A crisis that will soon swell to an almost unimaginable scale, with no lifeboat to take us back to safety."

"A worldwide catastrophe is putting this Pacific paradise in peril," he said. "The ocean is overflowing."

A report that Guterres' office commissioned found that sea level lapping against Tonga's capital Nuku'alofa had risen 21 centimeters (8.3 inches) between 1990 and 2020, twice the global average of 10 centimeters (3.9 inches). Apia, Samoa, has seen 31 centimeters (1 foot) of rising seas, while Suva-B, Fiji has had 29 centimeters (11.4 inches).

"This puts Pacific Island nations in grave danger," Guterres said. About 90% of the region's people live within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of the rising oceans, he said.

Since 1980, coastal flooding in Guam has jumped from twice a year to 22 times a year. It's gone from five times a year to 43 times a year in the Cook Islands. In Pago Pago, American Samoa, coastal flooding went from zero to 102 times a year, according to the WMO State of the Climate in the South-West Pacific 2023 report.

"Because of sea level rise, the ocean is transforming from being a lifelong friend into a growing threat," Celeste Saulo, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization, told reporters in Nuku'alofa on Tuesday.

While the western edges of the Pacific are seeing sea level rise about twice the global average, the central Pacific is closer to the global average, the WMO said.

Sea levels are rising faster in the western tropical Pacific because of where the melting ice from western Antarctica heads, warmer waters and ocean currents, UN officials said.

Guterres said he can see changes since the last time he was in the region in May 2019.

While he met in Nuku'alofa on Tuesday with Pacific nations on the environment at their leaders' annual

summit, a hundred local high school students and activists from across the Pacific marched for climate justice a few blocks away.

One of the marchers was Itinterunga Rae of the Barnaban Human Rights Defenders Network, whose people were forced generations ago to relocate to Fiji from their Kiribati island home due to environmental degradation. Rae said abandoning Pacific islands should not be seen as a solution to rising seas.

"We promote climate mobility as a solution to be safe from your island that's been destroyed by climate change, but it's not the safest option," he said. Barnabans have been cut off from the source of their culture and heritage, he said.

"The alarm is justified," said S. Jeffress Williams, a retired U.S. Geological Survey sea level scientist. He said it's especially bad for the Pacific islands because most of the islands are at low elevations, so people are more likely to get hurt. Three outside experts said the sea level reports accurately reflect what's happening.

The Pacific is getting hit hard despite only producing 0.2% of heat-trapping gases causing climate change and expanding oceans, the UN said. The largest chunk of the sea rise is from melting ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland. Melting land glaciers add to that, and warmer water also expands based on the laws of physics.

Antarctic and Greenland "melting has greatly accelerated over the past three to four decades due to high rate of warming at the poles," Williams, who was not part of the reports, said in an email.

About 90% of the heat trapped by greenhouse gases goes into the oceans, the UN said.

Globally, sea level rise has been accelerating, the UN report said, echoing peer-reviewed studies. The rate is now the fastest it has been in 3,000 years, Guterres said.

Between 1901 and 1971, the global average sea rise was 1.3 centimeters a decade, according to the UN report. Between 1971 and 2006 it jumped to 1.9 centimeters per decade, then between 2006 and 2018 it was up to 3.7 centimeters a decade. The last decade, seas have risen 4.8 centimeters (1.9 inches).

The UN report also highlighted cities in the richest 20 nations, which account for 80% of the heat-trapping gases, where rising seas are lapping at large population centers. Those cities where sea level rise in the past 30 years has been at least 50% higher than the global average include Shanghai; Perth, Australia; London; Atlantic City, New Jersey; Boston; Miami; and New Orleans.

New Orleans topped the list with 10.2 inches (26 centimeters) of sea level rise between 1990 and 2020. UN officials highlighted the flooding in New York City during 2012's Superstorm Sandy as worsened by rising seas. A 2021 study said climate-driven sea level rise added \$8 billion to the storm's costs.

Guterres is amping up his rhetoric on what he calls "climate chaos" and urged richer nations to step up efforts to reduce carbon emissions, end fossil fuel use and help poorer nations. Yet countries' energy plans show them producing double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than the amount that would limit warming to internationally agreed upon levels, a 2023 UN report found.

Guterres said he expects Pacific island nations to "speak loud and clear" in the next General Assembly, and because they contribute so little to climate change, "they have a moral authority to ask those that are creating accelerating the sea level rise to reverse these trends."

Ukraine counts on new long-range weapon to bypass Western restrictions and hit deep into Russia

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine says it has a new long-range weapon to strike deep into Russia without asking permission from allies — a homegrown combination of missile and drone that the defense minister vowed Monday would provide "answers" to a wave of Russian bombings.

The Paliynytsia was created due to urgent necessity, Ukrainian officials said, as Russia has dominated the skies since the outbreak of the war in February 2022 and Ukraine's Western allies have placed conditions on use of their long-range missiles in Russia. On Monday, a wave of Russian missiles and drones targeted

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 43 of 73

Ukraine's electrical infrastructure in the largest such attack in weeks.

"Defenders of life should have no restrictions on weapons, as long as Russia uses all kinds of its own weapons," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram message following the attacks.

Zelenskyy confirmed on Saturday the existence of the Palianytsia, named after a type of Ukrainian bread and a word so notoriously difficult to pronounce correctly that it was used to unmask suspected spies early in the war. The Ukrainian president called it "a new class" of weapon.

Saturday, which marked Ukraine's 33rd anniversary of independence from the former Soviet Union, also saw the first use of the new weapon, targeting a Russian military installation in the occupied territory, officials said without providing details.

Defense Minister Rustem Umerov promised Monday the weapon would be used again soon in response to the overnight attack on Ukraine.

"Ukraine is preparing its response. Weapons of its own production," he wrote on his Facebook page. "This once again proves that for victory, we need long-range capabilities and the lifting of restrictions on strikes on the enemy's military facilities."

A Ukrainian military video hinted that its range is up to 700 kilometers (430 miles) — on par with the U.S.-supplied ATACMS. It showed a map with various airfields, including Russia's Savasleyka air base, which lies within that range, adding that the Palianytsia can reach at least 20 Russian airfields.

The United States and other Western allies provide long-range weapons to Ukraine but restrict it from launching them deep into Russia for fear of escalating the war. Ukraine can target the border regions but wants to go deeper to attack Russia's military infrastructure.

The Institute for the Study of War said Russia was "leveraging sanctuary space in deep rear areas." It estimated at least 250 militarily significant targets in Russia were within range of the ATACMS missiles, but current restrictions allow Ukraine to strike only 20 of them.

Ukraine's technology minister, Mykhailo Fedorov, told The Associated Press in his first interview about the new weapon that the next step was to scale up the production.

"I think this will be a game changer because we will be able to strike where Russia doesn't expect it today," he said.

Fedorov declined to elaborate on the range or current supply, citing security reasons, but said that he has been involved in the projects for developing domestic missiles since the end of 2022.

Ukraine's battlefields have become a deadly testing lab for new weapons and new adaptations of old ones. Both Ukrainian and Russian forces have rigged off-the-shelf equipment with explosives and military-grade infrared cameras; Russia has retrofitted Soviet-era unguided bombs with GPS harnesses; and Ukraine's underwater drones have crippled Russia's Black Sea fleet.

But the new weapon has been a long-term goal of Ukraine.

One of the specialists involved in the long-range missile project said it was "a completely new development, from scratch" that began about 18 months ago.

"This is not an extension of an old Soviet project," said the specialist, speaking on condition of anonymity to safeguard the project's secrecy. The missile has a solid-fuel booster that accelerates it, followed by a jet engine, the specialist said.

Ukraine says its inability to fight back against Russian long-range weapons has deadly consequences. Ukraine's Commander-in-Chief Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi said Russia has launched 9,627 long-range missiles and Ukraine's defense shot down only a quarter of them, and that more than half the Russian targets were civilian.

The specialist and Fedorov said each missile costs less than \$1 million, and the military is turning to the private sector to bring down production costs further. "The private market generates solutions incredibly quickly," the minister said.

As of this year, private companies have become the main suppliers of drones for the Ukrainian army, including those now striking inside Russia and the underwater ones that have repeatedly struck the Russian Black Sea fleet, said Fedorov.

"All types of missiles will be available in Ukraine," he said. "If we have our own weapons like this, we will feel more independent and confident."

Fedorov added that he believed Russia's vast size could also be its vulnerability.

"It's impossible to produce enough air defense systems to protect such a large territory," he said. "For us, this opens up the possibility of operating deep behind enemy lines."

Russia's deadly overnight barrage of missiles and drones hits over half of Ukraine

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia battered much of Ukraine on Monday, firing scores of missiles and drones that killed four people, injured more than a dozen and damaged energy facilities in attacks that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described as "vile."

The barrage of over 100 missiles and a similar number of drones began around midnight and continued through daybreak in what appeared to be Russia's biggest onslaught in weeks.

Ukraine's air force said swarms of Russian drones fired at eastern, northern, southern, and central regions were followed by volleys of cruise and ballistic missiles.

"Like most previous Russian strikes, this one was just as vile, targeting critical civilian infrastructure," Zelenskyy said, adding that most of the country was targeted — from the Kharkiv region and Kyiv to Odesa and the west.

Explosions were heard in the capital of Kyiv. Power and water supplies in the city were disrupted by the attack, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said Russia fired drones, cruise missiles and hypersonic ballistic Kinzhal missiles at 15 Ukrainian regions — more than half the country.

"The energy infrastructure has once again become the target of Russian terrorists," Shmyhal said, adding that the state-owned power grid operator, Ukrenergo, has been forced to implement emergency power cuts to stabilize the system.

He urged Ukraine's allies to provide it with long-range weapons and permission to use them on targets inside Russia.

"In order to stop the barbaric shelling of Ukrainian cities, it is necessary to destroy the place from which the Russian missiles are launched," Shmyhal said. "We count on the support of our allies and will definitely make Russia pay."

