

Groton Daily Independent

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Wednesday, Sept. 25

School Breakfast: Cereal.
School Lunch: Cheese stuffed breadsticks, marina sauce.
Senior Menu: Beef stew, buttermilk biscuit, waldorf salad, cookie.
Confirmation, 6:30 p.m.
Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.
United Methodist: Community coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, Sept. 26

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.
School Lunch: Ranch parmesan chicken bake, peas.
Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

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



Boys golf at Sisseton, 10 a.m.
Boys Soccer at James Valley Christian, 4 p.m.
Volleyball hosts Tiospa Zina: 7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., Varsity to follow

Friday, Sept. 27

School Breakfast: Egg bake.
School Lunch: Tomato soup, grilled cheese.
Senior Menu: Chicken strips, tri-tators, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Football vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Clark, 7 p.m.
3rd/4th and 5th/6th Football at Clark - 5PM

Saturday, Sept. 28

Volleyball at Miller Tournament.(CSD Conference)
Boys soccer at Freeman Academy, noon
Common Cents Community Thrift Store open, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

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1440

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

Florida Braces for Helene

Helene is expected to make landfall on Florida's Gulf Coast late tomorrow as a potential Category 3 storm, prompting a state of emergency in 61 of the state's 67 counties. As of this writing, Helene is poised to strengthen into the Atlantic's fifth hurricane today after it passes through the Yucatan channel near Cancun. Helene is the Atlantic's eighth named storm of the year.

A hurricane watch is in effect from Tallahassee in Florida's northwestern panhandle to Tampa along the state's western coast. Many school systems and universities will close through Friday amid warnings of storm surges as high as 15 feet and sustained winds over 115 mph. Several counties have also ordered evacuation notices. Last month, meteorologists reaffirmed this year's Atlantic hurricane season (June 1 to Nov. 30) would have a 90% chance of above-normal activity, with 17 to 24 named storms likely.

In the Pacific, at least two people are dead after Category 3 Hurricane John made landfall Monday night on Mexico's southwestern coast.

FTX Deputy Sentenced

Caroline Ellison, the former CEO of Alameda Research, was sentenced in New York yesterday to two years in federal prison and ordered to forfeit \$11B for her role in the collapse of cryptocurrency exchange FTX. The sentencing was stiffer than what prosecutors had sought. Ellison pleaded guilty in December 2022 to seven criminal charges, including wire fraud and money laundering.

The 29-year-old was a key figure in the \$8B fraud scheme orchestrated by FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried. Ellison admitted to conspiring with Bankman-Fried by lying to investors, stealing FTX customer funds, and using those funds to create misleading financial statements. Ellison testified against Bankman-Fried, her former colleague and romantic partner, in his trial last year. He was found guilty in November and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Two other former senior FTX executives, Nishad Singh and Gary Wang, also pleaded guilty and will be sentenced Oct. 30 and Nov. 20, respectively.

Brett Favre Diagnosis

Hall of Fame quarterback Brett Favre revealed yesterday he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. The disclosure from the 54-year-old, who primarily played with the Green Bay Packers during his 20-season NFL career, came during congressional testimony on the misuse of welfare funds.

Parkinson's is the world's second most common neurodegenerative disease, affecting roughly 10 million people globally. It stems from the premature decay of dopamine-producing neurons in the midbrain. The average age for a Parkinson's diagnosis is 60 years old, making Favre's diagnosis slightly earlier than usual. Treatments typically involve mimicking dopamine in the relevant neural region, though the efficacy of such treatments declines over time.

Favre was testifying over his involvement in a Mississippi welfare fund misuse scandal. He was found to have received \$1.1M in speaking fees (for speeches he never gave) from welfare funds and was linked to the use of \$5M in welfare funds to pay for a volleyball facility at his alma mater. Favre hasn't been criminally charged and has repaid the speaking fees.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Sean "Diddy" Combs sued for sexual assault and distribution of a video of the alleged assault
Combs' music has seen an 18% increase in streams since his arrest last week on sex trafficking charges.
MLB regular season set to wrap this weekend; see latest playoff picture.
Paramount Global begins second round of layoffs that will impact 15% of its US workforce; CBS News among networks most impacted by layoffs.

Science & Technology

Researchers use AI algorithm to identify more than 300 new geoglyphs—large-scale designs on landscapes—in Peru's Nazca desert; find nearly doubles number of known etchings made by the pre-Inca civilization.

Neuroscientists find the human brain categorizes zero as numerical value instead of the abstract concept of "nothing"; answer to long-standing question sheds light on how the brain processes quantitative information.

Human heart tissue shows signs of accelerated aging after just one month in space, new study reveals.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +0.6%), with S&P 500, Dow closing at record highs.

China's central bank unveils biggest stimulus package since 2020 amid predictions the country will miss this year's 5% annual growth target; Chinese stocks jump on news.

Justice Department sues Visa on antitrust grounds, accuses world's biggest payment network of monopolizing debit card market by penalizing businesses and banks forgoing its payment processing tech.

CrowdStrike executive apologizes before House subcommittee over multibillion-dollar outage in July.

Southwest Airlines investor Elliott Investment Management calls for shareholder meeting as soon as next week in ongoing bid to shake up airline's board.

Politics & World Affairs

Thousands of people evacuate Lebanon as death toll from two days of Israeli strikes passes 560 people; Israel says it killed head of Hezbollah's rocket program.

War discussions dominate opening day of 79th annual UN General Assembly.

Swiss police arrest multiple people behind first-of-its-kind "suicide pod"—which releases nitrogen gas inside enclosed chamber—following inaugural use by US woman; Swiss law allows assisted suicide but without external assistance.

Man discovered weeks ago with rifle near golf course owned by former President Donald Trump charged with assassination attempt.

Missouri executes Marcellus Williams, convicted in the 1998 murder of a former newspaper journalist, amid ongoing disputes over evidence in the case.

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Warner has clean sweep over Groton Area



Rylee Dunker and Jaedyn Penning are step in step in getting ready for the set by Chesney Weber. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

It was the battle of the top teams in Region 1A and 1B with the Class B Warner Monarchs posting a 3-1 win over the Class A Groton Area Tigers.

Groton Area came out on fire, taking the first set, 25-23, in a set that was tied six times and there were two lead changes, all of that after the set was tied at 17. Warner came out with a 7-0 lead to start the second set and never trailed as the Monarchs won, 25-15. The third set was close with the game being tied twice in the early goings, but Groton Area holding on to the lead. Trailing 8-3, Warner called time out

and would come back to tie the set at 13, 15 and 17 before taking the lead for good at 18-17, en route to the 25-19 win. Warner had scored six straight points to go from trailing, 17-16, to leading, 22-17. Warner scored the first two points of the fourth set and never trailed as Warner took a 25-12 win.

Rylee Dunker had eight kills and one block, Faith Traphagen had six kills, Jaedyn Penning had five kills and two ace serves, Kella Tracy had five kills, Chesney Weber had four kills and an ace serve, Taryn Traphagen had four kills and Sydney Locke and Jerica Locke each had one ace serve.

Kyleigh Schopp led Warner with 18 kills, four blocks and one ace serve with MaKenna Leidholt having 16 kills and one block, Miah Liedholt had six kills and one block, Jaycee Jung had four kills and two ace serves, Courtney Leidholt had four kills, Olivia Marcuson had two kills and one block, Reagan Wood had two ace serves and Libby Scepaniak had one kill and one ace serve.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Fans of Jaedyn Penning, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Harry Implement, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms and The Meathouse in Andover.

Warner won the junior varsity match, 25-21 and 25-20. The first set was tied seven times and there were three lead changes. The second set was tied six times and there were three lead changes.

McKenna Tietz had four kills, Talli Wright had two kills, one block and one ace serve, Kella Tracy and Emerlee Jones each had three kills, Makenna Krause had two kills and one ace serve and Liby Althoff had one kill and one ace serve.

Lilly Meehan had five kills for Warner while Courtney Leidholt had four kills and two ace serves, Jaycee Jung had three kills, three ace serves and one block, Keira Steger had four ace serves, Miah Leidholt had three kills and one block, Olivia Marcuson had two kills and Kaydee Mackner had one kill.

The junior varsity match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Dorene Neslon.

Warner won the C match, 21-25, 25-18 and 15-4.

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Faith Traphagen
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Jaedyn Penning
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



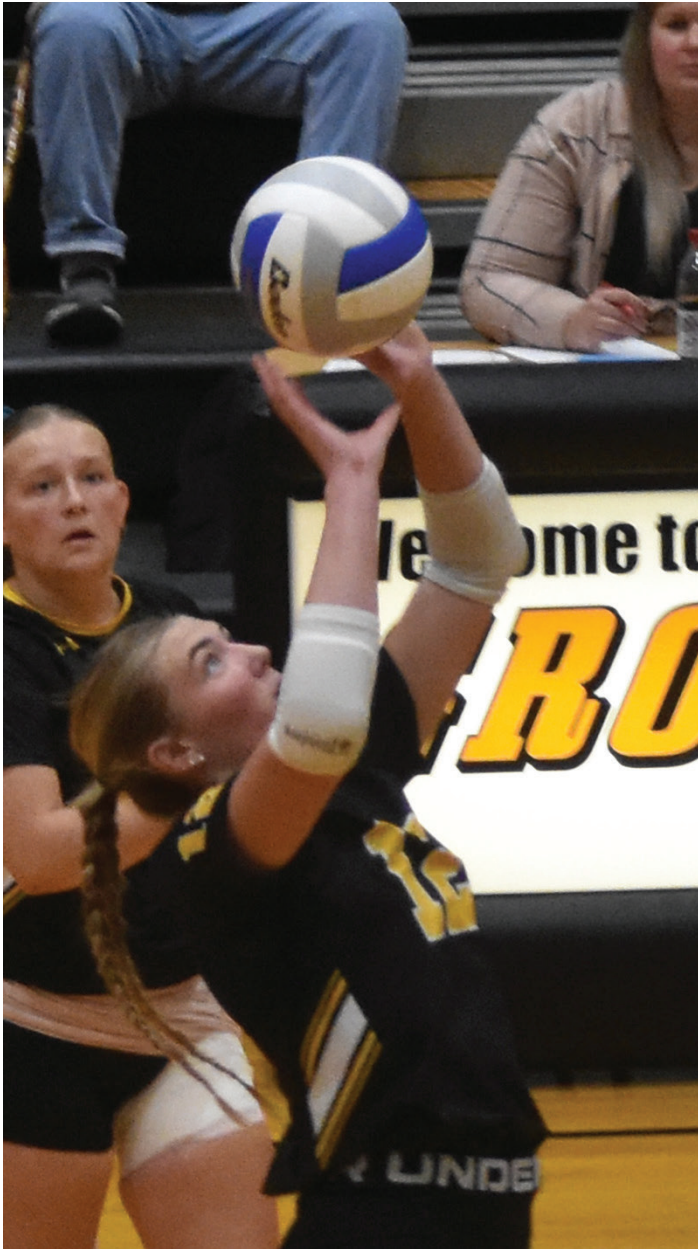
Jerica Locke
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Laila Roberts
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Rylee Dunker
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Elizabeth Flihs
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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1503 N Broadway, Groton, 605/397-8145

September 2024 Groton Area Community Calendar

Tuesday, Oct. 1

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, pineapple/oranges, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, tater tots

Volleyball at Great Plains Lutheran (5 at 5 p.m., JV at 6:15 p.m., varsity to follow)

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

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

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

United Methodist Bible Study, 10 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 2

Senior Menu: Autumn soup, peas, chicken salad croissant, cinnamon apple sauce.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Quesadillas, corn.

Picture Day

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall

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

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m. (elect officers), League, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 3

Senior Menu: Macaroni and cheese with Kielbasa, Normandy blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Taco burgers, tri tators.

Parent/Teacher Conferences (1:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.)

Cross Country at Sisseton Golf Course, 4 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m. (elect

officers)

Friday, Oct. 4

Senior Menu: Beef stew, carrots, Waldorf salad, sherbet, buttermilk biscuit.

No School - Faculty Inservice

Football hosts Aberdeen Roncalli, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 5

Boys Soccer at Dakota Valley.

Girls Soccer at Garrison, 11 a.m.

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

Pumpkin Fest, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Gypsy Day Parade in Aberdeen

Sunday, Oct. 6

United Methodist: Worship with communion: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion: St. John's at 9 a.m., Zion at 11 a.m., Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Pastor at Bethesda, 2 p.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

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Aberdeen

225-6772

1-800-843-1865



Redfield

1-800-247-4650

Webster

1-800-658-2252



JOHN DEERE

Monday, Oct. 7

Senior Menu: Spanish rice, green beans, vanilla pudding with oranges, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Beef sticks, mashed potatoes.

JH/JV Football at Aberdeen Roncalli (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m.)

State Boys Golf at Central Valley Golf Course, Hartford, 10 a.m.

Volleyball at Moberge: 7/C at 4 p.m., 8th/JV at 5 p.m., Varsity to follow

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

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

Tuesday, Oct. 8

Senior Menu: Ham rotini bake, capri blend, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancakes.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

Boys and Girls Soccer Playoffs

State Boys Golf at Central Valley Golf Course, Hartford, 10 a.m.

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

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center
United Methodist Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 9

Senior Menu: Ham rotini bake, capri blend, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, cooked carrots.

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

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 10

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, California blend, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, spudsters.

NEC Cross Country at Webster, 1 p.m.

JH Football at Sisseton, 4 p.m.

Volleyball at Milbank (7th at elementary, 4 p.m.; 8th at armory, 4 p.m.; C at 5:15, JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity)

Groton Lions Club meeting, 104 November Main, 6 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 11

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle hot dish with peas, mixed vegetables, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans.

Lake Region Marching Festival in Groton, 10 a.m.

Football at Sisseton, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 12

Boys and girls soccer playoffs.

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

Sunday, Oct. 13

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; No Sunday School; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Charge Conference, 11:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: St. John's at 9 a.m., Zion at 11 a.m., Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; No Sunday School, Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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BLOCKER
CONSTRUCTION
LLC

New Construction
Remodeling
Hoop Barns
Shops

Perry Blocker

13379 Sperry Ln, Bath
605/216-2677
prblocker@hotmail.com

Worship, 11 a.m.

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

Monday, Oct. 14

No School - Native American Day

Volleyball at Britton (7th at 4 p.m.; 8th/C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 3:30 p.m.

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

Tuesday, Oct. 15

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage hot dish, corn, pears, muffin.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: School Lunch Week: Pirate ship tacos with ye fixings.

School Board Meeting, 7 a.m.

JV Football hosts Sisseton, 4 p.m.

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

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

United Methodist Bible Study, 10 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 16

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzini, carrots, pineapple, bread stick.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Chicken pirate, pasta bake.

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

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 17

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, sweet potatoes, capri blend, chocolate pudding with banana, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.

School Lunch: Flat World on ye bun (hamburgers), fries.

Region 1A Cross Country at Webster, 3:30 p.m.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA, 1:30 p.m. (final packing of LWR kits), potluck.

Friday, Oct. 18

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, Mandarin orange salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Walk the plank crunchers, peas.

Football hosts Baltic, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 19

Boys/Girls Soccer championships

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

Sunday, Oct. 20

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10 a.m. (practice and snack), Sing in church at 10:30 then dismiss for Sunday School; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

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9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 10:30 a.m., with confirmation/Milestones; No Sunday School, Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

Monday, Oct. 21

Senior Menu: Beef noodle stroganoff, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: French bread pizza, cooked carrots.

Volleyball hosts Langford (7th/8th grade match, 4 p.m., in the Arena; JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow).

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

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

Tuesday, Oct. 22

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, peas and carrots, strawberry ambrosia, buttermilk biscuit.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Sloppy joes, smiley fries.

End of First Quarter

Flu Shot Clinic, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Area Elementary School

Volleyball at Northwestern (*Volley for a Cure) (7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

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

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center
United Methodist Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 23

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, oriental blend, apple, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Baked potato bar with toppings.

Community Coffee Hour at United Methodist

Church, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m. (Service event)

Thursday, Oct. 24

Senior Menu: New England ham dinner, 7 layer salad, peaches, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, garlic toast.

Football Playoffs

Friday, Oct. 25

Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad croissant, tomato spoon salad, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast cookie.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tri taters.

Volleyball hosts Redfield (7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

Saturday, Oct. 26

State Cross Country at Rapid City

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

Sunday, Oct. 27

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: St. John's at 9 a.m., Zion at 11 a.m., Sunday School at 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Milestones (Jr. K and Kindergarten), 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

Monday, Oct. 28

Senior Menu: Tatertot hot dish, green beans, pineapple, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy, mashed potatoes.

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Volleyball at Faulkton (JV at 6:30 p.m., varsity to follow)

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

Senior Citizens meet at noon for potluck, Groton Community Center

United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

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

Tuesday, Oct. 29

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, corn, garlic bread, fruit.

School Breakfast: Pancakes.

School Lunch: Pasta with meat sauce, breadstick.

FCCLA Blood Drive, 8 a.m. to Noon

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

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

United Methodist Bible Study, 10 a.m. (New Christmas Study Begins)

Wednesday, Oct. 30

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas, pears, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Popcorn chicken, wedge fries.

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

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 31

Senior Menu: Chili, cornbread, coleslaw, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Slugs and cheese (Mac and cheese), frog eyes (peas).

Football Playoffs

Downtown Trick or Treat, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

United Methodist Trunk or Treat, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Life of Lee Hjernstad



Lee Jeffrey Hjernstad, age 39, departed this life, Sept. 19, 2024 in West Fargo, ND. He was born in Aberdeen, SD, on May 10, 1985, to Randall Hjernstad and Wendy Ramberg. Lee was raised in Groton, SD, and attended school there through his junior year. He was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran faith. Lee graduated from West Fargo High School in 2003; in the following years, he attended semesters at the University of South Dakota and Moorhead State University. He married Melissa Schiller, Oct. 23, 2016, and later divorced.

Lee began working during high school at Aberdeen Health and Rehab. Lee particularly enjoyed working for Industrial Builders and was employed there for 15 years after graduating. He also worked for Midland Door Solutions, Sanford Health, and most recently at Valvoline.

He was an avid reader, spanning all genres, with his most loved series as the Wheel of Time books by Robert Jordan. Lee watched Chicago Bears football, every game during the season, and participated in Fantasy Football. He enjoyed attending movies, with Wes Anderson films being his favorite, concerts, grilling, sports, and spending time with his nephews and nieces. Lee proclaimed himself to be a master at tending bonfires and critiqued others' attempts. His favorite pastimes were hiking and camping. His two dogs, Rupert and Winston, were a central part of his life; Lee took them for walks and played frisbee with them. He prided himself on his fashion sense.

Whether it was playing games or working, Lee always strived to be the best. He had a stubborn streak and often thought he had the answer, defending it to no end. Many times he had the correct answer or solution.

Lee is survived by his mother and stepfather, Wendy and Michael Ramberg; father Randall Hjernstad; brothers Adam Hjernstad, Drew Hjernstad (Stacy); stepsisters and stepbrother Shannon Hjernstad and family, Shelby Hjernstad, Sadie Leicht, Amie Ramberg and family and Brett Ramberg and family; nieces and nephews: Kaleb, Mykah, Collin, Tucker, Ellia, Alyvia, Ashlynn, Regan, Riley, Sydney; and best friend Adam Hansen. He is survived by aunts and uncles Nancy and Wayne Schulz, Judy and Doug Hamaker, James Stearns, Lynn Claeys, Russel and Emily Hjernstad; and many cousins. Also mourning his passing are his beloved dogs, Rupert and Winston.

Those preceding him in death include grandparents Lauren and Maye Glover, Orval and Edythe Hjernstad; uncles Jeffrey Glover, Steven Glover, Laverne Schweer; aunts Kathleen Schweer, Dorothy Glover, Linda Stearns; and cousins Jordan Stearns, Matthew Schweer, and Karen Glover.

Visitation: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 from 7:00 PM until 8:00 PM at West Funeral Home, West Fargo, ND.

Prayer Service: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at 8:00 PM at West Funeral Home, West Fargo, ND.

Memorial Service: Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 1:00 PM at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, West Fargo, ND.

Burial: Family to do the burial at Sunset Gardens, Aberdeen, SD.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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COMMENTARY

PFAS pollution a growing problem for U.S. farmers **Will ag producers with contaminated farmland be left out in the cold?**

DAVE DICKEY, INVESTIGATE MIDWEST
SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 5:52 PM

Texas state courts have become ground zero in a complaint to determine whether farmers can be held liable for PFAS contamination discovered on their crop land. The Environmental Working Group reports the number of known “forever chemical” sites across the United States are increasing at an alarming rate.

PFAS have been linked to kidney and testicular cancer as well as damage to the liver and immune system. Needless to say, state governments have sat up and taken notice, and many are requiring public water facilities to conduct new tests to measure PFAS in the drinking supply. Including Texas.

Thus far, the PFAS testing of more than 400 public water systems in the Lone Star state has revealed about 50 exceeding new EPA limits.

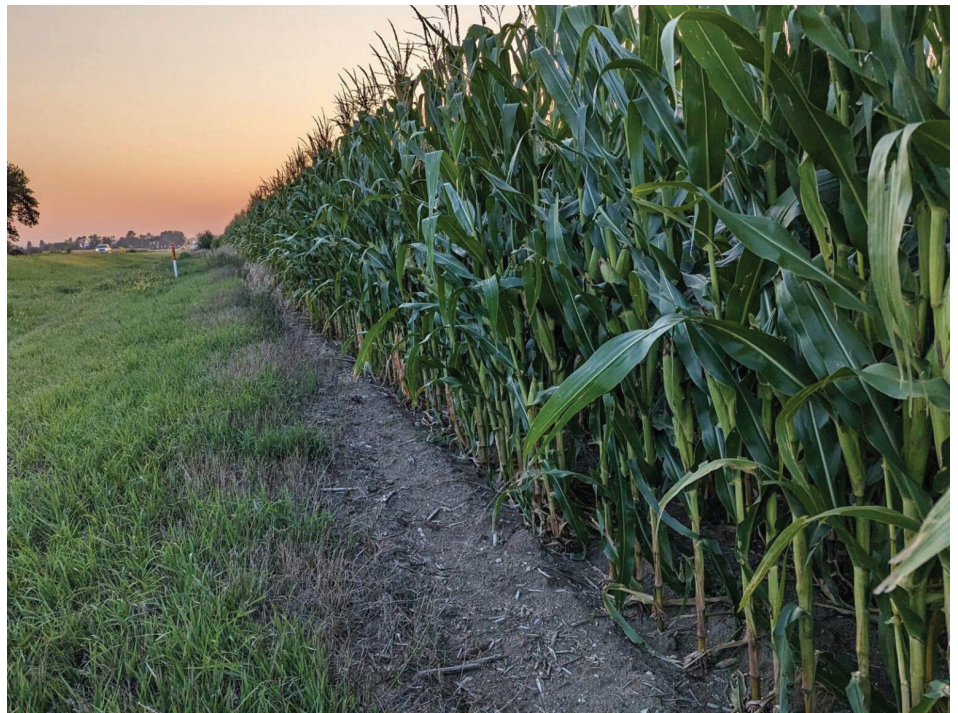
Texas is lousy with forever chemicals.

Which brings us to “biosolid fertilizers,” which are produced largely out of the sludge of wastewater treatment plants. Farmers like them because biosolids are often less expensive than other fertilizer options.

You can probably see where this is going. Farmers trusting biosolid fertilizers are safe from pollutants — including PFAS if that is even on their radar — could be unknowingly poisoning their farms with tragic consequences.

Such is the case of ranchers in the Fort Worth area, who claim in a lawsuit that biosolid fertilizers manufactured and sold by Synagro were not PFAS free:

“Synagro so negligently, carelessly, and recklessly designed, manufactured, formulated, handled, controlled, disposed, promoted, marketed, distributed, sold, tested, labeled, used, and provided product information and instructions for use of Synagro Granulite that it breached its duties and directly and proximately caused Plaintiffs’ properties including their drinking water wells to be polluted with PFAS. Synagro failed



Corn grows in a Turner County field in early August 2023.

(Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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to conduct reasonable, appropriate, or adequate scientific studies to determine the presence of PFAS or evaluate the environment fate and transport characteristics of PFAS in Synagro Granulite, including the likelihood that the use and disposal of its biosolids fertilizer would cause PFOA, PFOS, and other PFAS to pollute properties and water supplies, render drinking water unusable and unsafe, and threaten public health and welfare and the environment.”

A second lawsuit, filed by the same group of ranchers, accuses EPA of being asleep at the switch when it comes to PFAS. For good measure Johnson County, the Potomac RiverKeeper Network and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association have signed on as co-plaintiffs:

“Specifically, EPA has failed to identify as existing in sewage sludge at least eighteen toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that scientific evidence shows are present in sewage sludge in concentrations which may adversely affect public health or the environment, in violation of 33 U.S.C. § 1345(d) (2). EPA has also failed to promulgate regulations specifying appropriate restrictions, as required by the same provision, for several other PFAS that EPA has previously recognized exist in sewage sludge and for which sufficient information necessitating regulation exists.”

Of course, at the end of the day this is all about farmers’ livelihood. For example, in Maine the MOFG reports at least 60 farms have unsafe levels of forever chemicals. Farmland found to exceed new federal PFAS levels are at risk for closure. It’s extremely likely more contaminated farms will be identified in Texas as testing continues.

That’s just the tip of the iceberg. The EWG believes PFAS might be polluting more than 20% of all U.S. farmland – that’s nearly 20 million acres.

Let that sink in. 20 million acres.

The scope and breadth of this issue is staggering. A bill to assist farmers was introduced in 2023, where it has languished in the House Agriculture Committee. The measure would provide grants for:

“Investing in agricultural equipment, facilities, and infrastructure to ensure agricultural land that, or a commercial farm on any agricultural land of which, is found to be contaminated by PFAS maintains profitability while the producers on the agricultural land, in response to the PFAS contamination:

“(A) transition to an alternative production system; or (B) implement remediation strategies (including disposal), technological adaptations, or other modifications to the operations of the agricultural land or commercial farm.”

The House Ag Committee needs to take up the measure as soon as possible. Maine’s congressional delegation is pushing leadership to put \$500 million worth of grants in the new farm bill for tracking and clean up of PFAS.

The problem is that “clean up” of PFAS soil mostly falls into the realm of science fiction. And what is possible is prohibitively costly.

Which leaves farmers potentially holding the bag if they lose their farms to no fault of their own. That can’t happen.

Some farmers may luck out and find PFAS are limited to a portion of their acres. Others might try growing crops less susceptible to PFAS contamination. But those strategies come at a financial cost. One which farmers shouldn’t have to pay.

Hopefully the Texas courts will agree.

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.

State sends counties \$3 million for indigent defense, covering 12% of expenses

One-time money intended to help with costs of providing attorneys to those who can't afford it

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 1:09 PM

The \$3 million that South Dakota will send to counties in the coming weeks for their indigent legal service expenses will cover less than 12% of the collective amount of those costs incurred by counties during the last fiscal year.

The Legislature approved the one-time payouts earlier this year. The Unified Judicial System recently announced the state will distribute the funds based on how much each county spent on indigent defense, which is when judges appoint legal representation for someone who can't afford to hire an attorney. That includes court-appointed attorneys and public defenders for criminal defendants, and representation of abused and neglected children.

Minnehaha County will receive about 30% of the \$3 million total, having spent \$7.7 million last year. Pennington County will receive 23% of the total, having spent \$5.9 million.

Sen. Randy Deibert, R-Spearfish, advocated for indigent defense funding for counties during the last legislative session, which ended in March. Deibert said the distribution is fair, but added that the funding comes too late. The distribution couldn't be calculated until after the state established the Commission on Indigent Legal Services this spring.

Lawmakers hoped the funding would help to stabilize and offset property taxes, Deibert said. County governments can put the funding in their reserves if they've completed the budgeting process, but the mill levies, which control property taxes, won't be impacted. Mill levies are set based on the county's budget.

State law requires county commissioners to adopt a budget by Oct. 1 each year, though county budgets are often finalized in September. While some counties might still be able to squeeze in the projected reimbursement amounts, others won't, Deibert said. Ideally, the funding should have been distributed in July or August, he added.

"If counties could have budgeted that money, they might have been able to reduce the mill levy," Deibert



The Pennington County Courthouse and jail complex in Rapid City, in June 2023. (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

said.

Deibert co-chaired a summer committee in 2023 studying county funding issues. The committee recommended a cap on indigent defense costs for counties, above which the state would have been required to cover expenses. The price tag of the proposal ranged from \$35 to \$50 million at the time.

The Legislature instead passed a bill to create the Commission on Indigent Legal Services and a state public defender office, which included the \$3 million one-time reimbursement for counties. The public defender's office will handle appeals by indigent defendants to the state Supreme Court, while counties will remain responsible to provide representation to indigent defendants prior to their appeals.

Deibert hopes to continue reimbursing counties and increase the amount to \$20 million; or, he said, the state could take over indigent legal services completely.

"That's a big request," Deibert said.

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.

In the tightest states, new voting laws could tip the outcome in November

Pandemic protections offer more ballot options. Election lies are driving new restrictions.

BY: MATT VASILOGAMBROS, STATELINE - SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 9:14 AM

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Some voters are already casting early ballots in the first presidential election since the global pandemic ended and former President Donald Trump refused to accept his defeat.

This year's presidential election won't be decided by a margin of millions of votes, but likely by thousands in the seven tightly contested states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

How legislatures, courts and election boards have reshaped ballot access in those states in the past four years could make a difference. Some of those states, especially Michigan, cemented the temporary pandemic-era measures that allowed for more mail-in and early voting. But other battleground states have passed laws that may keep some registered voters from casting ballots.

Trump and his allies have continued to spread lies about the 2020 results, claiming without evidence that widespread voter fraud stole the election from him. That has spurred many Republican lawmakers



Voters cast ballots in Grand Rapids, Michigan. (Matt Vasilogambros/
Stateline)

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in states such as Arizona, Georgia and North Carolina to reel back access to early and mail-in voting and add new identification requirements to vote. And in Pennsylvania, statewide appellate courts are toggling between rulings.

"The last four years have been a long, strange trip," said Hannah Fried, co-founder and executive director of All Voting is Local, a multistate voting rights organization.

"Rollbacks were almost to an instance tied to the 'big lie,'" she added, referring to Trump's election conspiracy theories. "And there have been many, many positive reforms for voters in the last few years that have gone beyond what we saw in the COVID era."

The volume of election-related legislation and court cases that emerged over the past four years has been staggering.

Nationally, the Voting Rights Lab, a nonpartisan group that researches election law changes, tracked 6,450 bills across the country that were introduced since 2021 that sought to alter the voting process. Hundreds of those bills were enacted.

Justin Levitt, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, cautioned that incremental tweaks to election law — especially last-minute changes made by the courts — not only confuse voters, but also put a strain on local election officials who must comply with changes to statute as they prepare for another highly scrutinized voting process.

"Any voter that is affected unnecessarily is too many in my book," he said.

New restrictions

In many ways, the 2020 presidential election is still being litigated four years later.

Swing states have been the focus of legal challenges and new laws spun from a false narrative that questioned election integrity. The 2021 state legislative sessions, many begun in the days following the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, brought myriad legislative changes that have made it more difficult to vote and altered how ballots are counted and rejected.

The highest profile measure over the past four years came out of Georgia.

Under a 2021 law, Georgia residents now have less time to ask for mail-in ballots and must put their driver's license or state ID information on those requests. The number of drop boxes has been limited. And neither election officials nor nonprofits may send unsolicited mail-in ballot applications to voters.

Republican Gov. Brian Kemp said when signing the measure that it would ensure free and fair elections in the state, but voting rights groups lambasted the law as voter suppression.

That law also gave Georgia's State Election Board more authority to interfere in the makeup of local election boards. The state board has made recent headlines for paving the way for counties to potentially refuse to certify the upcoming election. This comes on top of a wave of voter registration challenges from conservative activists.

In North Carolina, the Republican-led legislature last year overrode Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's veto to enact measures that shortened the time to turn in mail-in ballots; required local election officials to reject ballots if voters who register to vote on Election Day do not later verify their home address; and required identification to vote by mail.

This will also be the first general election that North Carolinians will have to comply with a 2018 voter ID measure that was caught up in the court system until the state Supreme Court reinstated the law last year.

And in Arizona, the Republican-led legislature pushed through a measure[AS2] that shortened the time voters have to correct missing or mismatched signatures on their absentee ballot envelopes. Then-Gov. Doug Ducey, a Republican, signed the measure.

"Look, sometimes the complexity is the point," said Fried, of All Voting is Local. "If you are passing a law that makes it this complicated for somebody to vote or to register to vote, what's your endgame here? What are you trying to do?"

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Laws avoided major overhauls

But the restrictions could have gone much further.

That's partly because Democratic governors, such as Arizona's Katie Hobbs, who took office in 2023, have vetoed many of the Republican-backed bills. But it's also because of how popular early voting methods have become.

Arizonans, for example, have been able to vote by mail for more than three decades. More than 75% of Arizonan voters requested mail-in ballots in 2022, and 90% of voters in 2020 cast their ballots by mail.

This year, a bill that would have scrapped no-excuse absentee voting passed the state House but failed to clear a Republican-controlled Senate committee.

Bridget Augustine, a high school English teacher in Glendale, Arizona, and a registered independent, has been a consistent early voter since 2020. She said the first time she voted in Arizona was by absentee ballot while she was a college student in New Jersey, and she has no concerns "whatsoever" about the safety of early voting in Arizona.

"I just feel like so much of this rhetoric was drummed up as a way to make it easier to lie about the election and undermine people's confidence," she said.

Vanessa Jiminez, the security manager for a Phoenix high school district, a registered independent and an early voter, said she is confident in the safety of her ballot.

"I track my ballot every step of the way," she said.

Ben Ginsberg, a longtime Republican election lawyer and Volker Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the think tank Hoover Institution, said that while these laws may add new hurdles, he doesn't expect them to change vote totals.

"The bottom line is I don't think that the final result in any election is going to be impacted by a law that's been passed," he said on a recent call with reporters organized by the Knight Foundation, a Miami-based nonprofit that provides grants to support democracy and journalism.

Major expansions

No state has seen a bigger expansion to ballot access over the past four years than Michigan.

Republicans tried to curtail access to absentee voting, introducing 39 bills in 2021, when the party still was in charge of both legislative chambers.

Two GOP bills passed, but Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer vetoed them.

The next year, Michigan voters approved ballot measures that added nine days of early voting. The measures also allowed voters to request mail-in ballots online; created a permanent vote-by-mail list; provided prepaid postage on absentee ballot applications and ballots; increased ballot drop boxes; and allowed voters to correct missing or mismatched signatures on mail-in ballot envelopes.

"When you take it to the people and actually ask them about it, it turns out most people want more voting access," said Melinda Billingsley, communications manager for Voters Not Politicians, a Lansing, Michigan-based voting rights advocacy group.

"The ballot access expansions happened in spite of an anti-democratic, Republican-led push to restrict ballot access," she said.

In 2021, then-Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, signed into law a measure that transitioned the state into a universal vote-by-mail system. Every registered voter would be sent a ballot in the mail before an election, unless they opt out. The bill made permanent a temporary expansion of mail-in voting that the state put in place during the pandemic.

Nevada voters have embraced the system, data shows.

In February's presidential preference primary, 78% of ballots cast were ballots by mail or in a ballot drop box, according to the Nevada secretary of state's office. In June's nonpresidential primary, 65% of ballots were mail-in ballots. And in the 2022 general election, 51% of ballots cast were mail ballots.

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Last-minute court decisions

Drop boxes weren't controversial in Wisconsin until Trump became fixated on them as an avenue for alleged voter fraud, said Jeff Mandell, general counsel and co-founder of Law Forward, a Madison-based nonprofit legal organization.

For half of a century, Wisconsinites could return their absentee ballots in the same drop boxes that counties and municipalities used for water bills and property taxes, he said. But when the pandemic hit and local election officials expected higher volumes of absentee ballots, they installed larger boxes.

After Trump lost the state by fewer than 21,000 votes in 2020, drop boxes became a flashpoint. Republican leaders claimed drop boxes were not secure, and that nefarious people could tamper with the ballots. In 2022, the Wisconsin Supreme Court, then led by a conservative majority, banned drop boxes.

But that ruling would only last two years. In July, the new liberal majority in the state's high court reversed the ruling and said localities could determine whether to use drop boxes. It was a victory for voters, Mandell said.

With U.S. Postal Service delays stemming from the agency's restructuring, drop boxes provide a faster method of returning a ballot without having to worry about it showing up late, he said. Ballots must get in by 8 p.m. on Election Day. The boxes are especially convenient for rural voters, who may have a clerk's office or post office with shorter hours, he added.

"Every way that you make it easy for people to vote safely and securely is good," Mandell said.

After the high court's ruling, local officials had to make a swift decision about whether to reinstall drop boxes.

Milwaukee city employees were quickly dispatched throughout the city to remove the leather bags that covered the drop boxes for two years, cleaned them all and repaired several, said Paulina Gutierrez, executive director of the City of Milwaukee Election Commission.

"There's an all-hands-on-deck mentality here at the city," she said, adding that there are cameras pointed at each drop box.

Although it used a drop box in 2020, Marinette, a community on the western shore of Green Bay, opted not to use them for the August primary and asked voters to hand the ballots to clerk staff. Lana Bero, the city clerk, said the city may revisit that decision before November.

New Berlin Clerk Rubina Medina said her community, a city of about 40,000 on the outskirts of Milwaukee, had some security concerns about potentially tampering or destruction of ballots within drop boxes, and therefore decided not to use the boxes this year.

Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell, who serves the state capital of Madison and its surrounding area, has been encouraging local clerks in his county to have a camera on their drop boxes and save the videos in case residents have fraud concerns.

A risk of confusing voters

Many local election officials in Wisconsin say they worry that court decisions, made mere months before the November election, could create confusion for voters and more work for clerks.

"These decisions are last-second, over and over again," McDonell said. "You're killing us when you do that."

Arizonans and Pennsylvanians now know that late-in-the-game scramble too.

In August, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated part of a 2022 Arizona law that requires documented proof of citizenship to register on state forms, potentially impacting tens of thousands of voters, disproportionately affecting young and Native voters.

Whether Pennsylvania election officials should count mail ballots returned with errors has been a subject of litigation in every election since 2020. State courts continue to grapple with the question, and neither voting rights groups nor national Republicans show signs of giving up.

Former Pennsylvania Secretary of the Commonwealth Kathy Boockvar, who is now president of Athena Strategies and working on voting rights and election security issues across the country, said voters simply need to ignore the noise of litigation and closely follow the instructions with their mail ballots.

"Litigation is confusing," Boockvar said. "The legislature won't fix it by legislation. Voter education is the key thing here, and the instructions on the envelopes need to be as clear and simple as possible."

To avoid confusion, voters can make a plan for how and when they will vote by going to vote.gov, a federally run site where voters can check to make sure they are properly registered and to answer questions in more than a dozen languages about methods for casting a ballot.

Arizona Mirror's Caitlin Sievers and Jim Small, Nevada Current's April Corbin Girnus and Pennsylvania Capital-Star's Peter Hall contributed reporting.

Matt Vasilogambros covers voting rights, gun laws and Western climate policy for Stateline. He lives in San Diego, California.

Ryan Routh charged with attempted assassination in Trump golf course case

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 8:23 PM

WASHINGTON — Federal prosecutors said Tuesday that the man who allegedly stalked former President Donald Trump for a month before aiming his rifle through a fence at Trump's private golf course on Sept. 15 was indicted on the charge of an attempted assassination of a political candidate.

The Justice Department said a federal grand jury in Miami late Tuesday returned an indictment charging Ryan Wesley Routh, 58, of attempting to kill the GOP presidential nominee while at Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida.

"Violence targeting public officials endangers everything our country stands for, and the Department of Justice will use every available tool to hold Ryan Routh accountable for the attempted assassination of former President Trump charged in the indictment," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

"The Justice Department will not tolerate violence that strikes at the heart of our democracy, and we will find and hold accountable those who perpetrate it. This must stop," Garland said.

The maximum sentence for the attempted assassination charge is a life sentence. Routh remains in pretrial detention.

The case is being handled by U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon, who previously dismissed criminal charges against Trump related to illegally allegedly keeping classified documents after he left the presidency. Cannon was appointed by Trump to the federal bench.



Law enforcement personnel continued to investigate the area around Trump International Golf Club on Sept. 16, 2024, a day after an apparent assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

Prosecutors on Monday detailed that Routh stalked Trump for a month, noting events Trump would be at, and wrote a note where he offered \$150,000 to anyone who could "finish the job," according to court filings.

This is now officially the second assassination attempt against Trump, after the first one in Butler, Pennsylvania, where Trump sustained an injury to his ear. He was not injured at his Florida golf club.

Acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe confirmed that Routh did not fire his weapon and that the gunshots heard were from a Secret Service agent who saw part of Routh's gun poking out from the chain link fence and immediately fired.

Routh has already been charged with possession of a firearm as a convicted felon and with obliterating the serial number on a firearm, according to court records. With those charges, he faces up to 20 years in prison.

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

Gaps in FAFSA rollout are closing, watchdog tells U.S. House panel

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 6:01 PM

WASHINGTON — Months after the rollout of the streamlined form to apply for federal financial student aid faced a series of highly publicized hiccups that prompted processing delays and frustrated students and families, a government watchdog offered some additional explanation Tuesday of what went wrong and recommendations for the U.S. Education Department going forward.

Members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development expressed frustration

Tuesday over the botched rollout and its repercussions for students and families at a hearing that coincided with the release of a pair of findings from the Government Accountability Office on the major issues that plagued the rollout of the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA.

Though the application got a makeover after Congress passed the FAFSA Simplification Act, advocates have shared concerns over processing delays as a result of the form's failure to adjust for inflation, its formula miscalculation and its tax data errors. Major issues also initially prevented parents without Social Security numbers from completing the form.

The department has worked to fix issues surrounding the 2024-25 form and reevaluated the implementation of the 2025-26 form, taking into account feedback from students, families and stakeholders.

On Monday, the department released a report reviewing implementation of the 2024-25 form as well



Close up of a federal financial aid application. (Getty Images)

as the progress it's making to try to improve the user experience since the streamlined form launched.

Part of those efforts include the department using a phased rollout of the 2025-26 form in an effort to address any problems that might arise before opening to everyone by Dec. 1. The staggered approach will make the 2025-26 FAFSA fully available two months later than usual.

Members of both parties criticized the 2024-25 form's rollout at Tuesday's hearing.

Subcommittee Chairman Burgess Owens said the "FAFSA rollout was mired in delays, errors, frustration — and for some of our most vulnerable students — the loss of their dreams for a higher education."

The Utah Republican said the "impact of the Biden administration's failure on real lives has been devastating."

Rep. Frederica Wilson, ranking member of the subcommittee, said implementation of the FAFSA Simplification Act "has been derailed by a series of mistakes made by the Department of Education, leading to delays and ongoing setbacks in the rollout of the new application."

The Florida Democrat expressed frustration that "aside from the dozens of letters Congress has sent, this is not the first hearing we've had this year about this same issue, nor is this the first application cycle with these issues."

Lack of information

In one of the two GAO reports released Tuesday, the watchdog found that about 432,000 fewer people submitted a FAFSA compared to last year — marking a 3% decrease as of late August.

The decline in submissions was "most pronounced among lower income students and families," per GAO.

The investigators also found that the department did not consistently provide students with timely information on processing delays, changes in their student aid eligibility, or "solutions to technical barriers they encountered during the application process."

Melissa Emrey-Arras, a director at GAO who oversees work on education, said at the Tuesday hearing that delays "significantly hindered (students') ability to choose a college, thinking wisely about their finances and whether they could afford a school."

"Can you imagine? It's like buying a house but not knowing how much aid you're gonna get and having to make a commitment right then and there," Emrey-Arras said.

Understaffing leads to unanswered calls

The government watchdog also found that, as a result of understaffing, nearly three-quarters of all calls to the call center went unanswered in the first five months of the 2024-25 rollout — totalling 4 million out of 5.4 million calls.

As for the communication with schools, GAO found that the department "consistently failed to meet promised deadlines and provide colleges with sufficient notice" of timeframe changes throughout the 2024-25 FAFSA rollout.

Marisol Cruz Cain, a GAO director who oversees work on information technology, said the Office of Federal Student Aid "did not fully test the system, leading to numerous performance problems."

Cruz Cain said that after the initial deployment, "FSA identified 55 defects, which was almost twice as many as were identified when testing the system as a whole prior to launch."

Improvement plan

In a Monday letter to college and university presidents regarding progress on the 2025-26 form, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said the department "has worked tirelessly to completely overhaul a system that had largely remained untouched for over four decades and itself included twenty different sub-systems that required significant changes — a wholesale transformation to enable the most sweeping changes to federal financial aid eligibility and processes in years."

The department outlined in its report Monday 10 steps it has taken to improve the FAFSA application process, such as increasing the number of call center agents — with more than 700 new agents added.

The department is also working to address issues families without Social Security numbers faced when completing the form.

The department's efforts also include strengthening its leadership team and offering "additional outreach and support for students and families who need the most help completing the form."

In a statement responding to Tuesday's hearing, a spokesperson for the department said that "after the first major overhaul of the FAFSA system in more than four decades, there are more than 500,000 more students eligible for Pell Grants than there were at this time last year."

"We have sought advice from students and families, colleges, and partners and provided more than 1,000 documents to the Government Accountability Office," the spokesperson added. "Thanks to this input, along with community partnerships, we have now narrowed the FAFSA completion gap to about 2% compared to this time last year — down from 40% in March."

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Harris says she'd back an elimination of the filibuster to restore abortion rights

SD's Thune is among Republican leaders who've vowed to keep the Senate procedure in place

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 2:35 PM

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris said Tuesday during a radio interview that she supports changing a Senate procedure in order to codify the right to an abortion.

Vice President Harris said she is in favor of ending the 60-vote threshold in the Senate, known as the filibuster, to advance abortion rights legislation. But that task would hinge on Democrats agreeing to do so and holding on to majority control in the Senate, a difficult feat this November as Republicans appear potentially poised to take back the upper chamber.

"I think we should eliminate the filibuster for Roe, and get us to the point where 51 votes would be what we need to actually put



Vice President Kamala Harris departs Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport aboard Air Force 2, after speaking at a campaign rally inside West Allis Central High School on July 23, 2024, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. (Jim Vondruska/Getty Images)

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back in law the protections for reproductive freedom and for the ability of every person and every woman to make decisions about their own body and not have their government tell them what to do," she said during an interview with Wisconsin Public Radio.

Harris in 2022 said she would cast a tie-breaking vote in favor of abortion rights in her role as vice president. She has often pledged to sign into law a codification of Roe v. Wade, the constitutional right to an abortion struck down by the conservative U.S. Supreme Court in 2022.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, said in August that Democrats would talk about rules changes to codify abortion rights, NBC reported.

Trump in Pennsylvania

At a Monday rally in Pennsylvania, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump referred to himself as a "protector" of women. Trump said women no longer needed to think about abortion and it is "now where it always had to be, with the states."

"All they want to do is talk about abortion," the former president said at the rally, referring to Democrats. "It really no longer pertains because we've done something on abortion that no one thought was possible."

SD's abortion ballot measure

Read South Dakota Searchlight's guide to Amendment G, the ballot measure that would restore abortion rights in the state.

Trump has called for Senate Republicans to dismantle the filibuster, but GOP Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and other Republican leaders like No. 2 Sen. John Thune of South Dakota have vowed to keep the procedure in place.

Current Senate projections indicate Republicans are likely to gain control of the Senate. Republicans are also expected to pick up a seat in West Virginia, and only need to hold on to seats in Florida, Texas and Nebraska.

Democrats will need to secure wins in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Additionally, Senate Democrats would need to break a possible 50-50 tie through a Democratic presidency — if they want to remain the majority party and change the filibuster.

If Harris wins, and Democrats hold 50 seats in the Senate, then Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, the vice presidential nominee, would be the tie-breaking vote.

During a Tuesday Senate press conference on abortion, Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington said she was supportive of Harris' stance and that it would be a carve-out of the filibuster, rather than an elimination of it.

"What we are talking about is a simple procedure to allow, whenever rights are taken away from someone, that the U.S. Senate can, without being blocked by a filibuster, be able to restore those rights," she said.

Harris, Trump and the economy

The Harris campaign hosted a Tuesday press call with business owner and "Shark Tank" investor Mark Cuban, to advocate for Harris' economic policies.

Polls have found that voters view Trump as better for the economy. Pew Research found that Trump's key advantage is the economy, with 55% of voters viewing the former president as making good economic decisions, and 45% of voters viewing Harris as making good decisions about the economy.

"In a nutshell, the vice president and her team thinks through her policies," Cuban said. "She doesn't just off the top of her head say what she thinks the crowd wants to hear, like the Republican nominee."

Battleground states still the favorite spot

The candidates will continue to campaign and travel, especially around battleground states this week.

Trump is scheduled Tuesday to visit Savannah, Georgia, where he will give an afternoon campaign speech about lowering taxes for business owners.

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Walz is scheduled to head back to his home state of Minnesota Tuesday for a campaign reception there. Harris is heading to Pennsylvania Wednesday for a campaign rally and then she'll travel to Arizona on Friday and Nevada on Sunday.

Trump is stopping in Mint Hill, North Carolina, on Wednesday to give remarks about the importance of making goods in the U.S. His running mate, Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance, will travel to Traverse City, Michigan, on Wednesday to rally supporters.

Vance on Thursday will give a campaign speech on the economy in Macon, Georgia, and then host a voter mobilization drive in Flowery Branch, Georgia.

On Friday, Trump is scheduled to rally supporters in Walker, Michigan and in the evening hold a town hall in Warren, Michigan.