U.S. President Joe Biden called the Russian attack on energy infrastructure "outrageous" and said he had "re-prioritized U.S. air defense exports so they are sent to Ukraine first." He also said the U.S. was "surging energy equipment to Ukraine to repair its systems and strengthen the resilience of Ukraine's energy grid."

The Russian Defense Ministry said the attacks used "long-range precision air- and sea-based weapons and strike drones against critical energy infrastructure facilities that support the operation of Ukraine's military-industrial complex. All designated targets were hit."

At least four people were killed — one in the western city of Lutsk, one in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, one in Zhytomyr in the country's center, and one in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region in the southeast, local officials said. Thirteen others were wounded — one in the Kyiv region that surrounds the capital, five in Lutsk, three in the southern Mykolaiv region and four in the neighboring Odesa region.

Blackouts and damage to civilian infrastructure and residential buildings were reported from the region of Sumy in the east, to the Mykolaiv and Odesa regions in the south, to the region of Rivne in the west.

In Sumy, a province in the east that borders Russia, local administration said that 194 settlements lost power, while 19 others had a partial blackout.

The private energy company DTEK introduced emergency blackouts, saying in a statement that "energy workers throughout the country work 24/7 to restore light in the homes of Ukrainians."

In the wake of the barrage and the power cuts, officials across Ukraine were ordered to open "points of invincibility" — shelter-type places where people can charge their phones and other devices and get

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 45 of 73

refreshments during blackouts, Shmyhal said. Such points were first opened in the fall of 2022, when Russia targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure with weekly barrages.

In neighboring Poland, the military said Polish and NATO air defenses were activated in the eastern part of the country as a result of the attack.

In Russia, meanwhile, officials reported a Ukrainian drone attack overnight.

Four people were injured in the central region of Saratov, where drones hit residential buildings in two cities. One drone struck a residential high-rise in the city of Saratov, and another hit a residential building in the city of Engels, home to a military airfield that had been attacked before, local officials said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said a total of 22 Ukrainian drones were intercepted overnight and in the morning over eight provinces, including the Saratov and Yaroslavl regions in central Russia.

Russia also said its troops had fended off Ukrainian attempts to advance on half a dozen settlements in the Kursk region, where Ukraine launched an incursion on Aug. 6 that caught Russia off-guard.

The fighting in the region has raised concerns about the nuclear power plant there. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said he would visit the plant Tuesday.

In a rare event, fire smoke covers Brazil's capital, prompting federal response

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — The buildings in Brazil's modernist capital, Brasilia, have been enveloped in smoky air the past two days. The central part of the country is just the latest region affected by smoke from fires in the Amazon rainforest, Cerrado savannah, the Pantanal wetland and the state of Sao Paulo.

The smog crisis prompted President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to visit Brazil's fire monitoring center Sunday afternoon. "No fires caused by lightning were detected. This means that people are setting fires in the Amazon, the Pantanal, and especially in the state of Sao Paulo," he said. His government pledged to step up firefighting and investigations to identify the culprits.

Fire alerts so far this month total almost 3,500 in southeastern Sao Paulo state — the most registered in any month since data collection began in 1998. Over half those fires occurred on Aug. 23, raising the suspicion of a coordinated attack. The smog caused 48 cities to declare a red alert. The good news was that a cold front Monday brought declining temperatures and rain, extinguishing all fires, the state government said.

In Brasilia, the air quality index reached a very unhealthy level on Sunday night, according to Brasilia's environment institute. This is the first time the state agency has recorded a smog alert since its creation in 2007. Public events were canceled, and the airport of the nearby city of Goiania was closed for a few hours.

Amazon cities such as Manaus, Porto Velho and Rio Branco have been choking on smoke for several weeks but have received less official and media attention. This is partly because it's an annual occurrence.

"It took the smoke and soot from the Amazon and the Cerrado invading the halls of the presidential palace for the federal government to wake up," Altino Machado, a journalist based in Rio Branco who has been writing about the environment for four decades, told The Associated Press.

In the state of Sao Paulo, two employees working at an industrial plant died Friday while trying to fight back a fire. Additionally, a total of 59,000 hectares (146,000 acres) of sugar cane plantations were destroyed, according to a producers association. In the Amazon, a federal brigade firefighter also died Monday while working in the Capoto Jarina Indigenous Territory.

The smog that covered Sao Paulo state and Brasilia partially originated in the Amazon, Pantanal and Cerrado, according to Karla Longo, a researcher who monitors smoke at the National Institute for Space Research, a federal agency. Longo said changes in climatic conditions are the main reason smoke reached these regions.

During the driest months of August and September, when wildfires and deforestation peak, the smog typically spreads up to 5 million square kilometers (1.9 million square miles), traveling from east to west and then south after hitting the Andean Cordillera. Earlier this month, it reached Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's

southernmost state.

However, the arrival of a cold front displaced the smog toward Sao Paulo state, which was already experiencing a record number of fires, and then spread to Brasilia's region, Longo said.

The researcher also said the number of Brazil's wildfires this year is not outside the norm. However, she noted that burned areas are larger than average. From January through July, an area the size of Italy had burned — 64% larger than the same period last year, according to official data. Fires are traditionally used as the last procedure for deforestation and for managing pasture.

Almost half of Brazil's carbon emissions come from deforestation. The country is the world's fifth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, with almost 3% of global emissions, according to Climate Watch, an online platform managed by World Resources Institute.

Fair-goers scorched by heartland heat wave take refuge under misters as some schools let out early

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

FALCON HEIGHTS, Minn. (AP) — Visitors to the Minnesota State Fair sought relief from soaring temperatures under misters Monday while some Midwestern schools dismissed classes early or called off sports practices.

Highs approaching the century mark combined with oppressive humidity to made it feel like 105 to 115 degrees (40 to 46 Celsius) across the country's heartland, the National Weather Service said. It issued heat warnings or advisories for large swaths of Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

"There's going to be some records in play today," warned Ashton Robinson Cook, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

Several cities opened cooling centers, including in Des Moines, Iowa, where city buses were available to give people free rides to the sites. Experts urged those venturing outside to drink plenty of water.

"It is certainly steamy," said Dr. Haley Taormina, an emergency medicine physician for Regions Hospital EMS, while treating fair-goers in Minnesota for heat illnesses.

By 11 a.m., she already had seen firefighters cut rings off two people's fingers after they became swollen from the heat and salty fair food. Extra health care workers were assigned to the fair's medical stations, and air-conditioned city buses were parked nearby to give sweltering fair-goers a place to escape the heat.

On the fairgrounds, Blake Perkins, of Princeton, Minnesota, watched as his giggling 8- and 7-year-old daughters played under one of the water misters, plotting the rides they planned to go on next. "Thick and humid," was how he described the sticky conditions.

Mikosa Taylor, of St. Paul, sipped on a drink to keep hydrated.

"We are really trying to just make sure that we are staying cool and bringing kids inside when they need to be inside and standing by these misters when necessary," she said.

Brandie Jackson wore a battery-operated cooling fan around her neck while fanning herself with a piece of paper. But she is from Shreveport, Louisiana, so the heat and humidity wasn't unusual for her. "This is the norm," she said.

Meanwhile, Detroit's public schools implemented a 3-hour early release for students Monday and Tuesday because of scorching temperatures. The district said in a post on its webpage that it will decide Monday evening if the early release will be extended to Wednesday. Only 30% of the district's schools have air conditioning available, according to a spokeswoman.

The district has embarked on a 20-year facility master plan and expects that within five years nearly all of its schools will have new HVAC and air conditioning.

In the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Township, the temperature was in the high 80s as a T & J Landscaping crew worked Monday on a drainage issue outside a home. But it was Tuesday that company owner Tom Caramagno said he was more concerned about when the temperature was expected to reach into the 90s.

"Our typical challenge when we have these extreme temperatures is to make sure the guys hydrate

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 47 of 73

themselves," Caramagno said. "If we don't have anything to hydrate, douse yourself with a hose, take breaks, get in the shade. We don't really look for the productivity on days like that, so really it's just putting out more of the emergency fires."

DTE Energy, which provides electricity for much of southeastern Michigan and the state's Thumb region, said the utility is monitoring energy loads on its circuits and making adjustments when needed to keep the power on for customers during times of heavy demand.

"Our teams in the System Operation Center as well as field crews are working around the clock to prepare for the high heat and possible pop-up storms predicted this week," DTE Energy said in an email.

In Chicago, Mayor Brandon Johnson declared "Summer is over!" as students in the nation's fourth-largest school district headed back to class on Monday. Johnson, a former teacher and union organizer, visited a northwest side elementary school to ring in the occasion.

But with temperatures expected to climb to the mid-90s, Chicago officials said recess and physical education classes would be held indoors Monday and Tuesday. District officials also canceled outdoor athletic competitions scheduled for the start of the week.

All classrooms in the district's more than 600 schools have air-conditioning, but common spaces in older buildings, like hallways, often don't. District officials said if air-conditioning units malfunction, they would provide other cooling devices like chillers.

Separately, the city of Chicago opened more than 250 "cooling centers" to the public through Wednesday for residents to get relief.

In Indiana, all Gary Community Schools middle school athletic programs and events were canceled Monday and Tuesday, while all high school athletic teams have been instructed to practice — without exception — indoors, the northwestern Indiana district said Monday in an email.

By midweek, the heat will shift to the South and East, said Cook, the meteorologist with National Weather Service.

"The cool-off is coming," he said. "It's going to take a little bit of time."

U.S. Latinas contributed \$1.3 trillion to the GDP, about as much as Florida's economy, report finds

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press

Latinas contributed \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product in 2021, up from \$661 billion in 2010 and at a growth rate nearly triple that of non-Latinos during the same time period, according to a new report funded by Bank of America and conducted by professors at California Lutheran University and UCLA.

The report was compiled using publicly available economic and demographic data from U.S. agencies and shows "that Latinas are drivers of economic vitality in the United States, giving life to the U.S. economy," said economist Matthew Fienup, one of the study's authors and executive director of California Lutheran University's Center for Economic Research & Forecasting during a Zoom briefing presenting the findings on Monday.

"Latinas outpace their gender and ethnic peers in key economic measures, including record levels of Latina workforce participation, educational attainment, and income growth," he added in a press release.