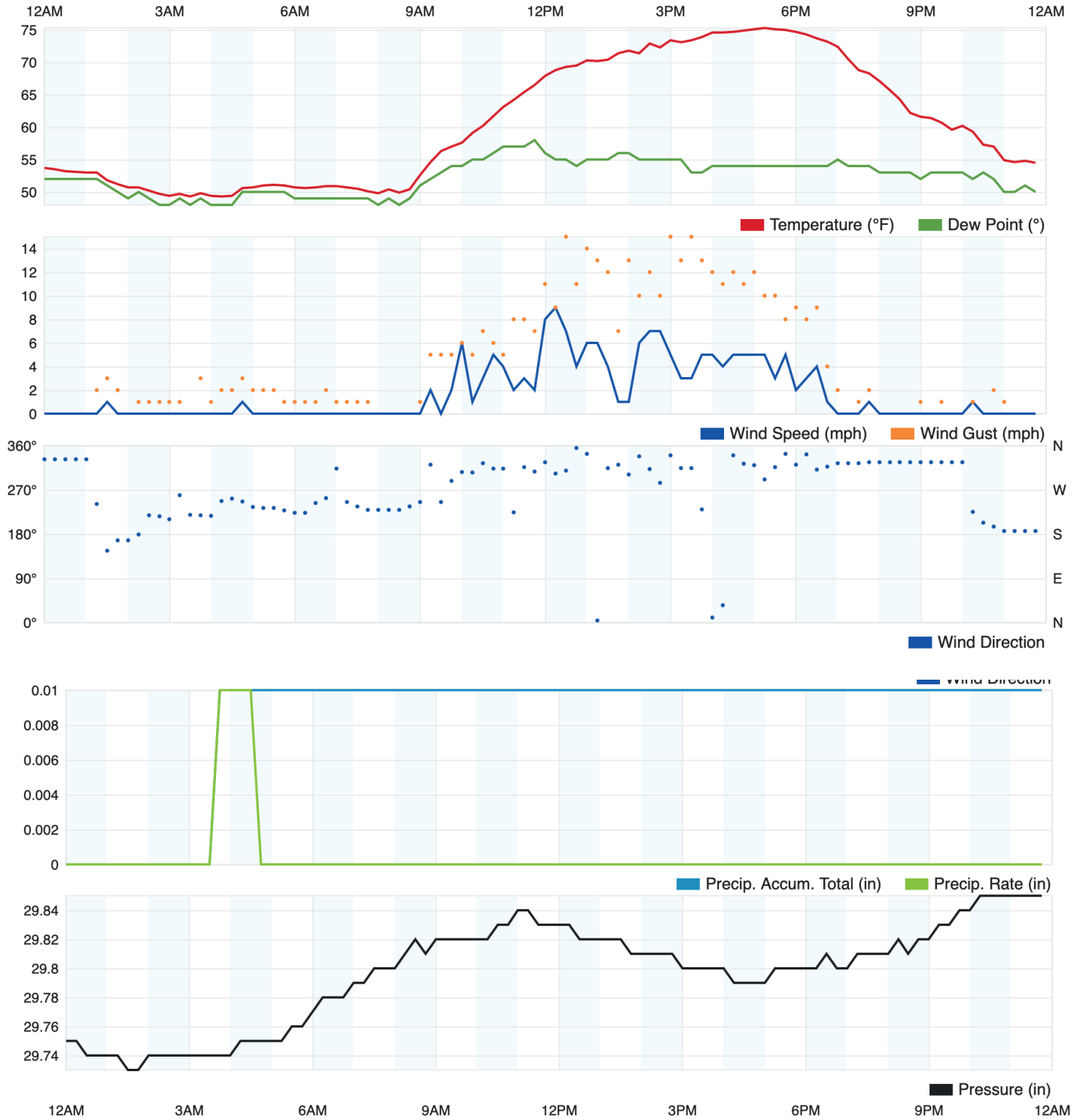
Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 82 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 56 °F

Clear

Thursday



High: 85 °F

Sunny and
Breezy

Thursday
Night



Low: 54 °F

Clear

Friday



High: 81 °F

Sunny

Above Average Temperatures Through
the End of the Week

Today

Highs: 79-87°F

Lows: 53-60°F

Thursday

Highs: 81-95°F

Lows: 51-56°F

Friday

Highs: 79-85°F

Lows: 50-53°F



Temperatures are expected to be 15-20+ degrees above average through the end of the work week. Thursday will be the warmest with highs above 90 possible west river.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 75 °F at 5:12 PM

Low Temp: 49 °F at 3:31 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 12:28 PM

Precip: : 0.01

Day length: 12 hours, 2 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1938

Record Low: 19 in 1926

Average High: 71

Average Low: 43

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.66

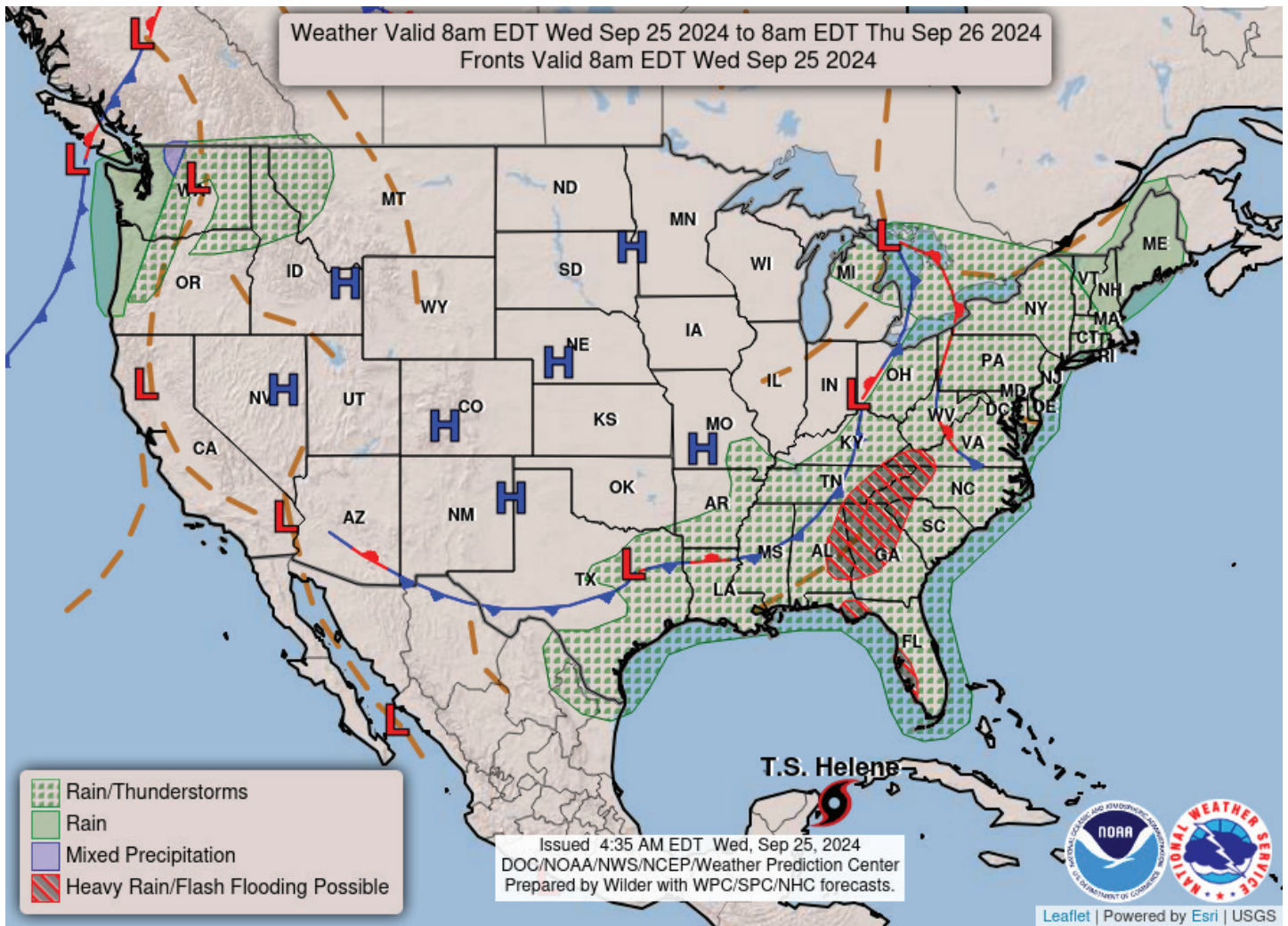
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.33

Average Precip to date: 18.00

Precip Year to Date: 19.75

Sunset Tonight: 7:24:55 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:23:54 am



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Today in Weather History

September 25, 1981: A late September tornado touched down briefly 14 miles west of Pierre during the early evening hours with no damage occurring.

September 25, 1996: An early fall storm over the Black Hills of northeast Wyoming and western South Dakota re-acquainted area residents with their winter driving techniques. Snow totals ranged from 4 to 8 inches. U.S. Highway 385, south of Deadwood South Dakota, was temporarily closed after a semi-truck jack-knifed on Strawberry Hill. Numerous minor accidents were reported in the Black Hills due to slick roads. Heavy wet snow closed the Needles Highway and Iron Mountain Road in the central/southern Black Hills until snowplows could clear the streets.

1848: The Great Gale of 1848 was the most severe hurricane to affect Tampa Bay, Florida and is one of two major hurricanes to make landfall in the area. This storm produced the highest storm tide ever experienced in Tampa Bay when the water rose 15 feet in six to eight hours.

1939 - A west coast hurricane moved onshore south of Los Angeles bringing unprecedented rains along the southern coast of California. Nearly five and a half inches of rain drenched Los Angeles during a 24 hour period. The hurricane caused two million dollars damage, mostly to structures along the coast and to crops, and claimed 45 lives at sea. "El Cordonazo" produced 5.66 inches of rain at Los Angeles and 11.6 inches of rain at Mount Wilson, both records for the month of September. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1942: From September 24th through the 26th, 1942, an early-season winter storm moved through the Northern Plains, Upper Mississippi River Valley, and Great Lakes, dropping measurable snow as it went. In many places across Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and northern Illinois, this was their earliest measurable snow on record.

1987 - Hurricane Emily crossed the island of Bermuda during the early morning. Emily, moving northeast at 45 mph, produced wind gusts to 115 mph at Kindley Field. The thirty-five million dollars damage inflicted by Emily made it the worst hurricane to strike Bermuda since 1948. Parts of Michigan and Wisconsin experienced their first freeze of the autumn. Snow and sleet were reported in the Sheffield and Sutton areas of northeastern Vermont at midday. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure off the Northern Pacific Coast brought rain and gale force winds to the coast of Washington State. Fair weather prevailed across most of the rest of the nation. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Twenty-three cities in the south central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Topeka KS with a reading of 33 degrees, and Binghamton NY with a low of 25 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms in the southeastern U.S. drenched Atlanta GA with 4.87 inches of rain, their sixth highest total of record for any given day. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998 - Four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.

2015: Fairbanks, Alaska received 4–9 inches of snow. Another storm on September 27-30 produced 14.2 inches, including 11.2 inches on the 29th. September 2015 would end up being Fairbanks's second snowiest September on record with 20.9 inches.

2015: An EF2 tornado tracked nearly seven miles across Johns Island in South Carolina.

2017: A large waterspout was seen over the Ionian Sea, off the coast of Gallipoli, Italy.



WHAT'S IN A GOAL?

Charlie Brown struck out for the fourth time in the same game. In deep despair he cried out, "Lucy! I'll never make it. All of my life I've dreamed of playing in the big leagues. But I know now I'll never make it!"

"Charlie," she answered, "choose an immediate goal. When you go out to pitch, see if you can walk to the mound without falling."

What's in a goal?

GUIDANCE: Establishing goals provides a process that enables us to accomplish worthwhile projects in life. Great things can be achieved when we know what we want to do. Goals enable us to make plans, solve problems, make decisions and set priorities. Then, at the end of the day, we can sit, review our progress or lack of it, redirect our steps and move forward.

OBJECTIVITY: We all have days when we feel like giving up. But if we have a goal in front of us, we will be able to see progress and see that the struggle is really worth the effort.

ACCOUNTABILITY: If we truly want to make a difference in this world, we can find an accountability partner who will work with us to encourage us to "get where we want to go." Being accountable is difficult without someone looking over our shoulder.

LABOR: Anything that has value and worth will require our hard work, patience, perseverance and prayer.

Prayer: Father, You have given each of us a reason for living and a purpose to accomplish. May we use the talents You have given us to achieve great things for You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.24.24

1 6 10 23 27 18

MegaPlier: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$77,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 33
DRAW: Mins 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.23.24

13 15 22 23 35 9

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$9,720,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 48 Mins
DRAW: 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.24.24

6 9 18 36 38 4

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 17 Hrs 3 Mins 55
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.21.24

6 16 26 30 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$38,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 3 Mins 55
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.23.24

23 39 57 61 67 10

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 32 Mins
DRAW: 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.23.24

15 21 25 37 45 19

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$223,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 32 Mins
DRAW: 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central High School def. Huron, 25-19, 25-17, 25-19
Aberdeen Christian def. Waubay/Summit, 25-23, 25-15, 25-15
Baltic def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-23, 25-18, 25-9
Bison def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-14, 25-18, 28-26
Bridgewater-Emery def. Hanson, 25-15, 20-25, 25-17, 25-19
Britton-Hecla def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-12, 25-20, 25-13
Brookings def. Mitchell, 25-19, 21-25, 25-22, 25-21
Burke def. Platte-Geddes, 25-17, 25-15, 25-17
Canton def. Tri-Valley, 27-25, 25-17, 25-11
Chester def. Parker, 25-13, 25-9, 25-8
Colman-Egan def. Canistota, 25-13, 25-7, 25-13
Corsica/Stickney def. Kimball-White Lake, 26-24, 22-25, 25-21, 18-25, 15-10
Crawford, Neb. def. Edgemont, 25-12, 15-25, 19-25, 25-23, 15-13
Dakota Valley def. West Central, 25-16, 25-12, 25-6
DeSmet def. James Valley Christian, 25-4, 25-8, 25-14
Dell Rapids St Mary def. Howard, 25-20, 27-25, 25-15
Dell Rapids def. Garretson, 25-20, 25-20, 25-12
Deubrook def. Deuel, 25-13, 25-14, 25-7
Faulkton def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-14, 25-16, 25-19
Flandreau def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-19, 25-19, 25-19
Freeman Academy-Marion def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-16, 26-24, 25-15
Freeman def. Scotland, 25-20, 19-25, 25-17, 19-25, 15-10
Great Plains Lutheran def. Castlewood, 25-6, 25-20, 25-16
Hamlin def. Estelline-Hendricks, 25-21, 25-19, 25-11
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Washington, 25-8, 25-17, 19-25, 25-12
Herreid-Selby def. Stanley County, 25-19, 25-22, 25-21
Hill City def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-12, 25-8, 25-15
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-0, 25-11, 25-6
Langford def. Tiospa Zina
Lennox def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-21, 25-18, 25-18
Lower Brule def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 26-28, 25-18, 26-24, 17-25, 15-10
Madison def. Arlington, 25-15, 25-13, 30-28
Miller def. Redfield, 25-20, 25-22, 25-13
North Central def. Sully Buttes, 26-24, 25-9, 25-10
Northwestern def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-3, 25-4, 25-14
Pine Ridge def. St. Francis Indian, 25-18, 25-13, 25-23
Potter County def. Faith, 25-21, 25-22, 25-20
Rapid City Christian def. Belle Fourche, 25-18, 25-21, 25-22
Sioux Falls Christian def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-16, 25-15, 25-16
Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-22, 21-25, 25-19, 18-25, 15-8
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Yankton, 25-8, 22-25, 25-22, 23-25, 15-12
Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Centerville, 25-20, 28-26, 18-25, 23-25, 15-11
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Brandon Valley, 25-22, 25-22, 25-20

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Sioux Valley def. Milbank, 25-11, 25-18, 22-25, 25-14
Sisseton def. Florence-Henry, 25-14, 26-24, 25-20
Spearfish def. Sturgis Brown High School, 25-17, 25-10, 25-17
St Thomas More def. Hot Springs, 25-19, 25-19, 25-16
Timber Lake def. McLaughlin, 25-10, 25-11, 25-11
Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-17, 25-16, 21-25, 24-26, 15-7
Viborg-Hurley def. Menno, 25-9, 25-23, 25-20
Wagner def. Bon Homme, 27-25, 25-16, 19-25, 25-13
Wall def. Lyman, 25-16, 25-16, 25-22
Warner def. Groton, 23-25, 25-15, 25-19, 25-12
Watertown def. Tea, 25-10, 25-9, 25-11
Webster def. Wilmot, 23-25, 25-12, 25-22, 28-26
White River def. Philip, 25-23, 25-19, 20-25, 25-14
Wolsey-Wessington def. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket, 25-18, 25-19, 18-25, 25-16

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

In dueling speeches, Harris is to make her capitalist pitch while Trump pushes deeper into populism

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Derided by Donald Trump as a “communist,” Kamala Harris is playing up her street cred as a capitalist.

Attacked by Harris as a rich kid who got \$400 million from his father on a “silver platter,” Trump is leaning into his raw populism.

The two presidential candidates are set to deliver dueling speeches on Wednesday that reflect how they’re honing their economic messages for voters in battleground states. Both are trying to counter criticism of them while laying out their best case for a public that still worries about the economy’s health.

Vice President Harris is set to speak at the Economic Club of Pittsburgh, where she plans to stress a “pragmatic” philosophy while outlining new policies to boost domestic manufacturing, according to a senior campaign official who sought anonymity to describe the upcoming address. The Democratic nominee’s remarks come after she told a swanky audience of donors in New York City on Sunday that she would cut any “red tape” holding back growth.

Former President Trump is scheduled to deliver a speech in Mint Hill, North Carolina, about how he will protect workers. The Republican nominee made his reputation as a businessman, but he’s recently expressed a willingness to crack down on businesses and has proposed to cap interest rates on credit cards and slap a whopping 200% tariff on tractor-maker John Deere if it moves any jobs to Mexico.

The candidates are each emphasizing the economy at a time when polls show that it is one of the most important issues for voters as they consider who to support. A recent AP-NORC poll found that neither candidate has a decisive edge with the public on the issue.

Both are eager to embrace an image as tax cutters and are accusing the other of backing massive tax hikes on the middle class. It’s a meaningful shift in messaging as inflation concerns have ebbed somewhat with the Federal Reserve cutting its benchmark interest rates last week.

Billionaire Mark Cuban said business leaders like him are backing Harris because she has taken considered stances that companies can understand even when they have a different perspective.

“I want a president that for business goes into details and has a policy team that understands all the ramifications of what’s been proposed,” Cuban said on a Tuesday call with reporters set up by the Harris campaign.

Trump initially stressed the importance of increasing oil production and cutting corporate tax rates and preserving tax breaks for the wealthy to spur economic growth. But in recent days, he’s been offering a

host of other ideas. In addition to wanting no taxes on tips, Social Security or overtime pay, he wants to limit the interest rate on credit cards to 10% and set up low-tax zones on federal lands to lure employers. Trump also wants to ditch the cap on the deduction of state and local taxes that he put into the tax code in 2017 while president.

"Americans will no longer worry about losing their jobs to foreign nations, instead foreign nations will be worried about losing their jobs to America," Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said in a statement.

Both candidates see an opportunity to trash the other's tax ideas. Trump recently dubbed Harris the "tax queen." She wants to raise the corporate tax rate to 28% from 21% as well as tax the unrealized capital gains of people worth more than \$100 million. She would use the revenue from that and other policies to sustain tax cuts for the middle class that are set to expire after 2025 as well as offer new tax breaks to parents and entrepreneurs. Many of her policies build on ideas initially proposed by President Joe Biden.

Trump claims her tax hikes would ultimately trickle down to the middle class.

"She's coming for your money," he told an audience on Monday. "She's coming for your pensions, and she's coming for your savings."

Harris has shown that two can play that game. She labeled his call for tariffs a "national sales tax," as it could increase the cost of coffee, clothes, electronics, autos and almost anything that gets imported or depends on imported parts. Her campaign likes to cite an analysis that originated with Brendan Duke of the Center for American Progress that estimated a 20% universal tariff would cost a typical family almost \$4,000 a year. For taxpayers in the middle-income range, that sum would effectively increase their total federal taxes by 50%, according to calculations based on Treasury Department data.

Speaking in Georgia on Tuesday, Trump singled out the word "tariff" for praise, calling it "one of the most beautiful words I've ever heard." He said it would raise hundreds of billions in tax revenues and not cause inflation.

Most economic analyses say broad tariffs would worsen inflation. The investment bank Goldman Sachs suggested that the tariffs, accompanied by a crackdown on immigrants in the United States, would hurt growth.

Harris has made efforts to elevate the middle class her top priority, often talking about her own background in the middle class to suggest that her ideas emerged out of a personal journey.

But at a New York City event on Sunday, she also made a pitch aimed at corporations that want less drama when dealing with government.

"We will create a stable business environment with consistent and transparent rules of the road," Harris said. "We will invest in semiconductors, clean energy, and other industries of the future. And we will cut needless bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape, all of which will create jobs, drive broad-based economic growth, and cement America's leadership throughout the world."

Secret Service failures before Trump rally shooting were 'preventable,' Senate panel finds

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Multiple Secret Service failures ahead of the July rally for former President Donald Trump where a gunman opened fire were "foreseeable, preventable, and directly related to the events resulting in the assassination attempt that day," according to a bipartisan Senate investigation released Wednesday.

Similar to the agency's own internal investigation and an ongoing bipartisan House probe, the interim report from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee found multiple failures on almost every level ahead of the Butler, Pennsylvania shooting, including in planning, communications, security and allocation of resources.

"The consequences of those failures were dire," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, the Democratic chairman of the Homeland panel.

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Investigators found that there was no clear chain of command among the Secret Service and other security agencies and no plan for coverage of the building where the shooter climbed up to fire the shots. Officials were operating on multiple, separate radio channels, leading to missed communications, and an inexperienced drone operator was stuck on a help line after his equipment wasn't working correctly.

Communications among security officials were a "multi-step game of telephone," Peters said.

The report found the Secret Service was notified about an individual on the roof of the building approximately two minutes before shooter Thomas Matthew Crooks opened fire, firing eight rounds in Trump's direction less than 150 yards from where the former president was speaking. Trump, the 2024 Republican presidential nominee, was struck in the ear by a bullet or a bullet fragment in the assassination attempt, one rallygoer was killed and two others were injured before the gunman was killed by a Secret Service counter-sniper.

Approximately 22 seconds before Crooks fired, the report found, a local officer sent a radio alert that there was an armed individual on the building. But that information was not relayed to key Secret Service personnel who were interviewed by Senate investigators.

The panel also interviewed a Secret Service counter-sniper who said that they saw officers with their guns drawn running toward the building where the shooter was perched, but the person said they did not think to notify anyone to get Trump off the stage.

The Senate report comes just days after the Secret Service released a five-page document summarizing the key conclusions of a yet-to-be finalized Secret Service report on what went wrong, and ahead of a Thursday hearing that will be held by a bipartisan House task force investigating the shooting. The House panel is also investigating a second assassination attempt on Trump earlier this month when Secret Service agents arrested a man with a rifle hiding on the golf course at Trump's Florida club.

Each investigation has found new details that reflect a massive breakdown in the former president's security, and lawmakers say there is much more they want to find out as they try to prevent it from happening again.

"This was the result of multiple human failures of the Secret Service," said Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, the top Republican on the panel.

The senators recommended that the Secret Service better define roles and responsibilities before any protective event, including by designating a single individual in charge of approving all the security plans. Investigators found that many of the people in charge denied that they had responsibility for planning or security failures, and deflected blame.

Advance agents interviewed by the committee said "that planning and security decisions were made jointly, with no specific individual responsible for approval," the report said.

Communication with local authorities was also poor. Local law enforcement had raised concern two days earlier about security coverage of the building where the shooter perched, telling Secret Service agents during a walk through that they did not have the manpower to lock it down. Secret Service agents then gave investigators conflicting accounts about who was responsible for that security coverage, the report said.

The internal review released last week by the Secret Service also detailed multiple communications breakdowns, including an absence of clear guidance to local law enforcement and the failure to fix line-of-sight vulnerabilities at the rally grounds that left Trump open to sniper fire and "complacency" among some agents.

"This was a failure on the part of the United States Secret Service. It's important that we hold ourselves to account for the failures of July 13th and that we use the lessons learned to make sure that we do not have another failure like this again," said Ronald Rowe Jr., the agency's acting director, after the report was released.

In addition to better defining responsibility for events, the senators recommended that the agency completely overhaul its communications operations at protective events and improve intelligence sharing. They also recommended that Congress evaluate whether more resources are needed.

Democrats and Republicans have disagreed on whether to give the Secret Service more money in the

wake of its failures. A spending bill on track to pass before the end of the month includes an additional \$231 million for the agency, but many Republicans have said that an internal overhaul is needed first.

"This is a management problem plain and simple," said Republican Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, the top Republican on the Homeland panel's investigations subcommittee.

Hezbollah fires a missile at Tel Aviv in deepest strike yet after Israel bombardment in Lebanon

By ABBY SEWELL and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hezbollah launched a missile at Tel Aviv early Wednesday in its deepest strike yet into Israel, marking a further escalation after Israeli strikes on Lebanon killed hundreds of people.

The Israeli military said it intercepted the surface-to-surface missile, which set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv and across central Israel, and there were no reports of casualties or damage. The military said it struck the site in southern Lebanon from which the missile was launched.

Hezbollah said it fired a Qader 1 ballistic missile targeting the headquarters of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, which it blames for a recent string of targeted killings of its top commanders and for an attack last week in which explosives hidden in pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands, including many Hezbollah members.

The Israeli military said it was the first time a projectile fired from Lebanon had reached central Israel. Hezbollah claimed to have targeted an intelligence base near Tel Aviv last month in an aerial attack, but there was no confirmation. The Palestinian Hamas militant group in Gaza repeatedly targeted Tel Aviv in the opening months of the war.

The launch ratcheted up tensions as the region appears to be teetering toward another all-out war, even as Israel continues to battle Hamas in the Gaza Strip. A wave of Israeli strikes on Monday and Tuesday killed at least 560 people in Lebanon and forced thousands to seek refuge.

Families have fled southern Lebanon, flocking to Beirut and the coastal city of Sidon, sleeping in schools turned into shelters, as well as in cars, parks and along the beach. Some sought to leave the country, causing a traffic jam at the border with Syria.

Israel said late Tuesday that fighter jets carried out "extensive strikes" on Hezbollah weapons and rocket launchers across southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa region to the north. The military has said it has no immediate plans for a ground invasion but has declined to give a timetable for the air campaign.

Tensions between Israel and the Lebanese militant group have steadily escalated over the last 11 months. Hezbollah has been firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and its ally Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group.

Israel has responded with increasingly heavy airstrikes and the targeted killing of Hezbollah commanders while threatening a wider operation.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on Lebanon for Wednesday at the request of France.

Nearly a year of fighting between Hezbollah and Israel had already displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border before this week's escalation. Israel has vowed to do whatever it takes to ensure its citizens can return to their homes in the north, while Hezbollah has said it will keep up its rocket attacks until there is a cease-fire in Gaza, something which appears increasingly remote.

The rocket fire over the past week has disrupted life for over 1 million people across northern Israel, with schools closed and restrictions on public gatherings. Many restaurants and other businesses are shut in the coastal city of Haifa, and there are fewer people on the streets. Some who fled south from communities near the border are coming under rocket fire again.

Israel has moved thousands of troops who had been serving in Gaza to the northern border. It says Hezbollah has some 150,000 rockets and missiles, including some capable of striking anywhere in Israel, and that the group has fired some 9,000 rockets and drones since last October.

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Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesperson, said the missile fired Wednesday had a "heavy warhead" but declined to elaborate or confirm it was the type described by Hezbollah. He dismissed Hezbollah's claim of targeting the Mossad headquarters, located just north of Tel Aviv, as "psychological warfare."

The Iranian-made Qader is a medium-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile with multiple types and payloads. It can carry an explosive payload of up to 800 kilograms (1,760 pounds), according to the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. Iranian officials have described the liquid-fueled missile as having a range of 2,000 kilometers (1,240 miles).

Cross-border weapons firing began ramping up on Sunday in the wake of the pager and walkie-talkie bombings, which killed 39 people and wounded nearly 3,000, many of them civilians. Lebanon blamed Israel, but Israel did not confirm or deny responsibility.

On Sunday, Hezbollah launched around 150 rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel.

The next day, Israel said its warplanes struck 1,600 Hezbollah targets, destroying cruise missiles, long- and short-range rockets and attack drones, including weapons concealed in private homes. The strikes racked up the highest one-day death toll in Lebanon since Israel and Hezbollah fought a bruising month-long war in 2006.

An Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Tuesday killed Ibrahim Kobeisi, whom Israel described as a top Hezbollah commander with the group's rocket and missile unit. Military officials said Kobeisi was responsible for launches toward Israel and planned a 2000 attack in which three Israeli soldiers were kidnapped and killed. Hezbollah later confirmed his death.

It was the latest in a string of assassinations and other setbacks for Hezbollah, which is Lebanon's strongest political and military actor and is widely considered the top paramilitary force in the Arab world.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said six people were killed and 15 were wounded in the strike in a southern Beirut suburb, an area where Hezbollah has a strong presence. The country's National News Agency said the attack destroyed three floors of a six-story apartment building.

The U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon said one of its staffers and her young son were among those killed Monday in the Bekaa region, while a cleaner under contract was killed in a strike in the south.

Hezbollah fired 300 rockets on Tuesday, injuring six Israeli soldiers and civilians, most of them lightly, according to the Israeli military.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said at least 564 people have been killed in Israeli strikes since Monday, including 50 children and 94 women, and that more than 1,800 have been wounded, a staggering toll for a country still reeling from the deadly pager and walkie-talkie bombings last week.

Zelenskyy's victory plan sets Ukraine's terms in a desperate war against Russia

By SAMYA KULLAB and LORNE COOK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The victory plan that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will present to the White House this week asks the Biden administration to do something it has not achieved in the two and a half years since Russia invaded Ukraine: act quickly to support Kyiv's campaign.

While Western dawdling has amplified Ukraine's losses, some Ukrainian officials, diplomats and analysts fear Kyiv's aim to have the plan implemented before a new U.S. president takes office in January may be out of reach.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, reportedly briefed on the plan, said it "can work" but many privately question how.

The specifics of Zelenskyy's blueprint have been kept under wraps until it can be formally presented to President Joe Biden, but contours of the plan have emerged, including the need for fast action on decisions Western allies have been mulling since the full-scale invasion began in 2022.

It includes the security guarantee of NATO membership, according to Zelenskyy's chief of staff Andrii Yermak — a principal demand of Kyiv and Moscow's key point of contention. Western allies, including the

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U.S., have been skeptical about this option.

Zelenskyy has said he will also seek permission to use long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory, another red line for some of Ukraine's supporters.

"Partners often say, 'We will be with Ukraine until its victory.' Now we clearly show how Ukraine can win and what is needed for this. Very specific things," Zelenskyy told reporters ahead of the trip. "Let's do all this today, while all the officials who want victory for Ukraine are still in official positions."

Meanwhile, outnumbered Ukrainian forces face grinding battles against one of the world's most powerful armies in the east. As Zelenskyy pitches his plan to Biden on Thursday, Ukrainian servicemen will be grappling to hold defensive lines in the key logistics point of Vuhledar in the Donetsk region. For some of them, it is essential that Biden buys into Zelenskyy's plan.

"I hope that allies will provide us with what we need," said Kyanin, a soldier fighting in the Donetsk region. "Not 10 or 31 tanks, but a thousand tanks, thousands of weapons and ammunition."

Kyiv sets the terms

The victory plan is Kyiv's response to rising pressure from Western allies and war-weary Ukrainians to negotiate a cease-fire. A deal with Russia would almost certainly be unfavorable for Ukraine, which has lost a fifth of its territory and tens of thousands of lives in the conflict.

Unless, Kyiv calculates, its western partners act quickly. Ukraine's allies have routinely mulled over requests for weapons and capabilities, granting them often after their strategic value is diminished. Under the plan, from October to December, they must dramatically strengthen Kyiv's hand.

The plan comprises military, political, diplomatic and economic elements.

A senior U.S. State Department official said the Ukrainians were "testing" certain elements of Zelenskyy's plan with the U.S. and others but had not yet offered details or the entire proposal. Any decision on support for parts or all of the plan will be up to Biden, the official said on the sidelines of the annual U.N. General Assembly in New York.

The official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss private consultations with the Ukrainians, said the military element of the plan deals with what Ukraine thinks it needs in the short term to keep pressure on Russia and hopefully force them to the negotiating table.

The political element deals with how to assure the Ukrainian people that they will be welcome in Western institutions like the European Union and NATO if they continue to fight with Russia or succeed in getting a negotiated settlement with Russia, the official said.

Aside from the demand for NATO membership, the plan seeks to bolster Ukraine's defenses, including air defense capabilities, enough to force Moscow to negotiate.

A request to ramp up sanctions to weaken Russia's economy and defense industry is also expected.

Zelenskyy has said without elaborating that Kyiv's military incursion into Kursk, in Russia, is part of the victory plan. That offensive, which embarrassed President Vladimir Putin as the Kremlin scrambled to counterattack, has not yielded any strategic gains. But it has shown the Russian public and doubtful Western allies that Russia is not invincible and Kyiv still has offensive capabilities despite being battered on the eastern front.

The cost of inaction

Zelenskyy has described his proposal as "a bridge to the Peace Summit" that he has proposed for November but that Russia says it will not attend. No international players capable of swaying Moscow agreed to his earlier 10-point peace plan, which calls for the full withdrawal of Russian forces.

Ukrainian presidential advisors and lawmakers have told The Associated Press that Kyiv will only agree to a cease-fire with Russia if Putin's ability to invade the country again is crippled. Any other arrangement would not benefit Ukraine's future or honor the sacrifices of its people.

Ukrainian officials have rejected competing proposals from China and Brazil, believing they would merely pause the war and give Moscow time to consolidate its battered army and defense industry.

"It will lead to a freezing of the conflict, nothing more: Occupied territories are considered occupied. Sanctions against Russia remain. The intensity of war drops significantly but it continues," said one presi-

dential advisor, who requested anonymity to speak freely.

He predicted that Moscow would recalibrate and attack again, likely from Mykolaiv and Odesa in the south, "within two, three, four years, or maybe even earlier, depending on the state of Russia. That's the scenario."

Russia's conditions for ending the war are spelled out in a 17-page draft agreement penned in April 2022.

The time element

Prolonging the status quo will only play into Russia's hands in the long-term, analysts said.

"Ukraine will lose more than 1,000 square kilometers (600 miles) by the end of the year," if current conditions continue, said Oleksandr Kovalenko, a military analyst for Information Resistance, a Kyiv-based think tank. "We need to understand that if (allies) don't defend Ukraine, it will make this war last for many more years, and finally, make it possible for us to lose the war," he said.

Time will also allow Russian forces to build up its weapons industry, as it did at a frightening pace in the last year, said Kovalenko.

"We lack every kind of weapon, and Russia produces their weapons 24 hours a day," Kovalenko said.

Russia has updated its aerial glide bombs, for which Ukraine has no effective countermeasure. They now weigh 3,000 pounds, which is six times bigger than when they were first used in the battle for Bakhmut in 2022, he said.

Soldiers in eastern Ukraine and analysts said long-range Western weapons would be the most effective countermeasure against glide bombs, which have been deployed along the frontline, including in Vuhledar. The mining town's fall would compromise supply lines feeding the southern front and strike a devastating blow to Ukrainian morale.

In his final address to the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, Biden urged Ukraine's backers to stand firm. "We cannot grow weary," he said. "We cannot look away."

Israel has landed heavy blows on Hezbollah. The victory it seeks could prove elusive

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

It has been a devastating week for Hezbollah and the people of Lebanon.

Bombs hidden in the group's pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands — many of them Hezbollah members. Israeli strikes on Beirut killed two of Hezbollah's top commanders. And Israel has bombed what it said were 1,600 militant sites across large parts of Lebanon, killing hundreds of people and displacing thousands.

Israel says its objective is to secure the border so that tens of thousands of people who fled under Hezbollah fire nearly a year ago can return to their homes. But it's far from clear that its recent operations — as tactically successful as they were — will bring that about.

"No one either in or out of the defense establishment has any clue as to how to translate these brilliant operational achievements into political benefit, into a real victory that will stop the war in the north," columnist Nadav Eyal wrote in Israel's Yediot Ahronot newspaper.

"As long as Hezbollah retains any firepower, the northern border will not be able to return to normal."

Hezbollah began firing into Israel the day after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the war in Gaza. Its stated aim was to pin down Israeli forces in the north to help its ally Hamas, which — like Hezbollah — is backed by Iran. The Lebanese militant group has said it would cease the attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which appears increasingly unlikely.

Hezbollah's response to the past week's escalation has seemed meager. The hundreds of rockets and drones it has fired into northern Israel — including areas much farther from the border than it hit previously — have caused few casualties and only scattered damage.

The militants fired a longer-range missile early Wednesday that targeted Tel Aviv for the first time, marking a clear escalation. The Israeli military said it intercepted the projectile, and there were no reports of casualties or damage.

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Experts say Hezbollah is holding more such weapons in reserve.

Israeli air power has its limits

The footage on Monday of Israeli strikes sending up plumes of dust and smoke seemed grimly familiar.

The American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the NATO campaign in Libya in 2011, and the U.S.-led war against the Islamic State group in 2014 all began with massive airstrikes lighting up the sky. In each case, the war dragged on for months or years, and ground forces played a crucial role.

Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza began with nearly three weeks of heavy airstrikes across the territory, followed by a full-scale ground invasion. Nearly a year later, Hamas is still putting up a fight and holding scores of hostages.

With Hezbollah, Israel has so far adopted narrower objectives — not the disarmament or defeat of the Lebanese militant group, but a new arrangement in which militants retreat from the border and halt their attacks.

But even that may not be possible without a ground invasion.

There's also the risk of mission-creep, as America discovered after its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan ground on for years after the toppling of Saddam Hussein and the Taliban. NATO airstrikes initially aimed at preventing a feared massacre in Benghazi morphed into a seven-month campaign of regime change from which Libya has yet to fully recover.

Hezbollah likely has capabilities we haven't seen yet

Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant boasted that Monday's strikes alone had taken out tens of thousands of Hezbollah's rockets and missiles.

"This is the most difficult week for Hezbollah since its establishment," he added. "A blow has been dealt to the chain of command, to the terrorists themselves on different levels, to their shooting capabilities and to their morale."

Hezbollah has acknowledged suffering heavy blows, but even if Gallant's assessment is correct, it still has considerable resources.

"The rocket unit is still active, Hezbollah has absorbed the initial shock, and the battle has only begun," said Qassim Qassir, a former Hezbollah member who wrote a book about the group. "Hezbollah has only used a small part of its capabilities."

The militant group was established with the help of Iran following Israel's 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon, and it seeks Israel's destruction. It has survived countless battles with Israeli forces, replaced several slain commanders over the years and rearmed after a monthlong war in 2006.

Hezbollah claims to have some 100,000 fighters. Before the latest hostilities, it was believed to have some 150,000 rockets and missiles, including long-range projectiles capable of hitting anywhere inside Israel, and some precision-guided missiles.

Its more sophisticated weapons are likely being held in reserve as it seeks to avoid triggering an all-out war.

Sarit Zehavi, a former Israeli military intelligence analyst and founder of the Alma Research and Education Center, a think tank focused on the northern border, said Hezbollah has concealed its weapons in different parts of the country, including in areas close to Beirut where it has a strong presence.

"Hezbollah was building redundancy, so they spread their munitions and infrastructure all over, and that's why that many targets are being attacked, because it's everywhere," she said.

Hezbollah is far more advanced militarily than Hamas. Hezbollah also has a far larger area in which to operate, extensive supply lines linking it more directly to Iran, and networks of tunnels potentially even more extensive than those in Gaza.

In the event of a ground invasion, Hezbollah fighters could be joined by thousands of fighters from fellow Iran-backed groups from Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere in the region.

Neither side has good options

Israel says it has no immediate plans for a ground invasion but is prepared for one, and has sent thousands of battle-hardened forces from Gaza to the northern border. If the air campaign fails to bring

Hezbollah to heel, Israeli leaders will be tempted to send them in.

Even if the goal is only to carve out a buffer zone to better secure the north, the risks are great.

Most Israelis are insulated from the air war by distance and Israel's missile defense systems, but a ground invasion would mean more casualties and protracted fighting for soldiers and reservists already weary from a year of war in Gaza.

Hezbollah waged an 18-year-long insurgency against Israel the last time it occupied Lebanon, eventually forcing it to withdraw, and another prolonged occupation could be similarly costly.

Israel has already faced international outrage over the war in Gaza, including ongoing investigations by top world courts, and risks even greater isolation if it launches a similar campaign in Lebanon.

Hezbollah also has few good options.

Halting its rocket fire on the north in the face of Israeli pressure would likely be seen by its supporters — and its patron Iran — as a humiliating capitulation and an abandonment of the Palestinians.

Escalating its attacks, either by launching more sophisticated rockets or targeting major cities like Tel Aviv, could bring an even more crushing Israeli response or an all-out war that devastates Lebanon — with Hezbollah at risk of being blamed.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah already faces criticism from many Lebanese who accuse him of tying their country's fate to Iran and inviting war at a time of financial ruin.

That leaves it stuck with the status quo, in which Israel carries out increasingly heavy strikes while Hezbollah makes do with a relatively restrained response.

For Hezbollah, and the Lebanese people, that might make the coming weeks even worse.

Israel bombards Hezbollah, killing a top commander, while families flee southern Lebanon

By ABBY SEWELL and NATALIE MELZER Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel killed a top Hezbollah commander Tuesday as part of a two-day bombing campaign that has left more than 560 people dead and prompted thousands in southern Lebanon to seek refuge from the widening conflict.

With the two sides on the brink of all-out war, Hezbollah launched dozens of rockets into Israel, including a longer-range projectile that set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv and across central Israel. It was the group's farthest strike yet in nearly a year of exchanges. Israel said it intercepted the projectile, and there were no reports of casualties or damage.

Hezbollah said it had fired a ballistic missile at the headquarters of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, which it said was responsible for the targeted killing of its senior leaders. Israel said it struck the site the missile was launched from in southern Lebanon.

Families that fled southern Lebanon flocked to Beirut and the coastal city of Sidon, sleeping in schools turned into shelters, as well as in cars, parks and along the beach. Some sought to leave the country, causing a traffic jam at the border with Syria.

Issa Baydoun fled the village of Shihine when it was bombed and drove to Beirut with his extended family. They slept in vehicles on the side of the road because the shelters were full.

"We struggled a lot on the road just to get here," said Baydoun, who rejected Israel's contention that it hit only military targets. "We evacuated our homes because Israel is targeting civilians and attacking them."

Volunteers cooked meals for displaced families at an empty Beirut gas station that first became a hub for relief after a devastating port explosion in 2020.

Israel said late Tuesday that fighter jets carried out "extensive strikes" on Hezbollah weapons and rocket launchers across southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa region to the north.

Asked about the duration of Israel's operations in Lebanon, military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said at a news conference that it aims to keep them "as short as possible, that's why we're attacking with great force. At the same time, we must be prepared for it to take longer."

Tensions between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah have steadily escalated over the last

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11 months. Hezbollah has been firing rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and its ally Hamas, a fellow Iran-backed militant group.

Israel has responded with increasingly heavy airstrikes and the targeted killing of Hezbollah commanders while threatening a wider operation.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on Lebanon for Wednesday at the request of France.

Israel said a strike in Beirut Tuesday had killed Ibrahim Kobeisi, who it said was a top Hezbollah commander with the group's rocket and missile unit. Military officials said Kobeisi was responsible for launches towards Israel and planned a 2000 attack in which three Israeli soldiers were kidnapped and killed. Hezbollah later confirmed his death.

It was the latest in a string of assassinations and setbacks for Hezbollah, the strongest political and military actor in Lebanon and widely considered the top paramilitary force in the Arab world.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said six people were killed and 15 were wounded in the strike in a southern Beirut suburb, an area where Hezbollah has a strong presence. The country's National News Agency said the attack destroyed three floors of a six-story apartment building.

The U.N.'s High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon said one of its staffers and her young son were among those killed Monday in the Bekaa region, while a cleaner under contract was killed in a strike in the south.

Hezbollah said its missile attacks Tuesday targeted eight sites in Israel, including an explosives factory in Zichron Yaakov, 60 kilometers (37 miles) from the border. It fired 300 rockets, injuring six soldiers and civilians, most of them lightly, according to Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman.

The renewed exchange came after Monday's barrages racked up the highest death toll in any single day in Lebanon since Israel and Hezbollah fought a bruising monthlong war in 2006.

On Tuesday, mourners carried 11 bodies through the streets of the Lebanese village of Saksakieh, some 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of the Lebanon-Israel border, including those of four women, an infant and a 7-year-old girl. All were killed in Israel's bombardment of the village Monday.

Some of the bodies were draped in Hezbollah flags, others wrapped in black clothes. A wreath of flowers was placed on top of the smallest one.

Mohammad Halal, father of 7-year-old Joury Halal, said his daughter was an "innocent child martyr."

"She is a martyr for the sake of the south and Palestine," Halal said and defiantly stated his allegiance to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Israel said it targeted sites where Hezbollah had stored weapons. Data from American fire-tracking satellites analyzed Tuesday by The Associated Press showed the wide range of Israeli airstrikes aimed at southern Lebanon, covering an area of over 1,700 square kilometers (650 square miles).

NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System typically is used to track U.S. wildfires, but can also be used to track the flashes and burning that follow airstrikes. Data from Monday showed significant fires across southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa Valley.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said at least 564 people have been killed in Israeli strikes since Monday, including 50 children and 94 women, and that more than 1,800 have been wounded — a staggering toll for a country still reeling from a deadly attack on communication devices last week.

Nearly a year of fighting between Hezbollah and Israel had displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border before this week's escalation. Israel has vowed to do whatever it takes to ensure its citizens can return to their homes in the north, while Hezbollah has said it will keep up its rocket attacks until there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which appears increasingly remote.

The Israeli military says it has no immediate plans for a ground invasion but is prepared for one. It has moved thousands of troops who had been serving in Gaza to the northern border. It says Hezbollah has some 150,000 rockets and missiles, including some capable of striking anywhere in Israel, and that the group has fired some 9,000 rockets and drones since last October.

Israel said its warplanes struck 1,600 Hezbollah targets Monday, destroying cruise missiles, long- and

short-range rockets and attack drones, including weapons concealed in private homes.

Monday's escalation came after a particularly heavy exchange of fire Sunday, when Hezbollah launched around 150 rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel.

Last week, thousands of communications devices used mainly by Hezbollah members exploded in different parts of Lebanon, killing 39 people and wounding nearly 3,000, many of them civilians. Lebanon blamed Israel, but Israel did not confirm or deny responsibility.

Tropical Storm Helene strengthens as hurricane warnings cover parts of Florida and Mexico

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and LUIS ALBERTO CRUZ Associated Press

Tropical Storm Helene was rapidly strengthening in the Caribbean Sea and expected to become a hurricane Wednesday while moving north along Mexico's coast toward the U.S., prompting residents to evacuate, schools to close and officials to declare emergencies in Florida and Georgia.

The storm is forecast to be "near hurricane strength" when it passes near Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula early Wednesday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said, and to "intensify and grow in size" as it moves north across the Gulf of Mexico. Heavy rainfall was forecast for the southeastern U.S. starting Wednesday, with a "life-threatening storm surge" along the entire west coast of Florida, according to the center.

Helene is expected to become a major hurricane — a Category 3 or higher — on Thursday, the day it's set to reach Florida's Gulf Coast, according to the hurricane center. The center has issued hurricane warnings for part of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and Florida's northwestern coastline, where large storm surges of up to 15 feet (4.5 meters) were expected.

Mexico is still reeling from former Hurricane John battering its other coast. John hit the country's southern Pacific coast late Monday, killing two people, blowing tin roofs off houses, triggering mudslides and toppling scores of trees, officials said Tuesday.

John grew into a Category 3 hurricane in a matter of hours Monday and made landfall about 80 miles (128 kilometers) east of the resort of Acapulco, near the town of Punta Maldonado, with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph (193 kph) before weakening to a tropical storm after moving inland.

Helene, which formed Tuesday in the Caribbean, is expected to move over deep, warm waters, fueling its intensification. People in regions under hurricane warnings and watches should be prepared to lose power and should have enough food and water for at least three days, forecasters warned.

Hurricane watches — which are a step down from warnings — were also in effect for parts of western Cuba and Florida, including the Tampa Bay area, the National Hurricane Center said.

"It's going to be a very large system with impacts across all of Florida," said Larry Kelly, a specialist at the hurricane center.

Several counties on Florida's west and northwestern coasts have issued evacuation orders. Multiple school districts, including in the areas around Tampa and the state capital Tallahassee, plan to close schools or reduce hours starting Wednesday.

Some residents started filling sandbags ahead of anticipated flooding and began leaving areas on the coast.

President Joe Biden declared an emergency in Florida and deployed Federal Emergency Management Agency teams to Florida and Alabama to support local first responders. Federal authorities were positioning generators, food and water, along with search-and-rescue and power restoration teams, the White House said.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis also issued an emergency for most of the state's counties, while Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp declared an emergency in his state as well.

The storm is anticipated to be unusually large and fast-moving, meaning storm surges, wind and rain will likely extend far from the storm's center, the hurricane center said. States as far inland as Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana could see rainfall.

Heavy rains and big waves already lashed the Cayman Islands on Tuesday. Officials there closed schools,

airports and government offices as strong winds knocked out power in some areas of Grand Cayman, while heavy rain and waves as high as 10 feet (3 meters) unleashed flooding. Authorities urged people to stay indoors as the storm moved away later Tuesday and said crews would fan out to assess damage.

Many in Cuba also worried about the storm, whose tentacles are expected to reach the capital of Havana, which is struggling with a severe water shortage, piles of uncollected garbage and chronic power outages.

Helene is the eighth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which began June 1. Since 2000, eight major hurricanes have made landfall in Florida, according to Philip Klotzbach, a Colorado State University hurricane researcher.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average Atlantic hurricane season this year because of record-warm ocean temperatures. It forecast 17 to 25 named storms before the season ends Nov. 30, with four to seven major hurricanes of Category 3 or higher.

Congress moving swiftly to fund government and avert shutdown before heading home to campaign

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is expected Wednesday to give swift approval to a temporary spending bill that would keep federal agencies funded when the new fiscal year begins next Tuesday, avoiding a potential shutdown showdown just weeks before the Nov. 5 election.

The stopgap measure generally funds agencies at current levels through Dec. 20, but an additional \$231 million was included to bolster the Secret Service after the two assassination attempts against Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. Money was also added to aid with the presidential transition, among other things.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., billed the measure as doing “only what’s absolutely necessary,” a statement directed at members of his own conference concerned about spending levels.