The \$1.3 trillion economic contribution by Latinas is about as much as the GDP of Florida, and only surpassed by California, Texas and New York, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Fienup says that Latinas' increased economic output and labor force growth — nine times faster than that of non-Latinos — is translating to higher earnings and economic mobility for Latinas.

"We are moving in the right direction. And that wage gap is closing, despite Latinas facing certain disadvantages relative to non-Latinos in the United States," Fienup said, adding that Latinas are outpacing other groups in investments toward starting businesses and homeownership, despite having less access to capital.

Women overall have made vast gains in C-suite and high-earning industry representation. But wage gap improvement has stalled for about 20 years, including for Latinas. Black and Latina workers experience

the largest pay gap of any group.

Titled "Dando Vida a la Economía," meaning "Giving Life to the Economy" in Spanish, the new study builds upon six previous U.S. Latino GDP Reports written in partnership with Bank of America to examine the rapidly growing economic contributions of Latinos living in the U.S.

Several factors are behind Latinas' fast-paced economic growth, according to David Hayes-Bautista, a report co-author and director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at UCLA's School of Medicine.

"Older immigrant Latinas are starting to age out of the workforce, and their shoes are being filled by their U.S.-born daughters and granddaughters," Hayes-Bautista explained during Monday's Zoom briefing. Latina workers today are entering the workforce as functionally bilingual professionals with much higher levels of education than their predecessors, creating a slingshot effect, he added.

"These daughters and granddaughters of immigrants are combining the extraordinary and selfless work ethic of their elders with rapid growth of human capital," Hayes Bautista said.

US appeals court clears way for Florida ban on transgender care for minors

ATLANTA (AP) — A federal appeals court Monday cleared the way for Florida to enforce a ban on gender-affirming care for minors, blocking a lower court order against the ban while the matter is appealed.

The 2-1 decision was issued by the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta. The law revived by the ruling prohibits transgender minors from being prescribed puberty blockers and hormonal treatments, even with their parents' permission. It also required that transgender adults only receive treatment from a doctor and not from a registered nurse or other qualified medical practitioner. Adults who want the treatment must be in the room with the physician when signing the consent form.

U.S. District Judge Judge Robert Hinkle had blocked the law in June.

Florida's attorneys had conceded during the district court trial that the state cannot stop someone from pursuing a transgender identity, but said it can regulate medical care.

For minors, the only treatments at issue are puberty blocking treatments and cross-sex hormones — giving testosterone to someone assigned female at birth, for example. Those who were undergoing treatment when the law was adopted in May 2023 were allowed to continue. Surgery, which is rare for minors, was still blocked.

At least 26 states have adopted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors, and most of those states face lawsuits. Federal judges have struck down the bans in Arkansas and Florida as unconstitutional, though a federal appeals court has stayed the Florida ruling. A judge's order is in place temporarily blocking enforcement of the ban in Montana.

The states that have passed laws restricting or banning gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Mariah Carey's mother and sister died on the same day. The singer says her 'heart is broken'

By KAITLYN HUAMANI Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mariah Carey's mother Patricia and sister Alison both died on the same day, the singer said Monday.

"My heart is broken that I've lost my mother this past weekend. Sadly, in a tragic turn of events, my sister lost her life on the same day," the Grammy-winning singer said in a statement.

"I feel blessed that I was able to spend the last week with my mom before she passed," the statement continued. "I appreciate everyone's love and support and respect for my privacy during this impossible time."

The Times Union reported Monday that Alison, who was largely estranged from Carey, died at 63 from complications with her organ function and that she had been in hospice care.

People Magazine first reported the news of their deaths and Carey's statement.

Patricia was a Juilliard-trained opera singer who Carey credits as an inspiration to her from a young age. "I would sing little tunes around the house, to my mother's delight. And she always encouraged me," she wrote in her 2020 memoir, "The Meaning of Mariah Carey."

Patricia was previously married to Alfred Roy Carey, the singer's father. The parents divorced when the "Vision of Love" singer was 3. Carey grew up in Suffolk County on Long Island and lived primarily with her mother after her parents' divorce. Her father died of cancer in 2002 at age 72.

Carey detailed her complicated relationship with her mother and her sister in her memoir, in which she wrote that she and her mother often clashed, causing her to feel "so much pain and confusion," and accused her sister of putting her in unsafe situations as a child.

"Like many aspects of my life, my journey with my mother has been full of contradictions and competing realities. It's never been only black-and-white — it's been a whole rainbow of emotions," Carey wrote in the book. "Our relationship is a prickly rope of pride, pain, shame, gratitude, jealousy, admiration and disappointment. A complicated love tethers my heart to my mother's."

Carey maintained contact with her mother and even recorded a duet of "O Come All Ye Faithful/Hallelujah Chorus" for the singer's second Christmas album in 2010.

Authorities arrest ex-sheriff's deputy who fatally shot a Black airman at his home

By CURT ANDERSON and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

A former Florida sheriff's deputy charged with killing a Black U.S. Air Force senior airman who answered his apartment door while holding a gun pointed toward the ground was arrested Monday, officials said.

Former Okaloosa County deputy Eddie Duran, 38, was charged with manslaughter with a firearm in the May 3 shooting death of 23-year-old Roger Fortson, Assistant State Attorney Greg Marcille announced Friday. The charge is a first-degree felony punishable by up to 30 years in prison.

Duran was booked into the county jail Monday, records show. Marcille confirmed his arrest to The Associated Press.

"He did, in fact, turn himself in," Marcille said in a telephone interview, adding that Duran's initial court appearance will be via video link Tuesday morning. "He will be held in custody pending his initial appearance."

An attorney representing Duran did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

Authorities say Duran had been directed to Fortson's Fort Walton Beach apartment in response to a domestic disturbance report that turned out to be false.

After repeated knocking, Fortson opened the door while holding his handgun at his side, pointed down. Authorities say that Duran shot him multiple times; only then did he tell Fortson to drop the gun.

On Friday, the day the charge was announced, candles and framed photos of Fortson in uniform graced the doorway of the apartment where he was killed.

According to the internal affairs report of the shooting, Duran told investigators that when Fortson opened the door, he saw aggression in the airman's eyes. He said he fired because, "I'm standing there thinking I'm about to get shot, I'm about to die."

Okaloosa Sheriff Eric Aden fired Duran on May 31 after an internal investigation concluded his life was not in danger when he opened fire. Outside law enforcement experts have also said that an officer cannot shoot only because a possible suspect is holding a gun if there is no threat.

Duran is a law enforcement veteran, starting as a military police officer in the Army. He joined the Okaloosa County sheriff's office in July 2019, but resigned two years later, saying his wife, a nurse, had been transferred to a Naval hospital out of the area. He rejoined the sheriff's office in June 2023.

Okaloosa personnel records show he was reprimanded in 2021 for not completing his assignment to confirm the addresses of three registered sex offenders by visiting their homes, telling a colleague he

didn't care about them. Then assigned to a high school as its on-campus deputy, he was also disciplined that year for leaving the school before the final bell and the students' departure. Florida law requires that an armed guard be on campus when class is in session.

Records of 911 calls show deputies had never been called to Fortson's apartment previously but they had been summoned to a nearby unit 10 times in the previous eight months, including once for a domestic disturbance.

Hospital in central Gaza empties out as Israeli forces draw near

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — One of Gaza's last functioning hospitals has been emptying out in recent days as Israel has ordered the evacuation of nearby areas and signaled a possible ground operation in a town that has been largely spared throughout the war, officials said Monday.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah is the main hospital serving central Gaza. The Israeli military has not ordered its evacuation, but patients and people sheltering there fear that it may be engulfed in fighting or become the target of a raid.

Also on Monday, Israeli strikes in Gaza City and Khan Younis killed at least 19 people, according to local officials, and fighting between Israel and Hezbollah resumed across the Lebanon border.

Israeli forces have invaded several hospitals in Gaza over the course of the 10-month-old war, accusing Hamas of using them for military purposes, allegations denied by Palestinian health officials.

Israeli evacuation orders now cover around 84% of Gaza's territory, according to the United Nations, which estimates that around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have been forced from their homes. Many have been displaced multiple times.

The evacuation orders have reduced the size of the humanitarian zone declared by Israel at the start of the war while crowding more Palestinians into it. Thousands of Palestinian families have packed into tent camps along the beach where aid groups say food and clean water are scarce and disease spreads quickly.

The most recent satellite images available from PlanetLabs and analyzed by The Associated Press show the increase in tent density along the beachfront since July 19.

AP reporters saw people fleeing the hospital and surrounding areas on Monday, many on foot. Some pushed patients on stretchers or carried sick children, while others held bags of clothes, mattresses and blankets. Four schools in the area were also being evacuated.

"Where will we get medicine?" Adliyah al-Najjar said as she rested outside the hospital gate. "Where will patients like me go?"

Fatimah al-Attar fought back tears as she left the hospital compound heading in the direction of the tent camps. "Our fate is to die," she said. "There is no place for us to go. There is no safe place."

The U.N. Office for Humanitarian Affairs known as OCHA said that since Friday the Israeli military has issued three evacuation orders for over 19 neighborhoods in northern Gaza and in Deir al Balah, affecting more than 8,000 people staying in these areas.

The order covers an area including or near UN and other humanitarian centers, the Al Aqsa hospital, two clinics, three wells, one water reservoir and one desalination plant, said Jens Laerke, a spokesman for OCHA.

"This effectively upends a whole lifesaving humanitarian hub," Laerke said.

Doctors Without Borders, an international charity known by its French acronym MSF, said an explosion around 250 meters (yards) from the hospital on Sunday caused panic, accelerating the exodus.

"As a result, MSF is considering whether to suspend wound care for the time being, while trying to maintain life-saving treatment," it said on the platform X.

The hospital says it was treating over 600 patients before the evacuation orders, which apply to residential areas about a kilometer (0.6 mile) away. Around 100 patients remain, including seven in intensive care and eight in the children's ward.