Still, it’s a no-go for some Republicans, forcing House GOP leadership to rely on Democratic votes to pass the bill through a process that requires at least two-thirds support from voting members. Johnson said the only alternative to the continuing resolution at this stage would be a government shutdown.

“It would be political malpractice to shut the government down,” Johnson said. “I think everyone understands that.”

If the House passes the temporary funding measure as expected, it will move to the Senate for final approval. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said late Wednesday that he had reached agreement ensuring passage will happen quickly.

“This is how things should be done,” Schumer said. “Without brinkmanship, without delay.”

Lawmakers in both chambers are anxious to return to their home states and districts to campaign, smoothing the path for passage of a temporary funding fix. But more arduous fiscal negotiations await them at the end of the year.

That’s because the bill essentially punts for three months a final decision on full-year spending levels. Under terms of a previous deal to avoid a federal default and allow the government to continue paying its bills, spending for defense and nondefense programs would rise 1% next year.

The Senate has charted a course to go above that level, while House Republicans have been voting for steep cuts to many nondefense programs, and they have attached policy mandates to the spending bills that Democrats overwhelmingly oppose. So a final agreement will be difficult to reach.

In the meantime, the temporary bill will mostly fund the government at current levels, with a few exceptions like the funding infusion for the Secret Service.

The \$231 million for the Secret Service does come with strings attached. It’s contingent upon the agency complying with congressional oversight. The bill also allows the Secret Service to spend its allocations faster if needed.

“Everybody understands that’s critically important right now,” Johnson said of the Secret Service money.

In a recent letter, the Secret Service told lawmakers that a funding shortfall was not the reason for lapses in Trump's security when a gunman climbed onto an unsecured roof on July 13 at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, and opened fire. But acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe Jr., also made clear the agency had "immediate needs" and that he's talking to Congress.

The continuing resolution is needed because Congress is nowhere close to completing work on the dozen annual appropriations bills that fund much of the federal government. The House has passed five of the 12 bills, mostly along party lines. The Senate has passed zero.

Johnson also warned that when the Dec. 20 extension expires, he would not support a massive, catchall bill to fund the government, referred to as an omnibus, so another stopgap may be needed that would allow the new president and Congress to have the final say on fiscal year 2025 spending levels.

"I have no intention of going back to that terrible tradition," Johnson said.

Mexico's most popular president in decades is retiring. What will he leave behind?

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Many Mexicans will feel a deep sense of loss when folksy, charismatic, nationalistic President Andrés Manuel López Obrador leaves office on Sept. 30 — and that's no surprise.

López Obrador himself has spent an inordinate amount of time talking about his own legacy — and his place in history — over his six-year term, something he brings up at almost every one of his marathonic daily 7 a.m. media briefings.

But what legacy will the ruffled, grinning López Obrador leave behind? It is perhaps the main question for a man who is obsessed with history, and one thing appears clear: he has changed the way politics is done in Mexico, perhaps forever.

Unlike decades of reserved and distant presidents, López Obrador has built a deep personal connection with many Mexicans. He has stripped the office of the thousands of presidential guards, limousines and walled compounds that once characterized it, saying "you can't have a rich government with poor people."

"He is a politician who evokes familiarity, he reminds people of a father, an uncle, a grandfather," said Carlos Pérez Ricart, a political analyst at Mexico's Center for Economic Research and Teaching. That's not a coincidence, either. López Obrador constantly praises the traditional family and says it has saved the country.

"He does feel nostalgia for some of the social structures of the 1970s in Mexico and nostalgia for the family," said Pérez Ricart.

Will his legacy be like that of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose New Deal created lasting institutions like Social Security and home mortgage programs that resulted in an enormous, stable middle class?

The Mexican leader stakes his movement on cash social-benefit programs, he likes to compare himself to Roosevelt and many Mexicans think of him with the same fondness that the more patrician FDR inspired in his day.

"I think he's going to be remembered as a president who started big changes, who thought about the people," said Armando López, 60, who works as a street cleaner.

Marina Fiesco, an office worker taking a break at a Mexico City park with her 11-year-old son, voiced similar feelings.

"I feel he does think about the people," said Fiesco. "It's not about left or right, a president has to look out for the people."

Part of that connection is that he talks more, and fields more questions, than probably any other leader in the world.

In his six years in office, he has held about 1,400 televised morning briefings that last an average of 2 1/2 hours each. He tells jokes, talks about his favorite foods, lashes out at critical journalists, makes fun of the opposition and sometimes plays his favorite music videos. Most briefings end with him saying,

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"Let's go get breakfast."

He frequently says things that are not true. He claims Mexico doesn't produce fentanyl — the deadly synthetic opioid that kills about 70,000 Americans every year — even though his own officials have contradicted him. When homicides spiked this year — despite his claims to have achieved an 18% reduction — he simply ignored the figures.

Many Mexicans seem willing to tolerate the untruths, in part because López Obrador, 70, has mastered a key Mexican folk saying: "He who gets angry, loses." He brushes real contradictions and problems off with a chuckle, a stony refusal to discuss them, or his stock phrase, "I have other data."

He's probably the most skillful politician ever to rule Mexico and seems to enjoy some unstoppable motivating force: in all of his thousands of hours of talking, never once has he sat down, taken one sip of water or gone off to use the bathroom.

Influenced by Mexican presidents of the 20th century, López Obrador would have liked to make his mark with big infrastructure projects — he is obsessed with railroads and oil refineries — and big state-owned companies like the ones that dominated Mexico's economy in the 1970s, his formative years.

But his building projects have been often ill-planned and will be subject to the withering trends of economic and energy transition. Unlike his heroes from the past, he hasn't been able to nationalize any industry, and has only been able to fight a rear-guard action to defend the indebted, struggling state-owned oil and electric power companies he inherited.

Nor has he been able to make much of a mark in foreign policy, apart from a few rather pointless, unresolved disputes with Spain, the Vatican, Ecuador and Peru. In the face of U.S. pressure, he has used the 120,000-member national guard he created not to confront drug cartels, but to prevent migrants from reaching the U.S. border.

And his social programs — like the \$150-per month payment to people over 65 — can fade, be defunded or eviscerated by inflation.

So could López Obrador turn out to be a figure like Argentina's president in the 1940s and 50s, Juan Perón, who left behind an ideologically amorphous legacy that was fought over by disparate wings of his movement for decades?

"I think that what we are going to see is the 'balkanization' of Obrador-ism," said Pérez Ricart, "a dispute between the left and the right to own the term, a bit like what happened with Peronism in Argentina."

Or he could go down in history as the person who, however briefly, revived the nearly century-old Mexican tradition of a "state party", like the old PRI, where López Obrador began his political career. The PRI ruled Mexico for 70 years, before corruption, internal disputes and economic crises brought it down.

Some of López Obrador's most devoted followers seem surprisingly willing to take the chance of another PRI.

"If after 70 years we've found we made a mistake, well, that's life," Fiesco said.

López Obrador may be part of a region-wide revival of old, populist state-party models, both on the left and right.

For example, El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele stresses that his administration — which won even greater margins of reelection than López Obrador's Morena — is a "hegemonic party, not a state party."

That's almost exactly how Morena supporters describe their movement, but the instant any party starts to use the power of the government to keep itself in power, that distinction disappears.

Most people think it's unlikely that Morena will last as long in power as the seven-decade run of the PRI.

"Times have changed, that's not possible anymore," said Armando López, the street cleaner. "People will support him as long as they see something (in return). They're not going to follow him blindly."

The Morena party was cobbled together by López Obrador out of old PRI members like himself and people from more leftist backgrounds. López Obrador is Morena's star, its guide, its moral authority. Once he's gone, the tensions within the party — already palpable — will likely grow stronger.

López Obrador is very aware of that, and from the start he has consciously built structures to guard his legacy, which he views as his own, not the party's. He has handed more economic and law-enforcement power over to the armed forces than any other Mexican president, because the army obeys him unques-

tioningly and he trusts them.

His longest-lasting legacy may be those structural changes: the militarization of law enforcement and large swaths of the economy, the elimination of all independent regulatory and oversight agencies, the frequent attacks on the media and a judicial overhaul that critics say will weaken democratic checks and balances.

Mexico's armed forces now run airports, trains, customs facilities — and even an airline.

"The truth is that there is one really important legacy, and that is the legacy of militarization," said Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, an associate professor at George Mason University.

Trump tells women he 'will be your protector' as GOP struggles with outreach to female voters

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

INDIANA, Pa. (AP) — From former President Donald Trump to Ohio Senate candidate Bernie Moreno, male Republican candidates are struggling to speak to female voters, using language criticized as tone deaf and patronizing as they try to win support from women and speak to issues important to them.

On Monday night, Trump cast himself as a "protector" of women, saying in battleground Pennsylvania that he will save them from fear and loneliness and they will no longer have to think about abortion.

"You will no longer be abandoned, lonely or scared. You will no longer be in danger. ... You will no longer have anxiety from all of the problems our country has today," Trump said. "You will be protected, and I will be your protector."

At a town hall event on Friday, Moreno bemoaned the fact that abortion has become the deciding issue for many suburban women, calling the notion "a little crazy, by the way, but especially for women that are like past 50. I'm thinking to myself, 'I don't really think that's an issue for you.'"

Former Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley responded with exasperation to Moreno in a social media post. "Are you trying to lose the election?" she asked. "Asking for a friend. #Tonedead #DonLemonVibes." The latter was a reference to former CNN anchor Don Lemon's suggestion during the 2024 campaign that Haley, at 51, was "past her prime."

The comments underscore the GOP's challenges in appealing to women, especially when it comes to the issue of abortion. The problem has become amplified since Vice President Kamala Harris replaced President Joe Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket.

Women have emerged as a core weakness for Trump's campaign, and he is viewed less favorably by women than men. A September AP-NORC poll found more than half of registered voters who are women have a somewhat or very favorable view of Harris, while only about one-third have a favorable view of Trump.

The gender gap — the difference between the share of men and women who say they're supporting each candidate — has been in the double digits for Trump and Harris in several recent polls. That split has been attributed, in part, to Trump's role in appointing the Supreme Court justices who overturned the constitutional right to an abortion — a ruling he continues to celebrate at his events.

"Women will be healthy, happy, confident and free. You will no longer be thinking about abortion," Trump said Monday, insisting the issue "no longer pertains," even as women living in Republican-led states grapple with a wave of new restrictions that have left emergency rooms refusing to treat pregnant women and been linked by ProPublica to at least two preventable deaths.

Instead of helping Trump expand his appeal with women, such language is likely to turn them off, argued Debbie Walsh, the director of the Center for American Women and Politics at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

"This notion that women need to be protected, that women are somehow weak or vulnerable — this sort of protectionist, patronizing tone ... I think for a lot of women will just add to that sense of he doesn't understand their lives, that he doesn't understand where they are on a whole host of issues," she said.

Many women, she noted, believe that overturning *Roe v. Wade* has "put their lives at risk."

Trump's pledge to protect women is also complicated by his long history of personal attacks against

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women as well as a jury's finding last year that he sexually abused a magazine columnist decades earlier in a department store dressing room. Trump has denied the allegations, along with multiple others that have emerged over the years.

"This kind of language is just more evidence that Donald Trump is out of touch with American women," said Jennifer Lawless, chair of the politics department at the University of Virginia. "Not only is the sentiment paternalistic, but the fact that he uttered these words while simultaneously berating women for caring about reproductive rights is stunning."

Trump's campaign dismissed the criticism as coming from partisan voices and said Trump's comments reflected his voters' top issues.

"President Trump is responding directly to the concerns that he hears and our campaign hears from women across the country everyday, their fear, the very real fear that women have about being assaulted or potentially raped by criminals or illegal immigrants who have been allowed in this country," said Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt.

Harris' campaign said Trump's latest comments showed he was trying to tell women "what to think and what we care about."

"Women know better — and we will not be silenced, dismissed, ignored or treated like we're stupid," spokesperson Sarafina Chitika said in a statement.

Moreno spokesperson Reagan McCarthy, meanwhile, said the Senate candidate's comment was made in jest.

"Bernie's view is that women voters care just as much about the economy, rising prices, crime, and our open southern border as male voters do, and it's disgusting that Democrats and their friends in the leftwing media constantly treat all women as if they're automatically single-issue voters on abortion who don't have other concerns that they vote on," she said in a written statement.

Trump's campaign has been spending much of its energy focused on appealing to and turning out men — especially younger men who don't consistently vote in elections. That effort has included appearances on popular podcasts and at major sporting events like Ultimate Fighting Championship fights that have sometimes given the campaign a frat-like feel.

But campaign officials have long insisted that they have been working to appeal to women, too. They believe Trump's focus on the border and crime — with dark threats of neighborhoods being overrun by dangerous migrants and out-of-control crime putting families at risk — resonates especially well with women, as does his focus on the economy and his pledge to lower prices.

At Monday night's rally, Trump talked about women being worse off now than they were when he was in office. He vowed to "fix all of that and fast."

"I will protect women at a level never seen before. They will finally be healthy, hopeful, safe and secure. Their lives will be happy, beautiful and great again. And it's my honor to do so," he said.

Even some of Trump's supporters seemed to raise an eyebrow.

"He's what I call an old-style male," said Louella Ondo, 69, who lives in nearby Home, Pennsylvania, defining that as the kind who believes "that women are inferior to them and that they need to be the boss." She said she'd encountered many such male egos while working in health care alongside surgeons for 40 years.

Ondo, who's been a longtime supporter since Trump's days on "The Apprentice," said that attitude bothered her during his first run. But now, she said, it's clear the country needs "someone that is willing to do the job, not someone to sweet talk you."

"Would I want him to be my best friend? I'm not sure I would, you know? Because my thoughts and how he presents is different. But he can do the job and get us turned around. And that's what we need."

Others liked what they heard.

Mary Ann Williams, 63, a retired school teacher who lives in Newtown, said she feels less safe now than she did when Trump was in office and is looking for him to turn things around.

"I feel that what he's really saying, the bottom line, is that by following his policies — like closing the

border, stopping the immigrants that are criminals, drugs dealers — in that way, women, children, everybody's safe, we're all safer," she said.

What polls show about Tim Walz and JD Vance before Tuesday's VP debate

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ohio Sen. JD Vance, the Republican vice presidential candidate, is less popular among voters than his Democratic rival, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, according to a new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Both Vance and Walz entered the spotlight this summer as relative political unknowns. As both running mates prepare to address a huge audience in next week's vice-presidential debate, Democrats are more positive about Walz and Vice President Kamala Harris than Republicans are about Vance and former President Donald Trump.

The findings of the new survey reinforce the challenge for the Republican presidential ticket as voting begins in more and more states.

Vance is less well-liked than Walz

The poll shows that negative feelings about Vance are considerably more widespread than positive opinions. About half of registered voters have a somewhat or very unfavorable view of Vance, up from about 4 in 10 in late July, while around one-quarter have a somewhat or very favorable view of him, and a similar share don't know enough to say.

Walz, by contrast, is better liked. About 3 in 10 voters have a negative view of Walz, while about 4 in 10 have a positive opinion and about 3 in 10 don't know enough to say.

That difference in favorability extends to the candidates' bases. About 7 in 10 Democratic voters have a positive opinion of Walz, compared to about 6 in 10 Republican voters who have a favorable view of Vance.

Walz is stronger than Vance among men and women

Democratic candidates tend to receive more support from women, while Republicans perform better among men. That gap is clear in Trump and Harris' favorability numbers — but Walz is better liked than Vance among both men and women.

About 4 in 10 male and female voters have a positive view of Walz, while about 3 in 10 men and about one-quarter of women have a positive view of Vance.

Walz also has a popularity advantage over Vance among voters over the age of 60. Half of voters in this group view Walz somewhat or very favorably, while about 3 in 10 have a similar opinion of Vance.

Walz is a little weaker than Harris among Black voters and women

Despite his strength over Vance in some areas, there are also some key Democratic groups where Walz still has work to do. About three-quarters of Black adults have a favorable view of Harris, while roughly half say the same about Walz. She is also viewed more positively by women; about 3 in 10 women don't know enough about Walz to have an opinion.

In general, though, neither of the vice-presidential candidates outshine Harris or Trump among major demographic groups, and they remain less well-known than the presidential nominees, even among groups that are traditionally part of each party's base. For example, about one-quarter of white voters without a college degree don't know enough to say about Vance, and around 4 in 10 voters between the ages of 18 and 29 don't have an opinion on Walz.

This means their popularity could continue to shift as their national profiles rise.

Deadly flooding in Central Europe made twice as likely by climate change

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Human-caused climate change doubled the likelihood and intensified the heavy rains that led to devastating flooding in Central Europe earlier this month, a new flash study found.

Torrential rain in mid-September from Storm Boris pummeled a large part of central Europe, including Romania, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Germany, and caused widespread damage. The floods killed 24 people, damaged bridges, submerged cars, left towns without power and in need of significant infrastructure repairs.

The severe four-day rainfall was “by far” the heaviest ever recorded in Central Europe and twice as likely because of warming from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, World Weather Attribution, a collection of scientists that run rapid climate attribution studies, said Wednesday from Europe. Climate change also made the rains between 7% and 20% more intense, the study found.

“Yet again, these floods highlight the devastating results of fossil fuel-driven warming,” said Joyce Kimutai, the study’s lead author and a climate researcher at Imperial College, London.

To test the influence of human-caused climate change, the team of scientists analyzed weather data and used climate models to compare how such events have changed since cooler preindustrial times to today. Such models simulate a world without the current 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) of global warming since preindustrial times, and see how likely a rainfall event that severe would be in such a world.

The study analyzed four-day rainfall events, focusing on the countries that felt severe impacts.

Though the rapid study hasn’t been peer-reviewed, it follows scientifically accepted techniques.

“In any climate, you would expect to occasionally see records broken,” said Friederike Otto, an Imperial College, London, climate scientist who coordinates the attribution study team. But, “to see records being broken by such large margins, that is really the fingerprint of climate change. And that is only something that we see in a warming world.”

Some of the most severe impacts were felt in the Polish-Czech border region and Austria, mainly in urban areas along major rivers. The study noted that the death toll from this month’s flooding was considerably lower than during catastrophic floods in the region in 1997 and 2002. Still, infrastructure and emergency management systems were overwhelmed in many cases and will require billions of euros to fix.

Last week, European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen pledged billions of euros in aid for countries that suffered damage to infrastructure and housing from the floods.

The World Weather Attribution study also warned that in a world with even more warming — specifically 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since preindustrial times, the likelihood of ferocious four-day storms would grow by 50% compared to current levels. Such storms would grow in intensity, too, the authors found.

The heavy rainfall across Central Europe was caused by what’s known as a “Vb depression” that forms when cold polar air flows from the north over the Alps and meets warm air from Southern Europe. The study’s authors found no observable change in the number of similar Vb depressions since the 1950s.

The World Weather Attribution group launched in 2015 largely due to frustration that it took so long to determine whether climate change was behind an extreme weather event. Studies like theirs, within attribution science, use real-world weather observations and computer modeling to determine the likelihood of a particular happening before and after climate change, and whether global warming affected its intensity.

Man who staked out Trump at Florida golf course charged with attempting an assassination

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man who authorities say staked out Donald Trump for 12 hours on his golf course in Florida and wrote of his desire to kill him was indicted Tuesday on an attempted assassination charge.

Ryan Wesley Routh had been initially charged with two federal firearms offenses. The upgraded charges contained in a five-count indictment reflect the Justice Department's assessment that he methodically plotted to kill the Republican nominee, aiming a rifle through the shrubbery surrounding Trump's West Palm Beach golf course on an afternoon Trump was playing on it. Routh left behind a note in which he described his intention, prosecutors said.

Court records show the case has been assigned to Aileen Cannon, a Trump-appointed federal judge who generated intense scrutiny for her handling of a criminal case charging Trump with illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. She dismissed that case in July, a decision now being appealed by special counsel Jack Smith's team.

The attempted assassination indictment had been foreshadowed during a court hearing Monday in which prosecutors successfully argued for the 58-year-old Routh to remain behind bars as a flight risk and a threat to public safety.

They alleged that he had written of his plans to kill Trump in a handwritten note months before his Sept. 15 arrest in which he referred to his actions as a failed "assassination attempt on Donald Trump" and offered \$150,000 for anyone who could "finish the job." That note was in a box that Routh had apparently dropped off at the home of an unidentified witness months before his arrest.

After the attempted assassination, the person opened the box, took a photograph of the front page of the letter — addressed "Dear World" — and contacted law enforcement.

Prosecutors also said Routh kept in his car a handwritten list of venues at which Trump had appeared or was expected to be present in August, September and October.

The charge of attempted assassination of a major presidential candidate carries a potential life sentence in the event of a conviction. Other charges in the indictment include assaulting a federal officer, possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence and the two original firearms charges he faced last week.

The potential shooting was thwarted when a member of Trump's Secret Service protective detail spotted a partially obscured man's face and a rifle barrel protruding through the golf course fence line, ahead of where Trump was playing. The agent fired in the direction of Routh, who sped away and was stopped by law enforcement in a neighboring county.

Routh did not fire any rounds and did not have Trump in his line of sight, officials have said. He left behind a digital camera, a backpack, a loaded SKS-style rifle with a scope and a plastic bag containing food.

The arrest came two months after Trump was shot and wounded in the ear in an assassination attempt during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania. The Secret Service has acknowledged failings leading up to that shooting but has said that security worked as it should have to thwart a potential attack in Florida.

The initial charges Routh faced in a criminal complaint accused him of illegally possessing his gun in spite of multiple felony convictions and with possessing a firearm with an obliterated serial number. It is common for prosecutors to bring preliminary and easily provable charges upon an arrest and then add more serious offenses later as the investigation develops.

The FBI had said at the outset that it was investigating the episode as an apparent assassination attempt, but the absence of an immediate charge to that effect opened the door for Florida's Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis to announce his own state-level investigation that he said could produce more serious charges.

Trump, seeking to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the investigation and the Justice Department more broadly, complained Monday — before the attempted assassination charge was brought — that federal prosecutors were "mishandling and downplaying" the case by bringing charges that were a "slap on the wrist."

Asked Tuesday at an unrelated press conference about Trump's criticism, Attorney General Merrick Gar-

land said the Justice Department "would spare no resources to ensure accountability" in the case.

"All of our top priority should be ensuring that accountability occurs in this case and that those who run for office and their families are safe and protected," Garland said.

The Justice Department also said Monday that authorities who searched Routh's car found six cellphones, including one that showed a Google search of how to travel from Palm Beach County to Mexico.

A notebook found in his car was filled with criticism of the Russian and Chinese governments and notes about how to join the war on behalf of Ukraine.

In addition, prosecutors have cited a book authored by Routh last year in which he lambasted Trump's approach to foreign policy, including in Ukraine. In the book, he wrote that Iran was "free to assassinate Trump" for having left the nuclear deal.

Ukraine's president calls for unspecified global 'action' to force Russia into peace

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Ukraine's president dismissed the notion of peace talks with Moscow on Tuesday, calling instead for unspecified global "action" to force Russia into peace for invading his country and to comply with the U.N. Charter's requirement that every country respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all other nations.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the U.N. Security Council that Russian President Vladimir Putin is committing "an international crime" and has broken so many international rules that he won't stop on his own.

"And that's why this war can't simply fade away. That's why this war can't be calmed by talks," Zelenskyy said at a meeting on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders at the General Assembly. "Russia can only be forced into peace, and that is exactly what's needed — forcing Russia into peace as the sole aggressor in this war, the sole violator of the U.N. Charter."

The high-level meeting on the more than 2½-year war in Ukraine was attended by ministers from 14 of the council's 15 member nations. Russia chose to send its lower-level U.N. ambassador.

Vassily Nebenzia opened the meeting protesting that Zelenskyy was being given the U.N. spotlight again. He also criticized Slovenia — which holds the rotating council presidency this month — for allowing the Ukrainian leader's "chorus" to speak. He meant about 10 European Union and NATO members who aren't on the council but march "in lockstep" every time they come to the council "to malign the Russian Federation."

"When it comes to listening to these hackneyed statements, and these cookie-cutter statements, we have no intention of wasting time on that," Nebenzia said.

Ukraine's sovereignty is defended

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres briefed the council, reiterating the United Nations' strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity under the U.N. Charter.

"Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 — following the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol a decade ago — is a clear violation of these principles," the U.N. chief said.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine knows some countries want to talk to Putin. But, he asked, "What could they possibly hear from him — that he's upset because we are exercising our right to defend our people, or that he wants to keep the war and terror going just so no one thinks he was wrong?"

China has repeatedly called for talks between Ukraine and Russia. Its foreign minister, Wang Yi, told the council that the suffering and destruction and increasing volatility in the region "must be turned around."

Wang stressed that Chinese President Xi Jinping believes "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected." China is pursuing peace talks and conducting shuttle diplomacy, Wang said, and its efforts have received wide international support. He pointed to a joint China-Brazil peace plan issued earlier this year.

Zelenskyy also went after countries that supply weapons and ammunition to Russia, telling the council

Moscow has no legitimate reason to make Iran and North Korea “de facto accomplices.”

The U.S. includes China, Iran and North Korea in its accusations

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised similar issues but also accused China, which has close ties to Russia, of providing Russia with machine tools, microelectronics and other items it is using “to rebuild, restock and ramp up its war machine and sustain its brutal war.”