The Israeli military said it was operating against Hamas in Deir al-Balah and working to dismantle its

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 51 of 73

remaining infrastructure there. It said the evacuation orders were issued to protect civilians, and did not include nearby hospitals or medical facilities. It said it had also informed Palestinian health officials that the facilities did not need to be evacuated.

The army has excluded hospitals from past evacuation orders, but patients and others have still fled, fearing for their safety.

Israel's military said Monday that its forces were expanding operations on the outskirts of Deir al-Balah and had discovered weapons in a residential apartment and dismantled an underground Hamas tunnel about 700 meters (765 yards) long.

Local health officials said an Israeli airstrike hit a group of people on the seashore in Gaza City, killing at least seven men while they were fishing.

Another strike hit a vehicle inside the Israeli-declared humanitarian zone near the southern city of Khan Younis, killing at least five people, according to a Kuwaiti field hospital, where the bodies were taken.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on those attacks.

Monday night, a strike hit a house in Maghazi, a refugee camp near Deir al-Balah, and killed at least seven people, including four children and a woman, according to hospital records and AP journalists who counted the bodies. Ambulances recovered the bodies that were taken to Al Aqsa hospital.

The war began on Oct. 7 when Hamas-led militants attacked Israeli army bases and farming communities. The militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and dragged around 250 hostages back to Gaza.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, and caused heavy destruction across much of the territory. Hamas is still holding around 110 hostages, about a third of whom are believed to be dead, after most of the rest were freed in a cease-fire last year.

Israel has continued carrying out strikes across Gaza as the United States, Egypt and Qatar have tried to broker a lasting cease-fire and the release of the remaining hostages. Major gaps remain despite several months of high-level negotiations.

Hospitals have repeatedly been turned into battlegrounds, both literally and in the rival narratives surrounding the war.

Israel's army has raided a number of medical facilities since the start of the war and has provided some evidence that militants were inside some of them. Medical staff deny the allegations and accuse the army of reckless disregard for civilians.

Hospitals can lose their protected status under international law if they are used for military purposes, but any operations against them must be proportional and seek to spare civilians.

Only 16 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are even partially functioning, according to the World Health Organization, even as they treat casualties from daily Israeli airstrikes across the territory. The difficulty of importing and distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza has contributed to widespread hunger and disease outbreaks, further stressing the health sector.

Going local: A new streaming service peeks into news in 2024 election swing states

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fans of politics have another way to keep track of what's happening in the most competitive states in the country through a new service that collects and streams local newscasts.

Swing State Election News, which began operation Monday, lets streamers choose from among 37 local television stations in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. They are primarily local affiliates of CBS, NBC, ABC and Fox.

Those are the states that pollsters have concluded will most likely decide the presidential contest between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. The service will allow people to test the maxim of "all politics is local" by closely following how the campaigns are being waged there.

"Nobody knows local politics better than the journalists in the local communities," said Jack Perry, CEO of Zeam Media.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 52 of 73

Viewers can choose between live and archived programming

Swing State Election News is an outgrowth of Zeam, a free streaming service affiliated with Gray Television that began last winter. Zeam caters to people who have given up cable or satellite television subscriptions by offering hundreds of local market broadcasts. The bulk of its users follow their local markets but a significant number check in on other areas where they may have had ties in the past, the service said.

Zeam doesn't reveal how many people use the service.

Swing State Election News allows users to choose between live programming or archived newscasts. A quick click Monday on a tab, for instance, calls up the morning newscast on WMGT-TV in Macon, Georgia.

As the campaign goes on, Perry said the newscasts will offer a window into rallies and other events held in those states, along with details in local House and Senate races that may impact control of those chambers.

It contrasts with national newscasts, Perry said, because "at the local level, you're going to get a different feel. It's the people actually living in these communities."

You won't see local political commercials, though

One important indicator of how the campaigns are going will be missing, however. A local newscast in the swing states this fall is expected to be filled with commercials for the presidential candidates, which can illustrate some of the campaign strategies and issues they feel are resonating.

Swing State Election News sells its own advertising, however, and will not show what is being seen in the local advertising breaks, Perry said.

In another effort aimed at boosting election news for swing states, The Associated Press said last month it is offering its campaign coverage to a series of small, independent news organizations that can't otherwise afford it.

Latino voting rights group calls for investigation after Texas authorities search homes

By NADIA LATHAN Associated Press/Report for America

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A Latino voting rights group called Monday for a federal investigation after its volunteers said Texas authorities raided their homes and seized phones and computers as part of an investigation by the state's Republican attorney general into allegations of voter fraud.

No charges have been filed against any targets of the searches that took place last week in the San Antonio area. Attorney General Ken Paxton previously confirmed his office had conducted searches after a local prosecutor referred to his office "allegations of election fraud and vote harvesting" during the 2022 election.

Some volunteers whose homes were searched, including an 80-year-old woman who told her associates that agents were at her house for two hours and took medicine, along with her smartphone and watch, railed outside an attorney general's office in San Antonio against the searches.

"We feel like our votes are being suppressed," Roman Palomares, national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, said Monday. "We're going to get to the bottom of it."

The investigation is part of an Election Integrity Unit that Paxton formed in his office. Paxton's office did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment. The federal Justice Department declined to comment.

At least six members had their homes searched, Palomares said. They included Manuel Medina, a San Antonio political consultant, who claimed his home was searched for several hours while agents seized documents, computers and cellphones. Medina is the former head of the Bexar County Democratic Party and is working on the campaign of Democratic state House candidate Cecilia Castellano, whose home was also searched.

Nine officers also entered the home of volunteer Lidia Martinez, 80, who said she expressed confusion about why they were there.

"They sat me down and they started searching all my house, my store room, my garage, kitchen, everything," Martinez said, and interrogated her about other members, including Medina.

The search warrant ordered officials to search any documents related to the election and to confiscate Martinez's devices.

"I'm not doing anything illegal," Martinez said she told agents. "All I do is help the seniors."

Voter fraud is rare, typically occurs in isolated instances and is generally detected. An Associated Press investigation of the 2020 presidential election found fewer than 475 potential cases of voter fraud out of 25.5 million ballots cast in the six states where Trump and his allies disputed his loss to Democratic President Joe Biden.

Ohio prison holds first-ever five-course meal open to public on facility grounds

By PATRICK AFTOORA ORSAGOS Associated Press

GRAFTON, Ohio (AP) — A state prison in northeast Ohio says that for the first time in the state's history, a five-course meal has been served to members of the public with food prepared by incarcerated men from fruits and vegetables grown in the prison garden.

Almost 60 people dined at Grafton Correctional Institution, where incarcerated men in the prison's EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute hosted the event in two prison gardens: the "EDWINS' Garden" and "Hope City Garden."

EDWINS, an organization dedicated to education in prisons, hosted the dinner as part of its culinary course, offered in 652 prisons and jails around the country. The six-month course provides training to incarcerated people, teaching them cooking techniques, safety and sanitation, knife skills and other certifications needed to work in a fine dining establishment.

"Figuratively what is happening is that we're reframing what's possible in prison," said Chef Brandon Chrostowski.

Chrostowski — a James Beard Award semifinalist and finalist for Outstanding Restaurateur — formed a partnership with the staff at Grafton Correctional Institution in 2012, and designed a class to teach incarcerated men about culinary arts and hospitality.

The program was born out of the belief that "every human being, regardless of their past, has the right to a fair and equal future," Chrostowski said.

Bouquets of magenta roses, lilies and other flowers lined a table covered with white linen cloth. Fresh bread and olive oil was set out for each diner. The table was placed in the middle of the two gardens.

Incarcerated men grow a range of fruits, vegetables and herbs ranging from parsley to corn and beets.

Greg Sigelmier, 40, an incarcerated person at GCI, says he looks forward to attending the program every week. He says the class has helped him come out of his shell.

He first signed up to work in the kitchen for the dinner party because he didn't want guests to see how nervous he was.

After some thought and conversation with others close to him, he thought it would be good to challenge himself by doing something that makes him feel uncomfortable. Sigelmier said he's considering working in the industry when he is released in a year.

"This could be the rest of my life. And they're doing this for everybody. They're not looking at me as a number. They're looking at me as a person," Sigelmier said.

The five-course meal began with a beet salad with goat cheese and greens, followed by a kale "purse" with farmer cheese. Guests ate roasted salmon topped with a béarnaise sauce and braised garden greens. Roasted lamb with tomato provencal followed. Dessert included a corn cake with blueberry compote and Chantilly cream.

Each course was paired with a mocktail, one of them named the "botinique" — soda with a thyme-infused honey syrup and lemon.

The program also requires participants to learn each other's working styles and behaviors, and helps them to build relationships over preparing and sharing a meal.

"Working together as the community that we are and at the end getting to eat the food, it's the best

part. You should see the faces on these guys when they're eating just the regular chicken noodle soup that we just all worked together. It's incredible," 28-year-old Efrain Paniagua-Villa said.

Before his incarceration, Paniagua-Villa said he spent a lot of his time cooking at home with his mother and sister. He said cooking with his classmates has helped fill the gap that was left when he began his stint in prison 2 1/2 years ago.

The incarcerated men in the EDWINS culinary program at GCI are serving a variety of sentences from short to life and range in age from 20 to 70, according to the organization.

Some of the men in the EDWINS program will graduate and have the option to apply to work at many restaurants in the Cleveland area upon their release.

"Many of our guys that live here are going home, so they're going home to be our neighbors. We want our neighbors to be prepared to be law-abiding citizens, and that's what this program is about. It's not just about teaching guys how to cook or how to prepare food," said GCI warden Jerry Spatny. "This gives them reentry level skills so that when they go home, they can be successful in that environment."

Harris and Trump squabble over muted mics at upcoming debate

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

The campaigns of Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump are arguing in advance of their high-stakes Sept. 10 debate over whether microphones should be muted except for the candidate whose turn it is to speak.

While it's common for campaigns to quibble beforehand over debate mechanics, both Harris and Trump are under pressure to deliver a strong performance next month in Philadelphia. The first debate during this campaign led to President Joe Biden's departure from the race.

Trump on Sunday night raised the possibility that he might not show up on ABC, posting on his Truth Social network that he had watched the network's Sunday show with a "so-called Panel of Trump Haters" and posited, "why would I do the Debate against Kamala Harris on that network?" and urging followers to "Stay tuned!!"

The current dispute centers on the muting of microphones when a candidate isn't speaking, a condition both Biden and Trump accepted for their June debate hosted by CNN. Both sides are accusing the other of gaming the system to protect their candidate.

Biden's campaign team made microphone muting a condition of its decision to accept any debates this year, and some aides now regret the decision, saying voters were shielded from hearing Trump's outbursts during the debate. That move likely would not have helped the incumbent Democrat's disastrous performance.

The Harris campaign now wants microphones to be live all the time, according to Harris spokesman Brian Fallon, who issued a statement needling Trump.

"Trump's handlers prefer the muted microphone because they don't think their candidate can act presidential for 90 minutes on his own," Fallon said. Harris "is ready to deal with Trump's constant lies and interruptions in real time. Trump should stop hiding behind the mute button."

Trump spokesman Jason Miller retorted that the Republican nominee had "accepted the ABC debate under the exact same terms as the CNN debate." He alleged Harris' representatives sought "a seated debate, with notes, and opening statements."

Miller then took a shot at Harris not sitting for an interview or holding a news conference since Biden ended his reelection and endorsed her, arguing her campaign now wants "to give her a cheat sheet for the debate."

The Harris campaign denied Miller's claim that she wanted notes or to be seated during the debate.

"I'd rather have it probably on," Trump said Monday during a stop in the Washington area, when asked if he wanted microphones muted. "I didn't like it the last time, but it worked out fine," he added, in terms of the policy during his debate with Biden.

"We agreed to the same rules — same rules, same specifications," Trump noted, for his Sept. 10 debate

with Harris. "And I think that's probably what it should be."

Asked how he was preparing for the debate, Trump responded, "I'm not. ... I think my whole life I've been preparing for a debate."

Complicating the negotiations this year is that debates are being orchestrated on an ad hoc basis by host networks, as opposed to the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates, through which debate rules were negotiated privately.

Microphones have been unmuted for both candidates for most of televised presidential debate history. The debate commission announced that its October 2020 debate would have microphones muted when candidates were not recognized to speak after the first Biden-Trump contest descended into a shouting match. The second 2020 debate with the microphone muting rules was widely celebrated for being more substantive than the earlier matchup.

Police in Iceland call off search at ice cave collapse that killed 1 man, saying no one is missing

By DAVID KEYTON and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Icelandic police on Monday called off the search for anyone trapped in the previous day's collapse of an ice cave that killed one person and injured another, saying that all members of the tourist expedition had been accounted for.

Authorities had initially mounted a large-scale rescue operation, with as many as 200 rescuers sifting through the icy rubble by hand to find two people believed to have been missing.

But police eventually determined that no one was unaccounted for after examining the tour operator's records and finding that only 23 people were on the ice cave tour, not 25 as was first believed. Even so, rescuers continued the search until all of the collapsed ice had been moved to be sure that no one had been left behind.

"The police field manager located at the scene announced that all the ice that was thought to have fallen on the people had been moved," police said. "It has come to light that no one (was) hidden under the ice."

The rescue operation began around 3 p.m. local time on Sunday when authorities received reports that an ice cave had collapsed at the Breidamerkurjokull glacier in southeastern Iceland. One man died at the scene and a woman was transported to a hospital in Reykjavik, the capital, by helicopter. Both victims are American citizens, police said.

The search, which was suspended overnight when conditions made it too dangerous, had resumed at about 7 a.m., Icelandic broadcaster RUV reported. Video showed rescuers working inside two large craters surrounded by the sand-blackened ice of the Breidamerkurjokull glacier.

But by the end of the day, they were satisfied that no one else was missing. Police said there had been "misleading information" about the number of people on the trip.

The Association of Icelandic Mountain Guides called for a full investigation and tighter regulations on ice cave tours. Glacier trips during the warmer summer months can be very dangerous, the association said.

The tourism agency is working on a report for the government to discuss regulations regarding trips on the glaciers and especially ice caves tours. The Minister of Tourism Lilja Alfreðsdóttir said that the matter will be discussed in parliament.

Ice caves are a popular destination for visitors to Iceland, with tour operators offering customers the chance to "explore the insides of glaciers" and see the blue color and "stunning patterns" in the ice.

Glaciers cover about 11% of Iceland, an island nation in the north Atlantic that sits on the southern edge of the Arctic Circle. The largest is Vatnajokull, which covers 7,900 square kilometers (3,050 square miles). Breidamerkurjokull is a tongue of Vatnajokull that ends at the Jokulsarlon Lagoon, where icebergs constantly break off from the glacier.

Moving rescue equipment and personnel up to the glacier was difficult due to the rugged terrain, and rescuers had to cut through the ice using chainsaws.

The glacier is about 300 kilometers (185 miles) from a volcano that erupted Friday on the Reykjanes Peninsula in southwestern Iceland.

'Seismic' or 'absolutely horrible'? Helmet communication in major college football is here

By GARY B. GRAVES AP Sports Writer

Louisville coach Jeff Brohm looks forward to being that voice in his player's ear – much like he enjoyed hearing one as an NFL quarterback in the late 1990s.

Brohm just didn't expect college football to take 30 years to follow suit with in-helmet communications. "The NFL has used them ever since I played, which was a long time ago," the second-year Cardinals coach recalled. "So it should have been put into place. But I do think it's time, and you've just got to figure out the best way to utilize it."

After years of debate over cost and equity, the NCAA approved widespread use of helmet communication in April for the Bowl Subdivision, giving 134 teams at the top of the sport the option to use it beginning this season. It will officially debut during this week's full slate of openers and join traditional methods such as huddles, hand signals, wristband play scripts and those clever sideline signs bearing emojis and animation to call plays.

Teams have spent the past four months preparing how to use coach-to-player helmet communications though it's not clear how many will use it. Some programs experimented with it during bowl season last year, but it was optional then and still is.

A single player on offense and a single player on defense will be able to hear from a coach; communication will be turned off with 15 seconds remaining on the play clock or when the ball is snapped, whichever comes first. Designated players will sport a green dot on their helmets.

"On offense, it's seismic," Nebraska coach Matt Rhule said. "You are able to remind the quarterback not just of the play but also the situation. Just the thought process, right? 'Hey, it's third and 7, two downs, take the check down if it's there and it gives us fourth and 3.'"

There is anticipation that the new technology will impact offensive pace and execution and help the defense respond.

"It's definitely an advantage, being able to have that communication with (QBs coach and play-caller Joe) Sloan, making sure we're in the correct play, running the right thing," LSU quarterback Garrett Nussmeier said.

Defense-minded Kentucky coach Mark Stoops said, "It helps us with subtle movements up front on things that we do, from where we shade guys, where we move things compared to the formation and what we think we're getting. It helps remind them and essentially makes some checks in that regard, even if they're subtle or big changes."

Long time coming

Years of discussion about cost and equitable use delayed approval of an electronic system similar to the NFL, which implemented transmitters between coaches and QBs in 1994 and then defensive players 14 years later. The Pro Football Hall of Fame says the innovation was introduced in 1956, when Ohio inventors John Campbell and George Sarles developed an audio receiver and pitched it to Cleveland Browns Paul Brown for quarterback George Ratterman. The Browns used it in an exhibition and several games before NFL Commissioner Bert Bell banned it.

Dallas Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy recalled the NFL's approval to helmet communication decades later as "a transition" from signals and pointed to different parts of his body to demonstrate the gyrations done to relay calls. He also remembers working with many QBs who had different preferences.

"My experience is some guys, they want a lot of information," said McCarthy, who coached the Green Bay Packers to a Super Bowl title in the 2010 season, "Some guys want as little as possible. Like Rich Gannon, you couldn't get off quick enough. Brett Favre, you could talk to him all the way down to 15 seconds. So, I mean, just certain guys are different, so that's what I found was the biggest transition going from

signals to the helmet speaker because it's different."

Mixed reaction

Like any changes in sports, reactions on college football's top tier already vary between yay and nay. Texas Tech coach Joey McGuire's disapproval featured numerous adjectives along with a reminder that old habits will remain.

"It's an absolutely horrible rule," he said. "It's really, really comical. You're still going to see everybody signal. ... We actually experimented with letting a linebacker that has it on tell the other linebacker and then they were going to communicate to the two levels. We got lit up like a Christmas tree. It was a fiasco.

"So, please, for all the other coaches we play, don't signal. Have one guy trying to communicate it to everybody on the field whenever you're playing college football in tempo."

Approval of the communication came in the wake of allegations last fall of sign-stealing and impermissible scouting by Michigan, which the NCAA is investigating. The NCAA does not ban efforts to decipher an opponent's sideline signs on game days — advanced, in-person scouting is banned — and that practice is likely to continue. It just becomes a little harder with players hearing plays straight from coaches' mouths.

What to expect

It remains to be seen which side of the ball will benefit most from the technology. At the very least, plays could feature more clarity with perspectives that could benefit many positions.

Although Auburn coach Hugh Freeze hinted at throwing the communications "on the ground" earlier in fall camp as he adapts, he appeared intrigued about how it may streamline the pre-snap process — if not spark debate over whether to say more or less.

"I think everybody's trying to maneuver around that," he said. "You know, do we hold it until 15 seconds so that the defense can't, and then you put it all on (Rebels quarterback) Payton (Thorne) or do we try to start with 30 seconds talking to him and knowing that they still could change with 15. We're all dealing with that."

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 58 of 73

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 conversation. 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 more than 200 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.”

Ultraprocessed foods are everywhere. How bad are they?

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Whether they know it or not, most Americans don’t go a day — or often a single meal — without eating ultraprocessed foods.

From sugary cereals at breakfast to frozen pizzas at dinner, plus in-between snacks of potato chips, sodas and ice cream, ultraprocessed foods make up about 60% of the U.S. diet. For kids and teens, it’s even higher — about two-thirds of what they eat.