Wang, who spoke after him, didn’t directly respond but said: “I also wish to make it clear that on the Ukraine issue, any move to shift responsibility onto China or attack and smear China is irresponsible and will lead nowhere.”

Blinken also accused Iran of providing armed drones to Russia since 2022 and transferring hundreds of short-range ballistic missiles a few weeks ago – which its new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, has denied. North Korea has also delivered trainloads of weapons and ammunition to Russia including ballistic missiles and artillery rounds, Blinken said.

“The more Russia relies on their support, the more Iran and North Korea extract in return,” Blinken said. “And the more Putin gives to Pyongyang and Tehran, the more he exacerbates threats to peace and security.”

To those who ask how the United States and others can help Ukraine defend itself and criticize countries supplying military materiel to Russia, Blinken said the answer is simple: “Russia is the aggressor, Ukraine is the victim.”

What to know from the UN: Biden stops by, Gaza takes the spotlight, a dour world outlook prevails

By JENNIFER PELTZ and EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The world’s leaders gathered in New York for the beginning of their annual meeting at the U.N. General Assembly. Let’s just say the vibe was pretty grim.

Leader after leader spoke of the wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan, climate problems, exclusion from U.N. decision making, poor nations struggling to feed their populations. “I cannot recall a time of greater peril than this,” said KING ABDULLAH II of Jordan.

A few speakers, including U.S. President JOE BIDEN, tried to push a message of hope for the future. “We are stronger than we think. We are stronger together than alone,” Biden said. “And what the people call impossible is just an illusion.”

But the U.S. was the target of much veiled criticism for acting unilaterally on the response to the Gaza war: “Impunity” was the word of the day.

Here’s your daily guide to what’s going on at the United Nations this week, day by day:

From the podium

WAR IN GAZA: Many delegates focused their speeches on the war in Gaza. Jordan’s Abdullah said Israel’s campaigns are undermining a key part of the international system protecting human rights. He listed as examples: the bombing of U.N. shelters and schools; inability for U.N. workers to assist; and humanitarian workers being subsumed by the conflict. As for the idea of Palestinians finding new homes in Jordan, he said, forced displacement is a war crime and “that will never happen.”

Turkish President RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN called the U.N. a “dysfunctional, unwieldy and inert structure,” and told delegates that “international peace and security are too important to be left to the arbitrariness of the privileged five” permanent members of the Security Council. He called for the Security Council to impose sanctions on Israel and said the general assembly should recommend the use of force to achieve an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, the exchange of prisoners, and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid.

Brazilian President LUIZ INACIO LULA DASILVA said: “The right to self defense became a right for vengeance, which prevents a deal for the release of hostages and delays a ceasefire.”

Biden repeated his calls for a cease-fire and the return of hostages: “Full-scale war is not in anyone’s interest.”

IRAN: In his first speech at the U.N. General Assembly’s annual gathering of world leaders, President

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MASOUD PEZESHKIAN struck a somewhat more measured tone than his predecessors often have in recent years. "I aim to lay a strong foundation for my country's entry into a new era, positioning it to play an effective and constructive role in the evolving global order," said Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon who ran as a reformer. He took office in July.

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS: Erdogan criticized the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics in July, which featured drag queens and was widely misinterpreted as a representation of Christ's last supper with his disciples. He called it a "disgrace" that "revealed the dimensions of the threat we face as humanity." Erdogan, whose government has clamped down on LGBTQ+ events in recent years, added: "Anyone who raises a voice against this destruction project and shows the slightest reaction is silenced and becomes the target of lynching campaigns," he said. "Turkey is determined to break this siege and resist this climate of fear at all cost."

On the sidelines

Israel's envoy to the U.N. says his country doesn't want to send troops into Lebanon but will do "whatever necessary" to halt the Hezbollah rocket fire that has driven tens of thousands of Israelis from their country's north. "We prefer a diplomatic solution. But if it's not working, we are using other methods to show the other side that we mean business," said Ambassador DANNY DANON.

White House Principal Deputy National Security Adviser JON FINER said that Biden administration officials were in talks with allies to help find an off-ramp to the escalating tensions between Israel and Hezbollah. "We're working on that it real time right here in New York and in capitals around the world," Finer said in an appearance at an event hosted by the news site Axios. He sidestepped questions about whether the fighting has already become the all-out war that the U.S. had been pressing Israel to avoid with Lebanon as it continues its nearly year-long conflict in Gaza. But he underscored that a "big war, a wider war" is neither in Israel or Lebanon's interest.

Climate moment

In the buildup to introducing Biden for a climate speech in New York, actress and activist JANE FONDA changed some words, some accidentally, some not so to call attention to climate change. In talking about Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, Fonda slipped and started to call it the "Inflammation" Reduction Act and then corrected it, saying inflammation actually works too, given global temperatures. Then in discussing fossil fuels that cause climate change, Fonda was blunt and profane: "Forget natural gas, but the f---ing fossil gas. There's nothing natural about it, and it's terrible for people and the environment."

Voices you might have missed

Several leaders from Africa complained again this year about the lack of permanent representation on the U.N. Security Council. "Africa and its 1.4 billion people remain excluded from its key decision-making structures," said CYRIL RAMAPHOSA, the president of South Africa. "The U.N. Security Council must be reformed as a matter of urgency. It must become more inclusive so that the voices of all nations are heard and considered."

El Salvador President NAYIB BUKELE boasted of his country's security turnaround, moving the tiny Central American nation from one of the world's most dangerous countries to one of its safest. Bukele was reelected by a landslide to an unprecedented second term in February largely on his security record of crippling the country's once-powerful street gangs. The media-savvy millennial leader has locked up more than 81,000 people under a state of emergency now in place for more than 2 ½ years that suspends some fundamental rights. "Some say that we have jailed thousands, but the reality is that we have freed millions," Bukele said. "Now it's the good (people) who live free, without fear, with their freedoms and human rights totally respected."

"Security is not only about having strong armies and weapons of mass destruction. True security will only be achieved with trust, equality and prosperity for all peoples."

— SADYR ZHAPAROV, president of Kyrgyzstan

Something you probably don't know

Of all the United Nations' 193 countries, Brazil had the first word at the General Assembly's big annual

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debate Tuesday — as it has since the early days of the U.N. Why? Because back then, Brazil volunteered to speak first when no other nation would. A tradition was born. The United States typically goes second because it hosts the U.N. headquarters in New York. Everyone else's speaking slot is determined by multiple variables, including how high-level the speaker is (a head of state versus a cabinet member, for instance), countries' own preferences and geographic balance.

One notable number

Number of times U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the word "impunity" in his opening speech Tuesday: 5

Quotable

"My fellow leaders, let us never forget some things are more important than staying in power. It's your people that matter the most. Never forget, we are here to serve the people, not the other way around."

— Biden, who won applause when he used his decision not to run for re-election as fuel for calling all leaders -- particularly autocrats in the room -- to focus on democracy ahead of personal power

"Not only children are dying in Gaza; the United Nations system is also dying, the truth is dying, the values that the West claims to defend are dying, the hopes of humanity to live in a fairer world are dying one by one."

—Erdogan, speaking about the nations he says blindly support Israel, at the cost of tens of thousands of Palestinian lives.

Up next

Ukrainian President VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY, the leader of a nation at war, will address the General Assembly on Wednesday. Also Wednesday, the Security Council will hold a meeting about the situation in Lebanon.

Missouri executes a man for the 1998 killing of a woman despite her family's calls to spare his life

By DAVID A. LIEB and JIM SALTER Associated Press

BONNE TERRE, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri man convicted of breaking into a woman's home and repeatedly stabbing her was executed Tuesday over the objections of the victim's family and the prosecutor, who wanted the death sentence commuted to life in prison.

Marcellus Williams, 55, was convicted in the 1998 killing of Lisha Gayle, who was stabbed during the burglary of her suburban St. Louis home.

Williams was put to death despite questions his attorneys raised over jury selection at his trial and the handling of evidence in the case. His clemency petition focused heavily on how Gayle's relatives wanted Williams' sentence commuted to life without the possibility of parole.

"The family defines closure as Marcellus being allowed to live," the petition stated. "Marcellus' execution is not necessary."

As Williams lay awaiting execution, he appeared to converse with a spiritual advisor seated next to him. Williams wiggled his feet underneath a white sheet that was pulled up to his neck and moved his head slightly while his spiritual advisor continued to talk. Then Williams' chest heaved about a half dozen times, and he showed no further movement.

Williams' son and two attorneys watched from another room. No one was present on behalf of the victim's family.

The Department of Corrections released a brief statement that Williams had written ahead of time, saying: "All Praise Be to Allah In Every Situation!!!"

Republican Missouri Gov. Mike Parson said he hoped the execution brings finality to a case that "languished for decades, revictimizing Ms. Gayle's family over and over again."

"No juror nor judge has ever found Williams' innocence claim to be credible," Parson said in a statement. The NAACP had been among those urging Parson to cancel the execution.

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"Tonight, Missouri lynched another innocent Black man," NAACP President Derrick Johnson said in a statement.

It was the third time Williams faced execution. He got reprieves in 2015 and 2017, but his last-ditch efforts this time were futile. Parson and the state Supreme Court rejected his appeals in quick succession Monday, and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to intervene hours before he was put to death.

Last month, Gayle's relatives gave their blessings to an agreement between the St. Louis County prosecuting attorney's office and Williams' attorneys to commute the sentence to life in prison. But acting on an appeal from Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey's office, the state Supreme Court nullified the agreement.

Williams was among death row inmates in five states who were scheduled to be put to death in the span of a week — an unusually high number that defies a yearslong decline in the use and support of the death penalty in the U.S. The first was carried out Friday in South Carolina. Texas was also slated to execute a prisoner on Tuesday evening.

Gayle, 42, was a social worker and former St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter. Prosecutors at Williams' trial said he broke into her home on Aug. 11, 1998, heard the shower running and found a large butcher knife. Gayle was stabbed 43 times when she came downstairs. Her purse and her husband's laptop were stolen.

Authorities said Williams stole a jacket to conceal blood on his shirt. His girlfriend asked him why he would wear a jacket on a hot day. She said she later saw the purse and laptop in his car and that Williams sold the computer a day or two later.

Prosecutors also cited testimony from Henry Cole, who shared a cell with Williams in 1999 while Williams was jailed on unrelated charges. Cole told prosecutors that Williams confessed to the killing and provided details about it.

Williams' attorneys responded that the girlfriend and Cole were both convicted of felonies and wanted a \$10,000 reward. They said that fingerprints, a bloody shoeprint, hair and other evidence at the crime scene didn't match Williams'.

A crime scene investigator had testified the killer wore gloves.

Questions about DNA evidence also led St. Louis Prosecuting Attorney Wesley Bell to request a hearing challenging Williams' guilt. But days before the Aug. 21 hearing, new testing showed that DNA on the knife belonged to members of the prosecutor's office who handled it without gloves after the original crime lab tests.

Without DNA evidence pointing to any alternative suspect, Midwest Innocence Project attorneys reached a compromise with the prosecutor's office: Williams would enter a new, no-contest plea to first-degree murder in exchange for a new sentence of life in prison without parole. A no-contest plea isn't an admission of guilt but is treated as such for the purpose of sentencing.

Judge Bruce Hilton signed off, as did Gayle's family. But Bailey appealed, and the state Supreme Court blocked the agreement and ordered Hilton to proceed with an evidentiary hearing, which took place last month.

Hilton ruled on Sept. 12 that the first-degree murder conviction and death sentence would stand, noting that Williams' arguments all had been previously rejected. That decision was upheld Monday by the state Supreme Court.

Attorneys for Williams, who was Black, also challenged the fairness of his trial, particularly the fact that only one of the 12 jurors was Black. Tricia Bushnell of the Midwest Innocence Project said the prosecutor in the case, Keith Lerner, removed six of seven Black prospective jurors.

Lerner testified at the August hearing that he struck one potential Black juror partly because he looked too much like Williams — a statement that Williams' attorneys asserted showed improper racial bias.

Lerner contended that the jury selection process was fair.

Williams was the third Missouri inmate put to death this year and the 100th since the state resumed use of the death penalty in 1989.

Tropical Storm Helene is expected to become a hurricane. Florida residents begin evacuating

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

Tropical Storm Helene formed Tuesday in the Caribbean Sea and could strengthen into a major hurricane while moving north toward the U.S., forecasters said. Heavy rains and big waves already lashed the Cayman Islands, and some Florida residents began to evacuate or fill sandbags ahead of anticipated flooding.

Helene was expected to strengthen into a hurricane on Wednesday, and it could become a major hurricane before it arrives on Florida's Gulf Coast as soon as late Thursday. The storm was 145 miles (235 kilometers) south of the western tip of Cuba, had sustained winds of 60 mph (95 kph) and was moving northwest at 12 mph (19 kph).

As the storm approached the Gulf Coast, hurricane warnings were issued for the northwestern Florida coastline and part of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, and hurricane watches were in effect for parts of western Cuba and Florida, including Tampa Bay, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

Parts of Cuba and Florida's southwestern coastline, including the Florida Keys, were under tropical storm warnings. Nearly the entirety of Florida's west coast was under a storm surge warning.

In the U.S., federal authorities are positioning generators, food and water, along with search-and-rescue and power restoration teams, as President Joe Biden declared an emergency in Florida. Gov. Ron DeSantis also declared a state of emergency for most of the state's counties, 10 of which were urging or ordering evacuations.

The storm is expected to move over deep, warm waters, fueling its intensification. People in regions under watches and warnings should be prepared to lose power and should have enough food and water for at least three days, forecasters warned.

The tropical storm prompted NASA and SpaceX to bump Thursday's planned astronaut launch to at least Saturday. And Florida A&M University postponed its upcoming college football game against Alabama A&M.

The storm is anticipated to be unusually large and fast-moving, meaning storm surge, wind and rain will likely extend far from the storm's center, the hurricane center said. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp has declared a state of emergency. And states as far inland as Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana could see rainfall.

"It's going to be a very large system with impacts across all of Florida," said Larry Kelly, a specialist at the center. "Stay up to date with the latest forecast and heed your local officials."

Hal Summers, a restaurant worker in Mexico Beach, Florida, needed no reminding after he barely survived Hurricane Michael in 2018. DeSantis has said Helene is reminiscent of that Category 5 hurricane, which rapidly intensified and caught residents off guard before plowing a destructive path across the western Florida Panhandle.

When it hit, Summers waded with his cat in his arms as waters began rising rapidly in his parents' house. Their house and his home were destroyed.

"That was such a traumatic experience that that is not the place I needed to be for myself," he said Tuesday as he evacuated with a friend to Marianna, a town farther inland.

If Tropical Storm Helene follows the same path as two recent hurricanes, Florida will have a quicker recovery, Jimmy Patronis, the state's chief financial officer, said Tuesday. Hurricane Idalia, which hit Florida in August 2023, and Hurricane Debby, which came ashore last August, took down vulnerable structures and trees that would have caused debris, he said.

Helene, the eighth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season that began June 1, could strengthen into a major Category 3 hurricane — with winds of at least 111 mph (178 kph) — before approaching the northeastern Gulf Coast. Since 2000, eight major hurricanes have made landfall in Florida, according to Philip Klotzbach, a Colorado State University hurricane researcher.

The sun shone Tuesday in Tarpon Springs, Florida, but residents already filled sandbags as they braced for potential flooding.

Officials in the Cayman Islands closed schools, airports and government offices as strong winds knocked out power in some areas of Grand Cayman, while heavy rain and waves as high as 10 feet (3 meters)

unleashed flooding. Authorities urged people to stay indoors as the storm moved away later Tuesday and said crews would soon fan out to assess damage.

Many in Cuba worried about the storm, whose tentacles are expected to reach the capital of Havana, which is struggling with a severe water shortage, piles of uncollected garbage and chronic power outages.

Helene was expected to slip between Cuba and Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula early Wednesday and drench the area with up to a foot (30 centimeters) of rain, before heading north across the Gulf of Mexico. Heavy rainfall also was forecast for the southeastern U.S. starting Wednesday, threatening flash and river flooding, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Large storm surges of up to 15 feet (5 meters) were expected for a wide swath of the northwestern Florida coastline.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average Atlantic hurricane season this year because of record-warm ocean temperatures. It forecast 17 to 25 named storms before the season ends Nov. 30, with four to seven major hurricanes of Category 3 or higher.

In the Pacific, former Hurricane John killed two people after it barreled into Mexico's southern Pacific coast, blowing tin roofs off houses, triggering mudslides and toppling scores of trees, officials said Tuesday.

Boeing gives union more time to vote on an offer that's getting poor reviews from striking workers

By DAVID KOENIG, LINDSEY WASSON and MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Boeing is giving the union representing striking factory workers more time to consider a revised contract offer with bigger pay increases and more bonus money, but it was unclear Tuesday whether the union would schedule a ratification vote on the proposal.

On picket lines in the Pacific Northwest, strikers said the company's latest offer wasn't good enough. Both the union and many of its members complained about the way Boeing bypassed the union in publicizing the offer, with some workers saying it was an unfair attempt to make them look greedy.

Boeing's new "best and final" offer includes pay raises of 30% over four years, up from 25% in a deal that 33,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers overwhelmingly rejected when they voted to strike. The union originally demanded 40% over three years.

In the face of opposition from the union, Boeing backed down Tuesday from a demand that workers vote on the new offer by Friday night, but the company still wants a vote.

"This strike is affecting our team and our communities, and we believe our employees should have the opportunity to vote on our offer that makes significant improvements in wages and benefits," the company said in a statement.

The new offer seemed to have little support among strikers. Daniel Dias, a test technician at Boeing for the last six years, wasn't bowled over.

"A 5% increase (from the previous offer)? It's not enough. My mortgage is \$4,000. I went to Safeway yesterday to get breakfast, and it cost me \$62" in groceries, Dias said.

Som Dom, an electrician with 17 years at Boeing's factory in Renton, Washington, said workers need better wages for the high cost of living in the Seattle area.

"We just want a fair deal. We're not greedy," Dom said. "It's tough to live in this state. You've got to make over \$160,000, something like that, to buy a house. The new hires, they make \$25, \$26 an hour. So that (offer) isn't going to be enough."

Boeing officials told union representatives about their new offer Monday morning, a couple hours before announcing it to workers through the media.

"Boeing does not get to decide when or if you vote," union officials told members late Monday. "This proposal does not go far enough to address your concerns, and Boeing has missed the mark with this proposal."

John Lentz, a Boeing electrician who joined co-workers in waving strike signs along a side road near the Renton factory, said the way Boeing bypassed union negotiators in announcing the offer "seems to be

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kind of shady there. We do have people that are in place to negotiate for us.”

Boeing said its latest offer includes upfront pay raises of 12% plus three annual raises of 6% each and would take the average annual pay for machinists from \$75,608 now to \$111,155 at the end of the four-year contract.

It also would keep annual bonuses based on productivity. In the rejected contract, Boeing sought to replace those payouts with new contributions to retirement accounts.

John Reifel, who has spent nearly 25 years at Boeing, said the company was trying to make the strikers look unreasonable when they are only seeking to negotiate a contract for the first time in more than a decade.

“We build a product that people’s lives depend on,” Reifel said. “There will be plenty of bonus money to go around for upper-level and mid-level and first-level managers and all that, but if we don’t build it, there’s no product. And we work hard.”

The two sides have not held formal negotiations in nearly a week, since two days of sessions led by federal mediators broke off.

Boeing, which has encountered serious financial, legal and mechanical challenges this year, is eager to end the 12-day-old walkout that has halted production of its best-selling airline planes.

Cai von Rumohr, an aviation analyst at financial services firm TD Cowen, said Boeing’s decision to make its latest offer in the absence of additional bargaining sessions put a proposed second ratification vote in doubt.

“If it fails, it should prompt union leadership to reengage in serious negotiations,” he said. However, union leadership’s support for Boeing’s previous offer — which lost in a 96% strike vote — raises questions about the union’s ability to win support for the new, improved offer, he said.

The strike has shut down production of Boeing 737s, 767s and 777s and is causing the company to make cost-cutting moves, including rolling temporary furloughs for thousands of nonunion managers and employees.

Boeing has lost more than \$25 billion since the start of 2019 and fallen far behind rival Airbus in orders and deliveries of planes to airline customers. It needs to deliver more planes to bring in cash, but federal regulators are limiting production of 737s — Boeing’s best-selling plane — to 38 per month until the company improves its quality-control process. Boeing was producing fewer than 38 before the strike.

The downturn started after two deadly crashes involving Boeing 737 Max jets, and worsened after a panel called a door plug blew off another Max during an Alaska Airlines flight in January.

Boeing’s critics, including some whistleblowers from inside the company, claim Boeing cut corners during production and put profits above safety.

The head of the Federal Aviation Administration, Boeing’s regulator, said Tuesday that while it is not his job to assess Boeing’s finances, giving too little attention to safety has not turned out well for the company.

“Even if profits were your No. 1 goal, safety really needs to be your No. 1 goal because it’s hard to be profitable if you’re not safe, and I think Boeing certainly has learned that,” FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker said during a U.S. House subcommittee hearing. “Whatever money might have been saved has certainly been lost in the fallout.”

Whitaker, who previously acknowledged his agency’s oversight of Boeing wasn’t strong enough, told lawmakers that since Boeing submitted a plan to improve its manufacturing in late May, “They have been trending in the right direction.”

Still, he said, it will take years for Boeing to fully change its safety system and culture.

Tearful Caroline Ellison gets 2 years in prison over her role in FTX fraud

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Caroline Ellison, a former top executive in Sam Bankman-Fried's fallen FTX cryptocurrency empire, was sentenced to two years in prison on Tuesday after she apologized to everyone hurt by a fraud that stole billions of dollars from investors, lenders and customers.

Ellison, 29, could have faced a much tougher sentence, but both the judge and prosecutors said she deserved credit for talking extensively with federal investigators, pleading guilty and ultimately testifying against Bankman-Fried for three days at his trial last November.

U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan said Ellison's cooperation was "very, very substantial" and "remarkable."

But he said a prison sentence was necessary because she had participated in what might be the "greatest financial fraud ever perpetrated in this country and probably anywhere else" or at least close to it.

Ellison was ordered to report to prison Nov. 7.

FTX was one of the world's most popular cryptocurrency exchanges, known for its Superbowl TV ad and its extensive lobbying campaign in Washington, before it collapsed in 2022.

U.S. prosecutors accused Bankman-Fried and other top executives of looting customer accounts on the exchange to make risky investments, make millions of dollars of illegal political donations, bribe Chinese officials and buy luxury real estate in the Caribbean.

Ellison was chief executive at Alameda Research, a cryptocurrency hedge fund controlled by Bankman-Fried.

"I'm deeply ashamed with what I've done," she said at the sentencing hearing, fighting through tears to say she was "so so sorry" to everyone she had harmed directly or indirectly.

She did not speak as she left Manhattan federal court, surrounded by lawyers.

In court Tuesday, Assistant U.S. Attorney Danielle Sassoon called for leniency, saying Ellison's testimony was "devastating and powerful proof" against Bankman-Fried, 32, who was found guilty of fraud and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Attorney Anjan Sahni asked the judge to spare his client from prison, citing "unusual circumstances," including her off-and-on romantic relationship with Bankman-Fried and the damage caused when her "whole professional and personal life came to revolve" around him.

Judge Kaplan agreed that Ellison's willingness to work with prosecutors was extraordinary.

"I've seen a lot of cooperators in 30 years here. I've never seen one quite like Ms. Ellison," he said.

But he said that in such a serious case, he could not let cooperation be a get-out-of-jail-free card, even when it was clear that Bankman-Fried had become "your kryptonite."

Bankman-Fried also testified at the trial, portraying himself to the jury as inexperienced and bumbling but not a criminal. He acknowledged making mistakes, but said he didn't defraud anyone and wasn't aware that Alameda Research had amassed billions of dollars in debt.

Sassoon, the prosecutor, described that testimony in court Tuesday as "evasive, even contemptuous."

As the business began to falter, Ellison divulged the massive fraud to employees who worked for her even before FTX filed for bankruptcy, trial evidence showed.

Ultimately, she also spoke extensively with criminal and civil U.S. investigators.

Sassoon said prosecutors were impressed that Ellison did not "jump into the lifeboat" to escape her crimes but instead spent nearly two years fully cooperating.

Since testifying at Bankman-Fried's trial, Ellison has engaged in extensive charity work, written a novel and worked with her parents on a math enrichment textbook for advanced high school students, according to her lawyers.

They said she also now has a healthy romantic relationship and has reconnected with high school friends she had lost touch with while she worked for and sometimes dated Bankman-Fried from 2017 until late 2022.

Judge to approve auctions liquidating Alex Jones' Infowars to help pay Sandy Hook families

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones' Infowars media platform and its assets will be sold off piece by piece in auctions this fall to help pay the more than \$1 billion he owes relatives of victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, under an order expected to be approved by a federal judge.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Christopher Lopez in Houston said during a court hearing Tuesday that he will approve the auctions that start in November. But he said he first must change a previous order to make it clear that the trustee overseeing Jones' personal bankruptcy case controls all the assets of Infowars parent company Free Speech Systems, which is owned 100% by Jones.

Despite the pending loss of his company, Jones vows to continue his talk shows through other means, possibly including a new website and his personal social media accounts. He also has suggested that Infowars' assets could be bought by his supporters, allowing him to continue hosting his show as an employee under the Infowars brand in their home city of Austin, Texas.