That’s concerning because ultraprocessed foods have been linked to a host of negative health effects, from obesity and diabetes to heart disease, depression, dementia and more. One recent study suggested that eating these foods may raise the risk of early death.

Nutrition science is tricky, though, and most research so far has found connections, not proof, regarding the health consequences of these foods.

Food manufacturers argue that processing boosts food safety and supplies and offers a cheap, convenient way to provide a diverse and nutritious diet.

Even if the science were clear, it’s hard to know what practical advice to give when ultraprocessed foods account for what one study estimates is 73% of the U.S. food supply.

The Associated Press asked several nutrition experts and here’s what they said:

What are ultraprocessed foods?

Most foods are processed, whether it’s by freezing, grinding, fermentation, pasteurization or other means. In 2009, Brazilian epidemiologist Carlos Monteiro and colleagues first proposed a system that classifies foods according to the amount of processing they undergo, not by nutrient content.

At the top of the four-tier scale are foods created through industrial processes and with ingredients such as additives, colors and preservatives that you couldn’t duplicate in a home kitchen, said Kevin Hall, a researcher who focuses on metabolism and diet at the National Institutes of Health.

“These are most, but not all, of the packaged foods you see,” Hall said.

Such foods are often made to be both cheap and irresistibly delicious, said Dr. Neena Prasad, director of the Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Food Policy Program.

“They have just the right combination of sugar, salt and fat and you just can’t stop eating them,” Prasad said

However, the level of processing alone doesn’t determine whether a food is unhealthy or not, Hall noted. Whole-grain bread, yogurt, tofu and infant formula are all highly processed, for instance, but they’re also nutritious.

Are ultraprocessed foods harmful?

Here’s the tricky part. Many studies suggest that diets high in such foods are linked to negative health outcomes. But these kinds of studies can’t say whether the foods are the cause of the negative effects — or whether there’s something else about the people who eat these foods that might be responsible.

At the same time, ultraprocessed foods, as a group, tend to have higher amounts of sodium, saturated fat and sugar, and tend to be lower in fiber and protein. It’s not clear whether it’s just these nutrients that are driving the effects.

Hall and his colleagues were the first to conduct a small but influential experiment that directly compared the results of eating similar diets made of ultraprocessed versus unprocessed foods.

Published in 2019, the research included 20 adults who went to live at an NIH center for a month. They received diets of ultraprocessed and unprocessed foods matched for calories, sugar, fat, fiber and macronutrients for two weeks each and were told to eat as much as they liked.

When participants ate the diet of ultraprocessed foods, they consumed about 500 calories per day more than when they ate unprocessed foods, researchers found — and they gained an average of about 2 pounds (1 kilogram) during the study period. When they ate only unprocessed foods for the same amount of time, they lost about 2 pounds (1 kilogram).

Hall is conducting a more detailed study now, but the process is slow and costly and results aren't expected until late next year. He and others argue that such definitive research is needed to determine exactly how ultraprocessed foods affect consumption.

"It's better to understand the mechanisms by which they drive the deleterious health consequences, if they're driving them," he said.

Should ultraprocessed foods be regulated?

Some advocates, like Prasad, argue that the large body of research linking ultraprocessed foods to poor health should be more than enough to spur government and industry to change policies. She calls for actions such as increased taxes on sugary drinks, stricter sodium restrictions for manufacturers and cracking down on marketing of such foods to children, the same way tobacco marketing is curtailed.

"Do we want to risk our kids getting sicker while we wait for this perfect evidence to emerge?" Prasad said. Earlier this year, FDA Commissioner Robert Califf broached the subject, telling a conference of food policy experts that ultraprocessed foods are "one of the most complex things I've ever dealt with."

But, he concluded, "We've got to have the scientific basis and then we've got to follow through."

How should consumers manage ultraprocessed foods at home?

In countries like the U.S., it's hard to avoid highly processed foods — and not clear which ones should be targeted, said Aviva Musicus, science director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which advocates for food policies.

"The range of ultraprocessed foods is just so wide," she said.

Instead, it's better to be mindful of the ingredients in foods. Check the labels and make choices that align with the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines, she suggested.

"We have really good evidence that added sugar is not great for us. We have evidence that high-sodium foods are not great for us," she said. "We have great evidence that fruits and vegetables which are minimally processed are really good for us."

It's important not to vilify certain foods, she added. Many consumers don't have the time or money to cook most meals from scratch.

"I think foods should be joyous and delicious and shouldn't involve moral judgment," Musicus said.

What's behind the bloodiest recent attacks in Pakistan's Baluchistan province?

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Multiple attacks in Pakistan's restive southwest have killed at least 38 people, the highest death toll in a 24-hour period blamed on separatists in Baluchistan province in recent years.

Gunmen mowed down people after dragging them off buses, cars and trucks. Police and passersby were fatally shot in broad daylight in another district. A railway bridge connecting the province with the rest of the country was blown up. A police station was attacked. There have been other reports of shootings.

The assaults were more audacious and brutal than the ones usually perpetrated by militants, who normally target security personnel or installations.

Here's a look at what is happening in Baluchistan:

The background

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 61 of 73

Though Pakistan's largest province, Baluchistan is its least populated, made up largely of high mountains. It's also a hub for the country's ethnic Baluch minority, whose members say they face discrimination and exploitation by the central government. That has fuelled a separatist insurgency demanding independence. Islamic militants also operate in the province.

The government says it has largely quelled the violence, but assaults persist with raids by security forces and counterattacks.

Who's who?

The main player is the outlawed Baluchistan Liberation Army, which Pakistan and the U.S. have designated as a terrorist organization. It opposes the Pakistani government and wants a sovereign state that includes territories in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. It targets security forces in Baluchistan and sometimes Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and economic hub in Sindh province next door.

The BLA frequently, but not always, claims attacks. It has been banned since 2006.

The group was emboldened by the Pakistani Taliban ending a cease-fire with the government in November 2022 and ordering their fighters to resume attacks on the military. Islamabad-based analyst Abdullah Khan said the BLA is operating in the province with the support of other groups.

Last December, the leader of another insurgent group said he had surrendered to authorities with some 70 of his followers. Sarfraz Bungulzai, from the Baluch National Army, declared his regret for his role in kidnapping civilians for ransom and killing unarmed people.

The neighborhood

The volatile relationship between Iran and Pakistan compounds the insecurity and instability. They share a 900-kilometre (560-mile), largely lawless border where smugglers and fighters roam freely.

Insurgencies on either side of the Iran-Pakistan border have frustrated both countries. Their governments suspect each other of supporting — or at least tolerating — some of the groups operating on the other side of the border.

Massive Chinese-led infrastructure projects are also driving unrest, as separatists accuse the federal government of unfairly exploiting oil- and mineral-rich Baluchistan at the expense of locals.

Thousands of Chinese workers are in Pakistan, most of them involved in Beijing's multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative that connects south and central Asia with the Chinese capital.

What's different about the latest attacks?

Separatists, usually from the BLA, launch small-scale assaults on security forces and installations, with the death toll in the single digits.

But the coordination and tactics of the past 24 hours reveal a greater level of ambition, defiance and sheer brutality. The BLA had warned people to stay away from highways ahead of the attacks — it doesn't normally give notice.

Sunday night's highway assault was reminiscent of one in April, when gunmen killed nine people after abducting them from a bus. The same attackers had earlier killed two people and wounded six in another car that they forced to stop. Both incidents were claimed by the BLA.

In May, gunmen fatally shot seven barbers, all from eastern Punjab province, apparently part of a drive to force outsiders to leave Baluchistan.

Analyst Khan said the BLA is getting better at mobilising fighters in different areas and that its operational capabilities have increased tremendously. Authorities estimate the BLA has around 3,000 fighters.

What's the impact?

Islamabad-based security analyst Syed Muhammad Ali said the latest killings are an attempt to harm the province economically, because "the weakening of Baluchistan means the weakening of Pakistan."

While insurgent attacks aim to discourage people from outside the region from travelling, trading, or working in the province, they also make life harder for the Balochis by discouraging investment, aid and disrupting the flow of goods and services, Ali said.

A decadeslong crackdown and heavy-handed militarization to combat militancy creates additional trauma for locals, who have deep grievances about enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Thousands protested last month against police violence, an internet shutdown and highway closures. At

least one person was reportedly killed.

Analyst Khan said the timing was an attempt to sabotage Pakistan's effort to present the province as a secure place for international investment.

Gunmen kill dozens in multiple attacks in one of the deadliest days in a Pakistani province

By ABDUL SATTAR and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan (AP) — Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan killed at least 38 people in three separate attacks on Monday, officials said, while the military said security forces killed 21 insurgents, marking one of the deadliest days of violence in the restive Baluchistan province, with reports of other shootings and destruction in the area as well.

Twenty-three people were fatally shot overnight after being 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 Baluchistan's Qalat district, authorities said. The bodies of six people were found in Bolan, where insurgents also blew up a railway track. They also attacked a police station in Mastung and attacked and burned vehicles in Gwadar, all districts in Baluchistan. No casualties were reported in those attacks.

The military said 14 security forces were "martyred" while responding to the attacks. Those appeared to be included in the overall death toll.

"Sanitization operations are being conducted and the instigators, perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of these heinous and cowardly acts, targeting innocent civilians, will be brought to justice," the military said in a statement.

Sarfraz Bugti, the chief minister in Baluchistan, told reporters in Quetta that operations against the insurgents are underway, and "those who killed our innocent civilians and security will be dealt with a full force."

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.

It said one female suicide bomber also took part in the attack on security forces.

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, saying the "attacks are a matter of grave concern" and urging the Baluchistan government to "step up efforts to eliminate BLA terrorists."

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

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. They also killed two people and wounded six in another car they forced to stop. The BLA claimed responsibility

for those attacks.

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 of weakening Baluchistan economically, noting that "the weakening of Baluchistan means the weakening of Pakistan."

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.

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.

It looked like Israel and Hezbollah had gone to war, but then they pulled back. Here's what to know

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah pulled back after an exchange of heavy fire over the weekend that briefly raised fears of an all-out war.