"It's very cut and dry that the assets of Free Speech Systems, the website, the equipment, the shopping cart, all that, can be sold," Jones said on a recent show. "And they know full well that there are a bunch of patriot buyers, and then the operation can ease on."

Jones and his company both filed for bankruptcy protection in 2022 — the same year Sandy Hook families won nearly \$1.5 billion in defamation and emotional distress lawsuits against Jones for his repeatedly calling the 2012 school shooting a hoax staged by "crisis actors" to get more gun control legislation passed. Twenty first graders and six educators were killed in the Newtown, Connecticut shooting.

During two civil trials in Texas and Connecticut, parents and children of many of the victims testified that they were traumatized by Jones' hoax conspiracies and his followers' actions. They said they were harassed and threatened by Jones' believers, some of whom confronted the grieving families in person saying the shooting never happened and their children never existed. One parent said someone threatened to dig up his dead son's grave.

Jones is appealing the civil jury verdicts, citing free speech rights and questioning whether the families proved any connection between his comments, and the people who harassed and threatened the relatives. He has since acknowledged that the shooting did happen.

In June, Lopez converted Jones' personal bankruptcy reorganization case into a liquidation, meaning many of his assets will be sold off to pay creditors except for his main home and other exempt property. The same day, Lopez also dismissed Free Speech Systems' bankruptcy case after Jones and the families could not reach agreement on a final plan.

The sell-off order Lopez intends to approve would put Infowars' intellectual property up for auction on Nov. 13 including its trademarks, copyrighted material, social media accounts and websites. Jones' personal social media sites, including his account on the social platform X, which has 2.8 million followers, would not be included.

However, the trustee overseeing Jones' bankruptcy case, Christopher Murray, said Tuesday that he may soon seek court permission to also liquidate Jones' personal social media accounts and his other intellectual property — which Jones' attorneys have opposed. That issue could develop into another court fight in the bankruptcy case. Murray also is expected to sell many of Jones' personal assets.

The Sandy Hook families who won the Connecticut lawsuit want Jones to lose his personal social media accounts. Their lawyers further contend that the families should get a chunk of all of Jones' future earnings to help pay off his more than \$1 billion debt.

Christopher Mattei, a lawyer for the Sandy Hook families in the Connecticut lawsuit, said the judge's signing of the auction order will be "a significant step forward" in the family's efforts to make Jones pay for his hoax lies.

"Alex Jones will no longer own or control the company he built," Mattei said in a statement Tuesday. "This brings the families closer to their goal of holding him accountable for the harm he has caused."

The rest of Infowars' assets, including computers, video cameras and other studio equipment, would be sold at a different auction on Dec. 10.

Jones has made millions of dollars over the years selling dietary supplements, apparel, survival gear, books and other items he promotes on his shows, which air on the internet and dozens of radio stations. It's unclear how much money would be raised by selling Infowars and Jones' assets, and how much money the Sandy Hook families would get.

Jones has about \$9 million in personal assets, according to court filings. Free Speech Systems has about \$6 million in cash on hand and about \$1.2 million worth of inventory, according to previous court testimony.

Lawyers, financial experts and others who worked on Jones' bankruptcy cases — who have racked up millions of dollars in fees and expenses — are expected to be paid first.

A remaining legal dispute in the bankruptcy case is whether Free Speech Systems owes more than \$50 million to another Jones-owned company, PQPR Holdings Limited. Free Speech Systems buys dietary supplements from PQPR to sell on the Infowars website. PQPR said it wasn't paid for many of the supplements and filed liens. Sandy Hook lawyers allege the debt is bogus.

If the debt is found to be valid, that could reduce any amount the Sandy Hook families ultimately get from the liquidations.

Tropical Weather Latest: Tropical Storm Helene forms in Caribbean, Tropical Storm John weakens

By The Associated Press undefined

Two major weather systems are bringing heavy rain, high winds and more to Mexico's southern Pacific coast on one side and the Caribbean on the other.

Tropical Storm John struck Mexico late Monday with life-threatening flood potential after growing into a Category 3 hurricane in a matter of hours. It came ashore near the town of Punta Maldonado before weakening back to tropical storm status early Tuesday and was expected to weaken rapidly. Still, the U.S. National Hurricane Center warned that the storm's slow pace and heavy rains could cause potentially catastrophic flash flooding and mudslides.

Meanwhile, Tropical Storm Helene formed in the Caribbean Sea on Tuesday after bringing heavy rains and big waves to the Cayman Islands. Forecasters warned the storm could strengthen into a major hurricane en route to the southeast U.S. Hurricane watches were in effect for Florida's Tampa Bay and from Englewood to Indian Pass, as well as for eastern Mexico from Cabo Catoche to Tulum and for Cuba's Pinar del Rio province.

Follow AP's coverage of tropical weather at <https://apnews.com/hub/hurricanes>.

Here's the latest:

National Hurricane Center issues hurricane warnings for parts of Florida and Mexico

The U.S. National Hurricane Center has issued hurricane warnings for northwestern Florida's coastline and part of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula as Tropical Storm Helene approaches the area.

Helene is expected to strengthen into a hurricane Wednesday and could become a major hurricane Thursday.

Areas of western Cuba and Florida, including Tampa Bay, were under hurricane watches Tuesday evening. A tropical storm warning was issued for parts of Cuba and Florida's southwestern coastline, including the Florida Keys.

A storm surge warning was in effect for Florida's Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, and from Indian Pass south to Flamingo. Florida and Georgia's eastern coasts, from Palm Beach to the Savannah River, were under a tropical storm watch.

NASA and SpaceX postpone planned astronaut launch ahead of Helene

Tropical Storm Helene prompted NASA and SpaceX to bump Thursday's planned astronaut launch to at least Saturday.

Although Helene was expected to hit clear across the state, high wind and heavy rain were expected

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at Cape Canaveral.

SpaceX will launch two astronauts to the International Space Station, along with two empty seats reserved for the Boeing Starliner test pilots who have been up there since June. Their problem-plagued Boeing capsule returned to Earth without them earlier this month, so SpaceX will bring them back to Earth next year.

The postponement follows President Joe Biden ordering federal assistance for Florida and approving its state of emergency declaration.

Biden orders federal assistance for Florida and approves its state of emergency declaration

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Tuesday afternoon approved Florida's state of emergency declaration. He also ordered federal assistance to supplement state, tribal and local response efforts due to emergency conditions resulting from Tropical Storm Helene that began Monday.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency in 61 of the state's 67 counties ahead of the storm expected to become Hurricane Helene. The governor continues to urge residents across much of the state to prepare for potentially significant impacts, from the rural Panhandle region down the Gulf Coast to southwest Florida. The storm is expected to arrive as soon as late Thursday.

"We're anticipating impacts, I mean, 100, 200 miles (161 to 322 kilometers) outside the eye of the storm, you could see with winds and you could see with surge," DeSantis said. "We are going to see significant impacts no matter what happens."

DeSantis said the storm is reminiscent of Hurricane Michael, a category 5 hurricane that rapidly intensified and caught many residents off guard before plowing a path of destruction across the western Panhandle. Communities that are still rebuilding from previous storms could get battered again, DeSantis warned.

Some Floridians evacuate as Helene strengthens

Hal Summers is taking no chances as experts warned that a tropical storm in the Caribbean Sea could strengthen into a major hurricane.

The restaurant worker in Mexico Beach, Florida, was headed inland Tuesday to stay with a friend.

In 2018, he barely survived Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 hurricane, which rapidly intensified and caught residents off guard before plowing a destructive path across the western Florida Panhandle.

When it hit, water began to rise inside his parents' home. Summers waded through it with his cat in his arms to get to safety. Their house and his home were destroyed.

This time, he plans to ride out the storm in the town of Marianna.

He said, "That was such a traumatic experience that that is not the place I needed to be for myself."

Read more here.

Florida's chief financial officer says state will have a quicker recovery if Helene follows previous paths

If Tropical Storm Helene follows the same paths as two previous hurricanes that hit Florida in the past year, the state will have a quicker recovery and won't take as big an economic hit, Florida's chief financial officer said Tuesday.

That's because Hurricane Idalia, which hit Florida in August 2023, and Hurricane Debby, which came ashore last month, took down vulnerable structures and trees that would have caused debris, said Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis.

Both storms made landfall in Florida's Big Bend region, where some models have Helene making landfall.

"When Idalia hit, debris was everywhere. When Debby hit, the debris wasn't as great," Patronis said during a news conference at a fire station in St. Johns County, Florida.

Patronis urged Floridians to take photos and videos of their homes to help ease the process if they need to make claims with their insurance companies because of storm damage.

"Your house may be a total loss, but now you have video evidence," Patronis said. "You will have video evidence of what that claim needs in it so that you can be made whole."

Georgia governor issues state of emergency ahead of Helene

ATLANTA — gov. Brian Kemp has declared a state of emergency in Georgia ahead of Tropical Storm Helene's potential impact

Kemp said the state would open its emergency operations center and designate 500 members of the

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National Guard who could be called up for active service as needed. Kemp also suspended some rules about limits on commercial trucking operations and declared that rules against price gouging are in effect.

Biden deploys FEMA to Florida and Alabama ahead of Helene

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Joe Biden has been briefed on Tropical Storm Helene and his administration is in touch with officials from states in the storm, the White House said on Tuesday.

"Federal resources and personnel are prepositioned, including generators, food, and water, along with search and rescue and power restoration teams. At the direction of the President, FEMA has also deployed teams to Florida and Alabama to embed with local emergency response personnel to support their efforts, as needed," White House spokesperson Jeremy Edwards said in a statement.

FAMU postpones upcoming home game against Alabama A&M because of threat of Helene

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida A&M University postponed its upcoming college football game against Alabama A&M because of Tropical Storm Helene.

The Rattlers rescheduled the game for Friday, Nov. 29, in anticipation of Helene strengthening into a major hurricane Wednesday while moving north toward the United States. Several models have Helene making landfall just south of Tallahassee.

Florida State, meanwhile, might need to adjust its travel schedule before playing at Southern Methodist University on Saturday.

"We're continuing to track that. There's still a lot of information (to come)," Seminoles coach Mike Norvell said Tuesday. "Today is a big day for gaining more information of what could be our reality. I feel good about the plans that we have. I feel good about any potential adjustments, if necessary. But it's something that we're absolutely tracking."

Helene formed into a tropical storm Tuesday in the Caribbean Sea. Hurricane watches were issued for parts of Cuba, Mexico and a stretch of the Florida coastline, including Tampa Bay, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. A tropical storm warning has been issued for parts of the Florida Keys.

Ferry service offered to tourists on coastal island of Holbox

MEXICO CITY — Authorities in Mexico are offering free ferry service to move tourists off the low-lying coastal island of Holbox. The offer was made Tuesday by Mara Lezama, the governor of the Caribbean coast state of Quintana Roo, home to resorts like Cancun, Playa del Carmen and Tulum. Holbox is known among tourists for its tranquil, shallow waters and flocks of flamingos. It is easily flooded.

Tropical Storm Helene forms in the Caribbean Sea

MIAMI — Tropical Storm Helene formed Tuesday in the Caribbean Sea and could strengthen into a major hurricane while moving north toward the U.S., forecasters said.

Hurricane watches have been issued for parts of Cuba, Mexico and a stretch of the Florida coastline, including Tampa Bay, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said. A tropical storm warning has been issued for parts of the Florida Keys.

The storm was located 170 miles (275 kilometers) southeast of the western tip of Cuba and had sustained winds of 45 mph (75 kph). It could strengthen into Hurricane Helene as it approaches the Gulf Coast.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency in dozens of counties before the storm's arrival.

Florida governor declares state of emergency in most of the state's counties

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency in 61 of the state's 67 counties ahead of the storm expected to become Hurricane Helene. DeSantis is urging residents across a broad swath of the state to prepare for potentially significant impacts, from the rural Panhandle region down the Gulf Coast to southwest Florida.

"We're anticipating impacts, I mean, 100, 200 miles (161 to 322 kilometers) outside the eye of the storm, you could see with winds and you could see with surge," DeSantis said. "We are going to see significant impacts no matter what happens."

In a Tuesday morning update from the state's emergency operations center in Tallahassee, DeSantis said it's telling that forecasters are already projecting the storm system may become a major hurricane — even before it's technically formed into a tropical storm.

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DeSantis said the storm is reminiscent of Hurricane Michael, a category 5 hurricane that rapidly intensified and caught many residents off guard before plowing a path of destruction across the western Panhandle. Communities that are still rebuilding from previous storms could get battered again, DeSantis warned.

"The Big Bend and Panhandle should be especially prepared for direct impact," DeSantis said.

2 dead after John hits Mexico's Pacific coast

PUERTO ESCONDIDO, Mexico — Two people are dead after former hurricane John barreled into Mexico's southern Pacific coast, blowing tin roofs off houses, triggering mudslides and toppling scores of trees, officials said Tuesday.

John grew into a major hurricane in a matter of hours Monday and made landfall about 80 miles (130 kilometers) east of the resort of Acapulco before declining to a tropical storm after moving inland.

John came ashore near the town of Punta Maldonado late Monday as a Category 3 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph (190 kph). It weakened back to tropical storm status early Tuesday with maximum sustained wind speeds of 50 mph (85 kph) and was expected to weaken rapidly.

Evelyn Salgado, the governor of the coastal state of Guerrero, said two people died when the storm sent a mudslide crashing into their house on the remote mountain of Tlacoachistlahuaca (TLAH-ko-chis-tla-waka), further from the coast.

Storm walloping Cayman Islands expected to become Tropical Storm Helene

Heavy rains and big waves lashed the Cayman Islands on Tuesday as forecasters warned that a nearby cluster of thunderstorms could soon become a major hurricane en route to the southeast U.S.

Hurricane watches were in effect Tuesday for Florida's Tampa Bay and from Englewood to Indian Pass, as well as for eastern Mexico from Cabo Catoche to Tulum and for Cuba's Pinar del Rio province. Hurricane conditions could be possible in parts of Cuba and Mexico early Wednesday and in parts of Florida late Wednesday and early Thursday, according to the National Hurricane Center.

"Now is the time to start preparing. If you're in an evacuation zone, you should evacuate," said Lisa Bucci, a hurricane specialist at the center. "Don't be fooled by the way the storm looks at the moment. We are expecting it to rapidly intensify."

She said people in regions under watches and warnings should be prepared to lose power and should have enough food and water for at least three days.

The disturbance is expected to move "over extremely deep and warm waters" that would fuel its intensification.

The disturbance is expected to become Tropical Storm Helene on Tuesday and then strengthen into a Category 3 hurricane before approaching the northeast Gulf Coast.

80 years after D-Day the family of a Black World War II combat medic receives his medal for heroism

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Waverly B. Woodson Jr., who was part of the only African American combat unit involved in the D-Day invasion during World War II, spent more than a day treating wounded troops under heavy German fire — all while injured himself. Decades later, and nearly 20 years after his death, his family finally received the recognition that was denied many Black service members.

Woodson's 95-year-old widow, Joann, was presented Tuesday with the Distinguished Service Cross he was awarded posthumously for his extraordinary heroism. Generations of Woodson's family packed the audience, many of them wearing T-shirts with his photo and the words "1944 D-Day US Army Medic" on the front.

"It's been a long, long road ... to get to this day," Woodson's son, Steve, told the crowd. "My father, if he could have been here today, would have been humbled."

The award, the second-highest honor that can be bestowed on a member of the Army, marked an important milestone in a yearslong campaign by his widow, supporters in the military and Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen for greater recognition of Woodson's efforts that day.

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Ultimately, they would like to see him honored with the Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration that can be awarded by the U.S. government and one long denied to Black troops who served in World War II.

Van Hollen, who first heard Woodson's story when Joann Woodson reached out to his office nearly a decade ago, told the crowd that Woodson's "valor stood out." He said there was only one thing that stood between Woodson and the country's highest military honor and that was "the color of his skin."

"Righting this wrong matters. It matters for Waverly Woodson and his family, and it matters for our entire country because we are a stronger, more united country when we remember all of our history and when we honor all of our heroes," Van Hollen told the audience, which included troops from Woodson's unit, the First Army.

Woodson, who died in 2005, received the award just days before the 80th anniversary of Allied troops' landing in Normandy, France. First Army troops took the Distinguished Service Cross with them to France in June and in an intimate ceremony laid the medal in the sands of Omaha Beach, where a 21-year-old Woodson had come ashore decades earlier.

At a time when the U.S. military was still segregated by race, about 2,000 African American troops are believed to have taken part in the invasion that proved to be a turning point in pushing back the Nazis and eventually ending World War II.

On June 6, 1944, Woodson's unit, the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, was responsible for setting up balloons to deter enemy planes. Two shells hit his landing craft, and he was wounded before even getting to the beach.

After the vessel lost power, it was pushed toward the shore by the tide, and Woodson likely had to wade ashore under intense enemy fire.

He spoke to the AP in 1994 about that day.

"The tide brought us in, and that's when the 88s hit us," he said of the German 88mm guns. "They were murder. Of our 26 Navy personnel, there was only one left. They raked the whole top of the ship and killed all the crew. Then they started with the mortar shells."

For the next 30 hours, Woodson treated 200 wounded men — all while small arms and artillery fire pummeled the beach. Eventually, he collapsed from his injuries and blood loss, according to accounts of his service. At the time, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

Like many World War II veterans, Woodson didn't talk much about his experiences during the war or what it was like to be in the middle of some of the most intense combat U.S. troops saw, his son said.

Speaking after the ceremony to The Associated Press, Steve Woodson said it wasn't until 50 years after the invasion and his father had returned from an anniversary ceremony in France that he started to share memories of that day.

Woodson told his son one particular story that remained with him of a soldier who had been blown in half but was still alive and calling for God. There was little Woodson could do except console him until the soldier died.

"That troubled him through all of his life," Steve Woodson said.

In an era of intense racial discrimination, not a single one of the 1.2 million Black Americans who served in the military during World War II was awarded the Medal of Honor. It wasn't until the early 1990s that the Army commissioned a study to analyze whether Black troops had been unjustly overlooked.

Ultimately, seven Black World War II troops were awarded the Medal of Honor in 1997.

At the time, Woodson was considered for the award and he was interviewed. But, officials wrote, his decoration case file couldn't be found, and his personnel records were destroyed in a 1973 fire at a military records facility.

Woodson's supporters believe not just that he is worthy of the Medal of Honor but that there was a recommendation at the time to award it to him that has been lost.

U.S. First Army historian Capt. Kevin Braafladt has made it his mission to research Woodson's D-Day role and he'd combed through an estimated 415 feet of army records in the search for the truth. Even after

the ceremony Tuesday, that search would continue for Braafladt, who was planning to go Wednesday to see another collection at the Library of Congress. He said he became interested in Woodson's story when he realized how he was overlooked because of the bureaucracy and racism at the time.

"It really touched me," Braafladt said. "There was an opportunity here to fix something that was wrong in the past."

Trump calls for 100% tariffs on cars made in Mexico as part of US manufacturing plan

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON, WILL WEISSERT and TOM KRISHER Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — Donald Trump on Tuesday pledged to stop U.S. businesses from shipping jobs overseas and to take other countries' jobs and factories by relying heavily on sweeping tariffs to boost auto manufacturing — despite warnings that domestic consumers would pay more and a lack of specifics about how his plans would work.

"I want German car companies to become American car companies. I want them to build their plants here," Trump declared during a speech in Savannah, Georgia.

Trump added that, if elected, he'd put a 100% tariff on every car imported from Mexico and that the only way to avoid those charges would be for an automaker to build the cars in the U.S.

His ideas, if enacted, could cause a huge upheaval in the American auto industry. Many automakers now build smaller, lower-priced vehicles in Mexico — facilitated by a trade agreement Trump negotiated while president — or in other countries because their profit margins are slim. The lower labor costs help the companies make money on those vehicles.

German and other foreign automakers already have extensive manufacturing operations in the U.S., and many now build more vehicles here than they send. BMW, for instance, has an 8 million-square-foot campus in South Carolina that employs 11,000 people building more than 1,500 SUVs per day for the U.S. and 120 export markets. Mercedes and Volkswagen also have large factories here.

If German automakers were to increase production here, they likely would have to take it from factories in Germany, which then would run below their capacity and be less efficient, said Sam Abuelsamid, principal research analyst for Guidehouse Insights.

"It makes no sense," he said.

Trump proposes a 'new American industrialism' — without key specifics

Trump has sought to press Vice President Kamala Harris on the economy and has proposed using tariffs on imports and other measures to boost American industry — even as economists have cautioned that U.S. consumers would bear the costs of tariffs and other Trump proposals like staging the largest deportation operation in U.S. history.

The former president laid out a broad array of economic proposals during a speech in the key swing state of Georgia, promising to create a special ambassador to help lure foreign manufacturers to the U.S. and further entice them by offering access to federal land.

Additionally, he called for lowering the U.S. corporate tax rate from 21% to 15%, but only for companies that produce in the U.S. Harris, the Democratic nominee, wants to raise the corporate tax rate to 28%. It had been 35% when Trump became president in 2017, and he later signed legislation lowering it.

"We're putting America first," Trump said. "This new American industrialism will create millions and millions of jobs."

And Trump suggested wiping away some environmental regulations to boost energy production, saying America has "got the oil, it's got the gas. We have everything. The only thing we don't have is smart people leading our country."

Tuesday's series of economic proposals raised a lot of questions, but the former president hasn't given specific answers on his ideas, which could substantially affect their impact and how much they cost. He has not specified, for example, whether his U.S.-focused corporate tax cuts would apply to companies that assemble their products domestically out of imports.

Trump also suggested he use a newly created envoy, and his own personal efforts, to recruit foreign companies. But he had a spotty record in the White House of attracting foreign investment. In one infamous case, Trump promised a \$10 billion investment by Taiwan-based electronics giant Foxconn in Wisconsin, creating potentially 13,000 new jobs, that the company never delivered.

His calls to offer federal land, meanwhile, might clash with Bureau of Land Management restrictions on foreign entities looking to lease lands. It also wasn't clear whether companies from China would be excluded, given Trump's longtime accusations that China is hurting American business.

Gov. Kemp misses Trump's Georgia return

The Republican presidential nominee unveiled his plan in Savannah, which has one of the busiest ports in the country for cargo shipped in containers. It was his first visit since his feud with Republican Brian Kemp, came to an end last month with the popular Georgia governor finally endorsing Trump.

But Kemp skipped Trump's rally and instead was campaigning Tuesday in Pennsylvania with Republican Senate candidate David McCormick.

Some Republicans have said they fear Georgia has gotten more politically competitive in the two months since Harris launched her presidential bid after President Joe Biden abandoned his reelection efforts.

Georgia Lt. Gov. Burt Jones assailed Harris for calling Trump a threat to democracy. Jones served as a fake elector and falsely attested that Trump won the 2020 election he actually lost to Biden. A special prosecutor, however, declined to move forward with criminal charges against Jones in the matter.

Heather Mathis, 43, came to Tuesday's event with her 11-year-old daughter and said Kemp had done "a fine job." She said she didn't think any problems between the governor and Trump would harm the former president's Georgia chances.

"Many people have personality differences. It doesn't make any of them bad," Mathis said. "Maybe they just don't get along, and that's OK."

Woman alleges Sean 'Diddy' Combs raped her on video in latest lawsuit

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Another woman sued Sean "Diddy" Combs on Tuesday, alleging that the music mogul and his head of security raped her and recorded it on video at his New York recording studio in 2001.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in New York, the latest of several similar suits against Combs, comes a week after he was arrested and a federal sex trafficking indictment against him was unsealed.

Thalia Graves alleges that when she was 25 and dating an executive who worked for Combs in the summer of 2001, Combs and Joseph Sherman lured her to a meeting at Bad Boy Recording Studios. She said they picked her up in an SUV and during the ride gave her a drink "likely laced with a drug."

According to the lawsuit, Graves lost consciousness and awoke to find herself bound inside Combs' office and lounge at the studio. The two men raped her, slapped her, slammed her head against a pool table and ignored her screams and cries for help, the lawsuit alleges.

At a news conference in Los Angeles with one of her attorneys, Gloria Allred, Graves said she has suffered from "flashbacks, nightmares and intrusive thoughts" in the years since.

"It has been hard for me to trust others to form healthy relationships or even feel safe in my own skin," Graves said, crying as she read from a statement.

She said it is "a pain that reaches into your very core of who you are and leaves emotional scars that may never fully heal."

Combs remains jailed without bail in New York on federal charges alleging that he ran a vast network that facilitated sexual crimes and committed shocking acts of violence, using blackmail and other tactics to protect Combs and those close to him.

He pleaded not guilty to racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking. His attorney said he is innocent and will fight to clear his name. His representatives did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the latest lawsuit. There was no immediate indication from the lawsuit or from Combs' representatives

whether Sherman had a separate attorney who could comment on the allegations.

The lawsuit was filed under the New York City Victims of Gender-Motivated Violence Protection Act, and comes during a two-year window that suspends legal deadlines and allows sexual assault victims to sue over abuse that might otherwise be too old to pursue.

Allred declined to say whether her client had spoken to investigators in Combs' criminal case. The indictment in that case mentions only allegations since 2008.

Graves' lawsuit also alleges that late last year, after Combs' former singing protege and girlfriend Cassie filed a lawsuit that began the surge of allegations against him, Graves learned through her former boyfriend that Combs had recorded her rape, shown it to others and sold it as pornography.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused, unless they come forward publicly as Graves and Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, have done.