But their decades-long conflict is far from over, regional tensions linked to the war in Gaza are still high, and it's probably only a matter of time before another escalation.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah did not rule out another retaliatory strike over the killing of a top commander in an Israeli airstrike last month. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said "this is not the end of the story."

The near-daily strikes and counterstrikes along the border, which began shortly after the outbreak of the Gaza war, resumed Monday. Israel struck a Lebanese border village and a car, and Hezbollah said it had targeted military surveillance equipment in northern Israel with an exploding drone.

Here's a look at what happened over the weekend:

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.

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. It was all over by mid-morning Sunday, and the rest of the day and night passed without incident.

Hezbollah called the attack an initial response to the targeted killing of one of its top commanders, Fouad Shukur, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut last month. Nasrallah said Hezbollah would "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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 64 of 73

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.

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. 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.

An all-out war might have derailed the process, and Nasrallah said the attack had been delayed in part to give the negotiations a chance to succeed. Hezbollah has said it will halt its attacks along the border if there is a cease-fire in Gaza.

It's unclear whether Iran would halt or scale back its own threatened retaliatory strike over the killing of Haniyeh, but Tehran probably does not want 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 with no sign of a breakthrough.

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, 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 Mel-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 66 of 73

lencamp'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 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."

Hone weakens to tropical storm and sweeps 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 tropi-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 67 of 73

cal 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.

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.

German leader vows tougher knife laws and more deportations after fatal attack in Solingen

By DANIEL NIEMANN and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

SOLINGEN, Germany (AP) — German Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed to toughen knife laws and step up deportations of rejected asylum-seekers Monday as he visited the scene of the knife attack in which a suspected Islamic extremist from Syria is accused of killing three people.

Scholz, speaking after he joined regional officials in laying a white rose at a makeshift memorial in the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 68 of 73

western city of Solingen, said he was "furious and angry" about the attack, in which eight people also were wounded.

The suspect turned himself in to police on Saturday evening, a day after the attack at a festival marking the city's 650th anniversary. Federal prosecutors said Sunday that he shared the radical ideology of the Islamic State group, which he joined at a point that remains unclear, and was acting on those beliefs when he stabbed his victims repeatedly from behind in the neck and upper body.

The 26-year-old had had his asylum application rejected and was supposed to be deported last year to Bulgaria, where he first entered the European Union, but that failed because he disappeared for a time, according to German media reports.

That has revived criticism of the government on migration and deportation, an issue on which it has long been vulnerable. It has taken steps to defuse the issue, for example with legislation intended to ease deportations of unsuccessful asylum-seekers that was approved by lawmakers in January. It also has launched legislation to ease the deportation of foreigners who publicly approve of terrorist acts.

"We must do everything to ensure that such things never happen in our country, if possible," Scholz said of the attack. He said that would include toughening knife laws in particular "and this should and will happen very quickly."

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser earlier this month proposed allowing only knives with a blade measuring up to 6 centimeters (nearly 2.4 inches) to be carried in public, rather than the length of 12 centimeters (4.7 inches) that is allowed now.

"We will have to do everything so that those who aren't allowed to stay in Germany are sent back and deported," he said, adding that "we have massively expanded the possibilities to carry out such deportations."

Scholz said there had been a 30% increase in deportations this year already, but "we will look very closely at how we can contribute to raising these figures even further." He said measures including border checks on Germany's eastern frontiers have reduced the number of migrants arriving "irregularly," but there's room for improvement there too.

Following a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant in Mannheim at the end of May that left one police officer dead and four more people injured, Scholz vowed that Germany will start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again.

Germany does not currently carry out deportations to those countries. The government has no diplomatic relations with the Taliban in Kabul, and so far considers the security situation in Syria too fragile to allow deportations there. But Scholz said in June that his government was working on solutions to enable the deportation of convicted Afghans to Afghanistan's neighboring countries, and there has been discussion in Germany about allowing deportations to Syria.

Critics say there has been little movement since. Interior Ministry spokesperson Sonja Kock said Monday the government is still working "intensively" on that.

Scholz spoke alongside Hendrik Wüst, the governor of North Rhine-Westphalia state and a member of Germany's mainstream conservative opposition, which has long criticized the government on migration. He said was "thankful" that more action had been announced but "announcements alone won't be enough."

"Action must follow," Wüst said.

Opposition leader Friedrich Merz, the leader of Wüst's Christian Democratic Union, complained on ARD television Sunday evening that "we have been discussing the consequences of Mannheim for three months ... it's enough. We must now do something together."

"We have people in Germany we don't want to have here, and we must ensure that we don't have even more coming," Merz said, arguing that such migrants should be turned back at the country's borders.

The Solingen attack came ahead of state elections this weekend in two eastern regions, Saxony and Thuringia, in which the far-right Alternative for Germany party is very strong and the parties in Scholz's three-party coalition already looked set for dismal results.

She's the sitting vice president. She's the candidate of change. How Harris is having it both ways

By ZEKE MILLER and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — She's the sitting vice president who has been in office for 3 1/2 years. She's also the presidential candidate of just five weeks promising a "new way forward."

Kamala Harris is having it both ways as she hits the campaign trail after the Democratic National Convention, taking credit for parts of President Joe Biden's record in rallies staged in front of Air Force Two while casting herself as a new leader who rails against "the politics of the past."

In every presidential cycle candidates run on experience or freshness, but Harris so far appears to be successfully harmonizing two seemingly competing messages, much to the frustration of former President Donald Trump and his allies.

"She has this powerful and unique and interesting advantage that we have never seen before in our politics," said Patrick Gaspard, CEO of the Democratic-leaning think tank Center for American Progress Action Fund and a former executive director of the Democratic National Committee under President Barack Obama.

"She is both an incumbent," he said, and "she's been able to seize the 'change' banner away from Donald Trump."

Harris' vision for the country has leaned heavily on Biden plans, to the point of not rewriting those plans even after Biden dropped out. The platform approved by the DNC was passed last week with frequent — and outdated — mentions of a Biden "second term."

Her presentation as someone offering a "new way forward" relies in large part on being someone different from the norm. The 59-year-old daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants replaced an 81-year-old white man who first ran for president 36 years ago. She is running to become the nation's first female president and first Black woman or person of South Asian descent to serve.

Two-thirds of Democrats wanted Biden to drop out after his debate performance against Trump, which crystallized longstanding concerns among the public and many prominent Democrats in private about his readiness.

Whit Ayres, a Republican pollster, said Harris' ability to embody change has "a lot more to do with her age, her race and her gender, than it has to do with any policy positions that she's articulated." He added, "That shouts change."

In the view of her aides, Harris is offering what voters seem to have been craving all year: a new messenger, but one thus far offering modest evolution of the Biden-Harris record.

"She is her own leader, of course," Brian Nelson, her senior campaign policy adviser, told reporters at a Bloomberg event at the DNC. "But she's a leader who has been a partner to President Biden for these last three and a half years," adding, they have "shared values and principles."

The Trump campaign has attacked her lack of policy specifics and tried to portray her as someone far more liberal than she's letting on. Perhaps trying to set expectations before new polls emerge, the campaign predicted on Saturday that Harris would see a post-convention bump in her polling and blamed what it called the "Harris Honeymoon."

"We've certainly had a front row seat to the 'honeymoon,'" wrote Trump pollsters Tony Fabrizio and Travis Tunis. "In fact, the Media decided to extend the honeymoon for over 4 weeks now."

Harris' campaign announced Sunday that it raised \$82 million during the week of the Democratic National Convention and a staggering \$540 million since Biden quit the race and endorsed her on July 21.

Harris has sought to take credit for parts of Biden's foreign policy record. In her convention address, she said she had met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy "to warn him about Russia's plan to invade" five days before Russia launched its full-scale attack. They met at the Munich Security Conference in Germany, at a time when the U.S. had been warning publicly and privately for months about an invasion and already working with Ukrainian forces to prepare.

Trump will continue trying to stick Harris with the less rosy parts of the Biden record. On Monday, he is

expected to visit Arlington National Cemetery to pay his respects to service members killed in the bombing outside Kabul airport three years ago during the calamitous U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Trump will then go to Michigan to address the National Guard Association of the United States conference.

Harris confirmed to CNN in August 2021 that she was the so-called last person in the room when Biden made his decision to withdraw.

"This is a president who has an extraordinary amount of courage," she told the network then. "I wish that the American public can see sometimes what I see, because ultimately – and the decision always rests with him – but I have seen him over and over again make decisions based exactly on what he believes is right. Regardless of what maybe the political people tell him is in his best self-interest."

Implicit in Harris' messaging now is the argument that Biden was also part of the politics of the past — even as she takes credit for his record and lauds him publicly. Harris' first national ad after the convention aims to lean into the generational contrast with Trump. "Instead of being focused on the politics of the past, we need to be thinking about the future."

Voters, said former Obama aide Dan Pfeiffer, "are thirsting for a new, more hopeful politics."

"If she can prove to people that she can turn the page, then Kamala Harris will win," she said.

Dutch watchdog fines Uber \$324 million for alleged inadequate protection of drivers' data

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The Dutch data protection watchdog slapped a 290 million euro (\$324 million) fine Monday on ride-hailing service Uber for allegedly transferring personal details of European drivers to the United States without adequate protection. Uber called the decision flawed and unjustified and said it would appeal.

The Dutch Data Protection Authority said the data transfers spanning more than two years amounted to a serious breach of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, which requires technical and organizational measures aimed at protecting user data.

"In Europe, the GDPR protects the fundamental rights of people, by requiring businesses and governments to handle personal data with due care," Dutch DPA chairman Aleid Wolfsen said in a statement.

"But sadly, this is not self-evident outside Europe. Think of governments that can tap data on a large scale. That is why businesses are usually obliged to take additional measures if they store personal data of Europeans outside the European Union. Uber did not meet the requirements of the GDPR to ensure the level of protection to the data with regard to transfers to the U.S. That is very serious."

The case was initiated by complaints from 170 French Uber drivers, but the Dutch authority issued the fine because Uber's European headquarters is in the Netherlands.

Uber insisted it did nothing wrong.

"This flawed decision and extraordinary fine are completely unjustified. Uber's cross-border data transfer process was compliant with GDPR during a 3-year period of immense uncertainty between the EU and U.S. We will appeal and remain confident that common sense will prevail," the company said in a statement.

The alleged breach came after the EU's top court ruled in 2020 that an agreement known as Privacy Shield that allowed thousands of companies — from tech giants to small financial firms — to transfer data to the United States was invalid because the American government could snoop on people's data.

The Dutch data protection agency said that following the EU court ruling, standard clauses in contracts could provide a basis for transferring data outside the EU, "but only if an equivalent level of protection can be guaranteed in practice."

"Because Uber no longer used Standard Contractual Clauses from August 2021, the data of drivers from the EU were insufficiently protected," the watchdog said. It added that Uber has been using the successor to Privacy Shield since the end of last year, ending the alleged breach.

The Computer & Communications Industry Association, an advocacy organization for tech companies,

said the fine ignored the realities of online business in the aftermath of the 2020 EU court ruling.

"The busiest internet route in the world could not simply be put on hold for three entire years while governments worked to establish a new legal framework for these data flows," the association's European head of policy, Alexandre Roure, said in a statement.

"Any retroactive fines by data protection authorities are especially worrisome given that these very privacy watchdogs failed to provide helpful guidance during this period of significant legal uncertainty, in absence of any clear legal framework," he added.

Monday's announcement is not the first time the Dutch data protection watchdog has fined Uber. In January, the agency fined it 10 million euros over what it said was the company's failure to disclose how long it retained data from drivers in Europe or to name non-EU countries it shared the data with.

Police officers are starting to use AI chatbots to write crime reports. Will they hold up in court?

By SEAN MURPHY and MATT O'BRIEN

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A body camera captured every word and bark uttered as police Sgt. Matt Gilmore and his K-9 dog, Gunner, searched for a group of suspects for nearly an hour.

Normally, the Oklahoma City police sergeant would grab his laptop and spend another 30 to 45 minutes writing up a report about the search. But this time he had artificial intelligence write the first draft.

Pulling from all the sounds and radio chatter picked up by the microphone attached to Gilbert's body camera, the AI tool churned out a report in eight seconds.

"It was a better report than I could have ever written, and it was 100% accurate. It flowed better," Gilbert said. It even documented a fact he didn't remember hearing — another officer's mention of the color of the car the suspects ran from.

Oklahoma City's police department is one of a handful to experiment with AI chatbots to produce the first drafts of incident reports. Police officers who've tried it are enthused about the time-saving technology, while some prosecutors, police watchdogs and legal scholars have concerns about how it could alter a fundamental document in the criminal justice system that plays a role in who gets prosecuted or imprisoned.

Built with the same technology as ChatGPT and sold by Axon, best known for developing the Taser and as the dominant U.S. supplier of body cameras, it could become what Gilbert describes as another "game changer" for police work.

"They become police officers because they want to do police work, and spending half their day doing data entry is just a tedious part of the job that they hate," said Axon's founder and CEO Rick Smith, describing the new AI product — called Draft One — as having the "most positive reaction" of any product the company has introduced.

"Now, there's certainly concerns," Smith added. In particular, he said district attorneys prosecuting a criminal case want to be sure that police officers — not solely an AI chatbot — are responsible for authoring their reports because they may have to testify in court about what they witnessed.

"They never want to get an officer on the stand who says, well, 'The AI wrote that, I didn't,'" Smith said.

AI technology is not new to police agencies, which have adopted algorithmic tools to read license plates, recognize suspects' faces, detect gunshot sounds and predict where crimes might occur. Many of those applications have come with privacy and civil rights concerns and attempts by legislators to set safeguards. But the introduction of AI-generated police reports is so new that there are few, if any, guardrails guiding their use.

Concerns about society's racial biases and prejudices getting built into AI technology are just part of what Oklahoma City community activist aurelius francisco finds "deeply troubling" about the new tool, which he learned about from The Associated Press.

"The fact that the technology is being used by the same company that provides Tasers to the department is alarming enough," said francisco, a co-founder of the Foundation for Liberating Minds in Oklahoma City.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 72 of 73

He said automating those reports will "ease the police's ability to harass, surveil and inflict violence on community members. While making the cop's job easier, it makes Black and brown people's lives harder."

Before trying out the tool in Oklahoma City, police officials showed it to local prosecutors who advised some caution before using it on high-stakes criminal cases. For now, it's only used for minor incident reports that don't lead to someone getting arrested.

"So no arrests, no felonies, no violent crimes," said Oklahoma City police Capt. Jason Bussert, who handles information technology for the 1,170-officer department.

That's not the case in another city, Lafayette, Indiana, where Police Chief Scott Galloway told the AP that all of his officers can use Draft One on any kind of case and it's been "incredibly popular" since the pilot began earlier this year.

Or in Fort Collins, Colorado, where police Sgt. Robert Younger said officers are free to use it on any type of report, though they discovered it doesn't work well on patrols of the city's downtown bar district because of an "overwhelming amount of noise."

Along with using AI to analyze and summarize the audio recording, Axon experimented with computer vision to summarize what's "seen" in the video footage, before quickly realizing that the technology was not ready.

"Given all the sensitivities around policing, around race and other identities of people involved, that's an area where I think we're going to have to do some real work before we would introduce it," said Smith, the Axon CEO, describing some of the tested responses as not "overtly racist" but insensitive in other ways.

Those experiments led Axon to focus squarely on audio in the product unveiled in April during its annual company conference for police officials.

The technology relies on the same generative AI model that powers ChatGPT, made by San Francisco-based OpenAI. OpenAI is a close business partner with Microsoft, which is Axon's cloud computing provider.

"We use the same underlying technology as ChatGPT, but we have access to more knobs and dials than an actual ChatGPT user would have," said Noah Spitzer-Williams, who manages Axon's AI products. Turning down the "creativity dial" helps the model stick to facts so that it "doesn't embellish or hallucinate in the same ways that you would find if you were just using ChatGPT on its own," he said.

Axon won't say how many police departments are using the technology. It's not the only vendor, with startups like Policereports.ai and Truleo pitching similar products. But given Axon's deep relationship with police departments that buy its Tasers and body cameras, experts and police officials expect AI-generated reports to become more ubiquitous in the coming months and years.

Before that happens, legal scholar Andrew Ferguson would like to see more of a public discussion about the benefits and potential harms. For one thing, the large language models behind AI chatbots are prone to making up false information, a problem known as hallucination that could add convincing and hard-to-notice falsehoods into a police report.

"I am concerned that automation and the ease of the technology would cause police officers to be sort of less careful with their writing," said Ferguson, a law professor at American University working on what's expected to be the first law review article on the emerging technology.

Ferguson said a police report is important in determining whether an officer's suspicion "justifies someone's loss of liberty." It's sometimes the only testimony a judge sees, especially for misdemeanor crimes.

Human-generated police reports also have flaws, Ferguson said, but it's an open question as to which is more reliable.

For some officers who've tried it, it is already changing how they respond to a reported crime. They're narrating what's happening so the camera better captures what they'd want to put in writing.

As the technology catches on, Bussert expects officers will become "more and more verbal" in describing what's in front of them.

After Bussert loaded the video of a traffic stop into the system and pressed a button, the program produced a narrative-style report in conversational language that included dates and times, just like an officer would have typed from his notes, all based on audio from the body camera.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 063 ~ 73 of 73

"It was literally seconds," Gilmore said, "and it was done to the point where I was like, 'I don't have anything to change.'"

At the end of the report, the officer must click a box that indicates it was generated with the use of AI.

Today in History: August 27, catastrophic eruption of Krakatoa

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 27, the 240th day of 2024. There are 126 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 27, 1883, the island volcano Krakatoa erupted with a series of cataclysmic explosions. The explosions (which could be heard 3,000 miles away) and resulting tsunamis in Indonesia's Sunda Strait claimed some 36,000 lives in Java and Sumatra.

Also on this date:

In 1894, Congress passed the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act, which contained a provision for a graduated income tax that was later struck down by the Supreme Court.

In 1964, the film "Mary Poppins" had its world premiere in Los Angeles, California.

In 1979, British war hero Lord Louis Mountbatten and three other people, including his 14-year-old grandson Nicholas, were killed off the coast of Ireland in a boat explosion claimed by the Irish Republican Army.

In 1982, Rickey Henderson of the Oakland A's stole his 119th base of the season, breaking Lou Brock's single-season stolen base record. (Henderson would finish the season with a still-unmatched 130 stolen bases.)

In 1990, blues musician Stevie Ray Vaughn and four others were killed in a helicopter crash near East Troy, Wisconsin.

In 2001, Israeli helicopters fired a pair of rockets through office windows, killing senior PLO leader Mustafa Zibri.

In 2005, coastal residents jammed freeways and gas stations as they rushed to avoid Hurricane Katrina, which was headed toward New Orleans.

In 2008, Barack Obama was nominated for president by the Democratic National Convention in Denver, becoming the first Black presidential nominee from a major political party.

In 2011, Hurricane Irene made landfall in the United States; the storm would be responsible for 49 total deaths and more than \$14 billion in damage.

Today's Birthdays: Author William Least Heat-Moon is 85. Actor Tuesday Weld is 81. Former U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., is 81. Actor G.W. Bailey is 80. Rock musician Alex Lifeson (Rush) is 71. Actor Peter Stormare is 71. Rock musician Glen Matlock (The Sex Pistols) is 68. Golfer Bernhard Langer is 67. Gospel singer Yolanda Adams is 63. Fashion designer and filmmaker Tom Ford is 63. U.S. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines is 55. Actor Chandra Wilson is 55. Baseball Hall of Famer Jim Thome is 54. Rapper Mase is 49. Actor Sarah Chalke is 48. Actor Aaron Paul is 45. Actor Patrick J. Adams (TV: "Suits") is 43. Singer Mario is 38. Actor Alexa PenaVega is 36. Singer-songwriter Kim Petras is 32. U.S. Olympic and WNBA basketball star Breanna Stewart is 30. Rapper/singer-songwriter Rod Wave is 26.