Graves' lawsuit says both Combs and Sherman contacted her multiple times in the years after the assault, threatening repercussions if she told anyone what had happened to her. She was in a divorce and custody fight at the time and feared losing her young son if she revealed anything, the suit says.

Graves said at the news conference that the guilt and shame attached "often made me feel worthless, isolated and sometimes responsible for what happened to me."

The lawsuit seeks damages to be determined at trial and for all copies of the video to be accounted for and destroyed.

The lawsuit also names as defendants several companies owned by Combs, the three-time Grammy winner and founder of Bad Boy Records who was among the most influential hip-hop producers and executives of the past three decades.

Department of Justice sues Visa, alleges the card issuer monopolizes debit card markets

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department has filed an antitrust lawsuit against Visa, alleging that the financial services behemoth uses its size and dominance to stifle competition in the debit card market, costing consumers and businesses billions of dollars.

The complaint filed Tuesday says San Francisco-based Visa penalizes merchants and banks who don't use Visa's own payment processing technology to process debit transactions, even though alternatives exist. Visa earns an incremental fee from every transaction processed on its network.

According to the DOJ's complaint, 60% of debit transactions in the United States run on Visa's debit network, allowing it to charge over \$7 billion in fees each year for processing those transactions.

"We allege that Visa has unlawfully amassed the power to extract fees that far exceed what it could charge in a competitive market," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland in a statement. "Merchants and banks pass along those costs to consumers, either by raising prices or reducing quality or service. As a result, Visa's unlawful conduct affects not just the price of one thing – but the price of nearly everything."

In a statement, Julie Rottenberg, Visa's general counsel, said the lawsuit doesn't take into account the "ever expanding universe of companies offering new ways to pay for goods and services."

"Today's lawsuit ignores the reality that Visa is just one of many competitors in a debit space that is growing, with entrants who are thriving," Rottenberg said. She added the lawsuit is "meritless" and the company will defend itself "vigorously."

The Biden administration has aggressively gone after U.S. companies that it says act like middlemen, such as Ticketmaster parent Live Nation and the real estate software company RealPage, accusing them of burdening Americans with nonsensical fees and anticompetitive behavior. The administration has also brought charges of monopolistic behavior against technology giants such as Apple and Google.

"In some of the Justice Department's antitrust enforcement actions, the harm caused by the alleged illegal conduct is more visible: higher prices for air travel, for concert tickets, for smartphones," Garland said during a news conference in Washington on Tuesday. "The harmful effects of Visa's alleged anticom-

petitive conduct is less visible, but they are no less harmful.”

According to the DOJ complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, Visa leverages the vast number of transactions on its network to impose volume commitments on merchants and their banks, as well as on financial institutions that issue debit cards. That makes it difficult for merchants to use alternatives, such as lower-cost or smaller payment processors, instead of Visa’s payment processing technology, without incurring what DOJ described as “disloyalty penalties” from Visa.

The DOJ said Visa also stifled competition by paying to enter into partnership agreements with potential competitors.

In 2020, the DOJ sued to block the company’s \$5.3 billion purchase of financial technology startup Plaid, calling it a monopolistic takeover of a potential competitor to Visa’s ubiquitous payments network. That acquisition was eventually later called off.

Visa previously disclosed the Justice Department was investigating the company in 2021, saying in a regulatory filing it was cooperating with a DOJ investigation into its debit practices.

Since the pandemic, more consumers globally have been shopping online for goods and services, which has translated into more revenue for Visa in the form of fees. Even traditionally cash-heavy businesses like bars, barbers and coffee shops have started accepting credit or debit cards as a form of payment, often via smartphones.

KBW analyst Sanjay Sahrani said in a note to investors that he estimates that U.S. debit revenue is likely at most about 10% of Visa revenue.

“Some subset of that may be lost if there is a financial impact,” he said. Visa’s “U.S. consumer payments business is the slowest growing piece of the aggregate business, and to the extent its contribution is affected, it is likely to have a very limited impact on revenue growth.”

He added the lawsuit could stretch out for years if it isn’t settled and goes to trial.

Visa processed \$3.325 trillion in transactions on its network during the quarter ended June 30, up 7.4% from a year earlier. U.S. payments grew by 5.1%, which is faster than U.S. economic growth.

Visa shares fell \$15.85, or 5.5%, to close at \$272.94 on Tuesday.

Capitol rioter mistakenly released from prison after appeals court ruling, prosecutors say

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

The federal Bureau of Prisons mistakenly released an Iowa man from custody before he finished serving his 30-month sentence for storming the Senate chamber during a mob’s attack on the U.S. Capitol, Justice Department prosecutors said in a court filing this week.

Leo Christopher Kelly of Cedar Rapids was freed last Thursday after an appeals court agreed to throw out one of his convictions stemming from the Jan. 6, 2021, riot.

But prosecutors believe Kelly’s release was a mistake because he only served 11 months of his 30-month sentence. In a court filing Monday, they asked U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth for a hearing to address Kelly’s release.

The Bureau of Prisons told The Associated Press that Kelly was “inadvertently released” last week after a “misinterpretation of a court order.” The bureau’s statement doesn’t elaborate on the reason for the error, but it says that Kelly, 39, reported to a probation officer “as instructed” and remains free while awaiting a resentencing hearing.

Prosecutors also are asking the judge to schedule a hearing for resentencing now that Kelly’s only felony conviction has been tossed by the federal appeals court for the District of Columbia circuit.

In May 2023, a jury convicted Kelly of all seven counts in his indictment. One of his convictions was for a charge that he obstructed an official proceeding, the Jan. 6 joint session of Congress for certifying President Joe Biden’s electoral victory over Donald Trump.

In June, however, the U.S. Supreme Court limited the government’s use of that obstruction charge. The justices ruled 6-3 that the charge of obstructing an official proceeding must include proof that defendants

tried to tamper with or destroy documents.

After the ruling, prosecutors and defense attorney Nicholas Smith joined in asking the appeals court to vacate Kelly's obstruction conviction. His remaining convictions were for misdemeanor offenses.

Smith declined to comment Tuesday on prosecutors' filing.

Lamberth sentenced Kelly in August 2023 and refused to release him pending the outcome of his appeal. The judge indicated last month that he was unlikely to reduce Kelly's sentence.

A Bureau of Prisons database doesn't specify where Kelly was serving his sentence when he was released last week.

A day before the Jan. 6 riot, Kelly drove to Washington, D.C., to attend then-President Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally near the White House. He marched to the Capitol, joined other rioters in entering the building and made his way to the Senate floor.

Kelly approached the dais where then-Vice President Mike Pence had just presided over the Senate. He took videos of documents on desks — including a ballot sheet, handwritten notes and a script — before police cleared the rioters out of the chamber.

Approximately 1,500 people have been charged with Capitol riot-related federal crimes. More than 600 of them have been convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment ranging from a few days to 22 years.

US to send \$375 million in military aid to Ukraine, including medium-range cluster bombs

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. will send Ukraine an undisclosed number of medium-range cluster bombs and an array of rockets, artillery and armored vehicles in a military aid package totaling about \$375 million, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

Officials expect an announcement on Wednesday, as global leaders meet at the U.N. General Assembly, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy uses his appearance there to shore up support and persuade the U.S. to allow his troops to use long-range weapons to strike deeper into Russia. The following day, Zelenskyy meets with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris in Washington.

The aid includes air-to-ground bombs, which have cluster munitions and can be fired by Ukraine's fighter jets, as well as munitions for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), Javelin and other anti-armor systems, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, bridging systems and other vehicles and military equipment, according to officials. The U.S. officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the aid has not yet been publicly announced.

The latest package of weapons, provided through presidential drawdown authority, is one of the largest approved recently and will take stocks from Pentagon shelves to deliver the weapons more quickly to Ukraine.

It comes as nearly \$6 billion in funding for aid to Ukraine could expire at the end of the month unless Congress acts to extend the Pentagon's authority to send weapons from its stockpile to Kyiv. Congressional leaders announced they reached an agreement Sunday on a short-term spending bill, but it's unclear if any language extending the Pentagon authority to send weapons to Ukraine will be added to the temporary measure as negotiations with Congress continue.

Ukrainian and Russian forces are battling in the east, including hand-to-hand combat in the Kharkiv border region where Ukraine has driven Russia out of a huge processing plant in the town of Vovchansk that had been occupied for four months, officials said Tuesday. At the same time, Ukrainian troops continue to hold ground in Russia's Kursk region after a daring incursion there last month.

The aid announcement comes on the heels of Zelenskyy's highly guarded visit on Sunday to a Pennsylvania ammunition factory to thank the workers who are producing 155 mm shells, one of the most critically needed munitions for his country's fight to fend off Russian ground forces.

Including this latest package, the United States has provided more than \$56.2 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since Russian forces invaded in February 2022.

Biden in farewell U.N. address says peace still possible in conflicts in Mideast and Ukraine

By AAMER MADHANI, MATTHEW LEE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Joe Biden declared in his final address to the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday that the U.S. must not retreat from the world, as Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon edged toward all-out war and Israel's bloody operation against Hamas in Gaza neared the one-year mark.

Biden used his wide-ranging address to speak to a need to end the Middle East conflict and the 17-month-old civil war in Sudan and to highlight U.S. and Western allies' support for Kyiv since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. He also raised concern over artificial intelligence and its potential to be used for repression.

His appearance before the international body offered Biden one of his last high-profile opportunities as president to make the case to keep up robust support for Ukraine, which could be in doubt if former President Donald Trump defeats Vice President Kamala Harris in November. Biden insisted that despite global conflicts, he remains hopeful for the future.

"I've seen a remarkable sweep of history," Biden said. "I know many look at the world today and see difficulties and react with despair but I do not."

"We are stronger than we think" when the world acts together, he added.

Biden came to office promising to rejuvenate U.S. relations around the world and to extract the U.S. from "forever wars" in Afghanistan and Iraq that consumed American foreign policy over the last 20 years.

"I was determined to end it, and I did," Biden said of the Afghanistan exit, calling it a "hard decision but the right decision." He acknowledged that it was "accompanied by tragedy" with the deaths of 13 American troops and hundreds of Afghans in a suicide bombing during the chaotic withdrawal.

But his foreign policy legacy may ultimately be shaped by his administration's response to two of the biggest conflicts in Europe and the Middle East since World War II.

"There will always be forces that pull our countries apart," Biden said, rejecting "a desire to retreat from the world and go it alone." He said, "Our task, our test, is to make sure that the forces holding us together are stronger than the forces pulling us apart."

The Pentagon announced Monday that it was sending a small number of additional U.S. troops to the Middle East to supplement the roughly 40,000 already in the region. All the while, the White House insists Israel and Hezbollah still have time to step back and de-escalate.

"Full scale war is not in anyone's interest," Biden said, and despite escalating violence, a diplomatic solution is the only path to peace.

Biden had a hopeful outlook for the Middle East when he addressed the U.N. just a year ago. In that speech, Biden spoke of a "sustainable, integrated Middle East" coming into view.

At the time, economic relations between Israel and some of its Arab neighbors were improving with implementation of the Abraham Accords that Israel signed with Bahrain, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates during the Trump administration.

Biden's team helped resolve a long-running Israel-Lebanon maritime dispute that had held back gas exploration in the region. And Israel-Saudi normalization talks were progressing, a game-changing alignment for the region if a deal could be landed.

"I suffer from an oxymoron: Irish optimism," Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when they met on the sidelines of last year's U.N. gathering. He added, "If you and I, 10 years ago, were talking about normalization with Saudi Arabia ... I think we'd look at each other like, 'Who's been drinking what?'"

Eighteen days later, Biden's Middle East hopes came crashing down. Hamas militants stormed into Israel killing 1,200, taking some 250 hostage, and spurring a bloody war that has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians in Gaza and led the region into a complicated downward spiral.

Now, the conflict is threatening to metastasize into a multi-front war and leave a lasting scar on Biden's presidential legacy.

Israel and Hezbollah traded strikes again Tuesday as the death toll from a massive Israeli bombardment

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climbed to nearly 560 people and thousands fled from southern Lebanon. It's the deadliest barrage since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

Israel has urged residents of southern Lebanon to evacuate from homes and other buildings where it claimed Hezbollah has stored weapons, saying the military would conduct "extensive strikes" against the militant group.

Hezbollah, meanwhile, has launched dozens of rockets, missiles and drones into northern Israel in retaliation for strikes last week that killed a top commander and dozens of fighters. Dozens were also killed last week and hundreds more wounded after hundreds of pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah militants exploded, a sophisticated attack that was widely believed to have been carried out by Israel.

Israel's leadership launched its counterattacks at a time of growing impatience with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah's persistent launching of missiles and drones across the Israel-Lebanon border after Hamas started the war with its brazen attack on Oct. 7.

Biden reiterated his call on the parties to agree to a cease-fire and hostage release deal, saying it's time to "end this war" — even as hopes for such a deal are fading as the conflict drags on.

Biden, in his address, called for the sustainment of Western support for Ukraine in its war with Russia. Biden helped galvanize an international coalition to back Ukraine with weapons and economic aid in response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's February 2022 assault on Ukraine.

"We cannot grow weary," Biden said. "We cannot look away."

Biden has managed to keep up American support in the face of rising skepticism from some Republican lawmakers — and Trump — about the cost of the conflict.

At the same time, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is pressing Biden to loosen restrictions on the use of Western-supplied long-range missiles so that Ukrainian forces can hit deeper in Russia.

So far Zelenskyy has not persuaded the Pentagon or White House to loosen those restrictions. The Defense Department has emphasized that Ukraine can already hit Moscow with Ukrainian-produced drones, and there is hesitation on the strategic implications of a U.S.-made missile potentially striking the Russian capital.

Putin has warned that Russia would be "at war" with the United States and its NATO allies if they allow Ukraine to use the long-range weapons.

Biden and Harris are scheduled to hold separate meetings with Zelenskyy in Washington on Thursday. Ukrainian officials were also trying to arrange a meeting for Zelenskyy with Trump this week, though a Trump campaign official said it wasn't going to materialize.

The president also sounded an alarm about the rapid advances in artificial intelligence development, particularly around disinformation, respect for human life and the potential exploitation by totalitarian powers. He told the world leaders, "There may well be no greater test of our leadership than how we deal with A.I."

"We must make certain that the awesome capabilities of A.I. will be used to uplift and empower everyday people, not to give dictators more powerful shackles on the human spirit," he added.

Later, he held a bilateral meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and joined other world leaders in an event highlighting their partnership to combat the production and distribution of synthetic opioids like fentanyl, which drive tens of thousands of deaths in the U.S. annually alone.

Biden struck a wistful tone in his remarks, peppering his speech with references to his first time attending the General Assembly more than 50 years ago, and quoting Irish poetry.

Biden held up his decision to step aside up as an instructive moment as he addressed a gathering that has no small share of totalitarian and nondemocratic leaders.

"Some things are more important than staying in power," Biden said. "It's your people that matter the most. Never forget, we are here to serve the people. Not the other way around."

In the gateway to the Arctic, fat, ice and polar bears are crucial. All three are in trouble

BY SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

ON HUDSON BAY (AP) — Searching for polar bears where the Churchill River dumps into Canada's massive Hudson Bay, biologist Geoff York scans a region that's on a low fat, low ice diet because of climate change. And it's getting lower on polar bears.

There are now about 600 polar bears in the Western Hudson Bay, one of the most threatened of the 20 populations of the white beasts. That's about half the number of 40 years ago, says York, senior director of research and policy at Polar Bears International. His latest study, with a team of scientists from various fields, shows that if the world doesn't cut back more on emissions of heat-trapping gases "we could lose this population entirely by the end of the century," he says.

More than polar bears are threatened in this changing gateway to the Arctic, where warmer waters melt sea ice earlier in the year and the open ocean lingers longer. For what grows, lives and especially eats in this region, it's like a house's foundation shifting. "The whole marine ecosystem is tied to the seasonality of that sea ice cover," University of Manitoba sea ice scientist Julienne Stroeve said.

When the sea ice melts earlier it warms the overall water temperature and it changes algae that blooms, which changes the plankton that feed on the algae, which changes the fish, all the way up the food web to beluga whales, seals and polar bears, scientists say.

"What we're seeing is a transformation of an Arctic ecosystem into more of a southern open ocean," York says in August from the bobbing up-and-down edge of a 12-foot Zodiac boat. "We're seeing a transformation from high-fat plankton that leads to things like beluga whales and polar bears to low-fat plankton that end up with the final part of the food chain being jellyfish."

Here, fat is good.

"To live in the Arctic you need to be fat, or live on fat, or both," said Kristin Laidre, a University of Washington marine mammal scientist who specializes in Arctic species.

The polar bear — the symbol of both climate change and an area warming four times faster than the rest of the world — is the king of fat. When mother polar bears nurse their young — as an Associated Press team witnessed on rocks outside of Churchill, Manitoba, the self-proclaimed polar bear capital of the world — what comes out in the milk is 30% fat, York says.

"If you think of the heaviest of heavy whipping cream, it would be just like drinking that," York says. "This why you can have cubs that are born the size of my fist in January emerge in March at 20 to 25 pounds."

Fewer of these cubs are being born or survive the first year because their mothers aren't fat enough or strong enough to even get pregnant, York says.

Polar bears feed like crazy in the ice-covered spring. They use the sea ice platforms as bases to hunt their favorite prey, high-fat seals, especially baby seals.

In the Hudson Bay, unlike other areas where polar bears live, sea ice naturally disappears in the summer. So the polar bears lose their food supply. This has always happened, but now it's happening earlier in the year and the ice free area is lasting longer, say York and Stroeve.

So most polar bears go hungry. Recent studies have shown that even hunting on land — caribou, birds, human trash — takes so much energy that bears that do it don't really gain any more calories than those that just sit and starve.

"Here on Hudson's Bay, we know from the long term research that the bears today are spending up to a month longer on shore than their parents or grandparents did. That's 30 days longer without access to food, and that's on average," York says.

Some years the bears get near the starvation threshold of 180 days. Polar bears can fast for less than that and do well, mostly because they are so good at gathering and storing fat for these lean periods, York says. During that lean time period, researchers monitoring bears found that 19 out of 20 of them lost 47 pounds in just three weeks, about 7% of their body weight.

Sea ice in the Arctic has shrunk by about 13% per decade — falling in large steps and plateaus — since

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1979, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center. While Arctic sea ice hit its fourth lowest extent on record for late August, in Western Hudson Bay unusual winds have meant longer lasting ice than usual, but it's a temporary and very localized respite.

A peer-reviewed study this year from Stroeve and York looked at sea ice levels, that 180-day hunger threshold and climate simulations based on different levels of carbon pollution. The researchers found that once Earth warms another 1.3 or 1.4 degrees Celsius (2.3 to 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit) from now, the polar bears likely will cross that point of no return. Bears will be too hungry and this population likely dies out.

Studies, including those by the United Nations, that look at current efforts to curb carbon dioxide emissions project warming of about 1.5 degrees to 1.7 degrees Celsius (2.7 to 3.1 degrees Fahrenheit) from now by the end of the century.

"The populations will definitely not make it," Stroeve said.

There's about 4,500 polar bears in the three Hudson Bay populations and 55,000 beluga whales. Together, that's more than 141 million pounds of fat large mammals. That seems huge, but those white beasts are losing a battle to an even larger weight: the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide the world spews into the air. It's 154 million pounds every minute.

It's not just polar bears.

University of Washington's Laidre said some scientists think the smallest water zooplankton called copepods are the most important animals in the Arctic. They're fat heavy and the staple of bowhead whales.

But copepods live on the smaller plant plankton that's changing. The timing of when copepods can prosper is changing and new species are moving in, "and they are not as lipid rich," Laidre said.

"It's not that nothing lives out there," York says while gazing on the Bay. "It's that the things that are living in the North are changing and looking a lot more like the South."

What's happening in the Hudson Bay is a preview of what will hit further north, Stroeve said.

An ice scientist, Stroeve says there is just something about polar bears that is so special.

"It really just makes you so happy to see them, to see an animal living in such a harsh environment," Stroeve said. "And somehow they have survived. And are we going to make it so that they can't survive? That makes me sad."

What is Hezbollah, the group battling Israel in Lebanon?

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — After almost a year of trading fire, Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah are now engaged in ferocious confrontations that threaten to turn into a full-blown war.

Israel faces a much more formidable foe in Hezbollah than it faced in Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Many consider the Iran-backed group the strongest paramilitary force in the region — but the group also has political and social wings with considerable power in Lebanon.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has warned Israel that his group has new weapons and capabilities, and it has published surveillance drone footage taken deep inside northern Israel that showed the port of Haifa and other sites far from the Lebanon-Israel border. In the past few days, it has struck deeper into Israel than at any time in the past year.

What is Hezbollah?

Founded in 1982 during Lebanon's civil war, Hezbollah was initially devoted to ending Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon. It achieved that in 2000 following a long war of attrition that eventually forced Israel to withdraw. But it has continued its battle and seeks Israel's destruction.

Shiite Muslim Hezbollah is part of a collection of Iranian-backed factions and governments known as the Axis of Resistance. It was the first group that Iran supported and used as a way to export its brand of political Islamism.

In addition to being an armed group, Hezbollah is also a political party with lawmakers in the Lebanese parliament and has had representatives in most Lebanese governments for decades. It also provides extensive social services, including running schools and health clinics, in southern Lebanon and other parts

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of the country where it has a strong presence.

In its early days, the group attacked U.S. interests, causing Washington to designate it a terrorist organization. Those attacks included taking U.S. hostages in Beirut and the infamous 1983 truck bombing of a Marine Corps barracks in Beirut that killed 241 American service members.

"Iran's support has helped Hezbollah consolidate its position as Lebanon's most powerful political actor as well as the most-equipped military actor supported by Iran in the whole of the Middle East," said Lina Khatib, the director of the SOAS Middle East Institute in London.

In 2006, Hezbollah fighters ambushed an Israeli patrol and took two Israeli soldiers hostage in a cross-border raid. That sparked a monthlong war between Hezbollah and Israel that ended in a draw, but Israeli bombardment wreaked widespread destruction in southern Lebanon.

Israel's objective was eliminating Hezbollah, but the Lebanese group came out stronger and became a key military and political power on Israel's northern border.

Domestic opponents have criticized Hezbollah for maintaining its arsenal and for coming to dominate the government. Hezbollah's reputation also suffered when it briefly seized a section of Beirut in May 2008 after the Lebanese government took measures against its private telecommunications network.

What are Hezbollah's military capabilities?

Hezbollah is the Arab world's most significant paramilitary force with a robust organizational structure as well as a sizeable arsenal. It claims to have some 100,000 fighters

Hezbollah's military capabilities have surged over the years, and it has played a key role in the Syrian civil war, helping keep President Bashar Assad in power there. It has also helped train Iran-backed militias in Syria and Iraq, as well as Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Israel estimates Hezbollah has some 150,000 rockets and missiles, including guided missiles and long-range projectiles capable of striking anywhere in Israel.

Throughout its latest conflict with Israel, Hezbollah has gradually introduced new weapons to its arsenal.

While Hezbollah initially began launching anti-tank missiles and rockets, it eventually introduced explosive drones and surface-to-air missiles for the first time. Nasrallah said the drones are locally manufactured, and they have many at their disposal.

The group sustained a severe blow last week, when thousands of communications devices, used mainly by its members, exploded in different parts of Lebanon, killing 39 and wounding nearly 3,000, many of them civilians. The attack — an embarrassing breach of Hezbollah's supply chain — is widely blamed on Israel.

Israel has recently also assassinated several of the group's senior leaders, including a top military commander.

Who Is Hassan Nasrallah?

Born in 1960 into a poor Shiite family in the Beirut suburb of Bourj Hammoud and later displaced to south Lebanon, Nasrallah studied theology and joined the Amal movement, a Shiite political and paramilitary organization, before becoming one of Hezbollah's founders.

He became Hezbollah's leader in 1992 after his predecessor was killed in an Israeli strike.

Idolized by many for presiding over Israel's withdrawal from the south and leading the 2006 war, his image appears on billboards and on gadgets in souvenir shops in Lebanon, Syria and other countries across the Arab world. But he also faces opposition among Lebanese who accuse him of tying their country's fate to Iran.

Nasrallah is also considered to be pragmatic, able to make political compromises.

He has lived in hiding for years, fearing Israeli assassination, and delivers his speeches from undisclosed locations.

Iran believes all remaining workers have died in coal mine explosion, raising death toll to 49

By NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran said Tuesday it believes the remaining workers trapped by an explosion at a coal mine in the country's east have died, bringing the death toll in one of its worst industrial disasters to at least 49.

A provincial emergency official, Mohammad Ali Akhouni, gave the death toll in a report carried by Iranian state television from the mine in Tabas.

Figures for the numbers of miners inside the mine at the time have fluctuated since a methane gas leak Saturday sparked an explosion at the coal mine in Tabas, about 540 kilometers (335 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran.

Around 70 people had been working at the time of the blast. Bodies recovered so far showed no signs of blast injuries, suggesting many of the workers died from the gas before the blast.

Such gases are common in mining, though modern safety measures call for ventilation and other measures to protect workers.

It wasn't immediately clear what safety procedures were in place at the privately owned Tabas Parvadeh 5 mine, operated by Mandanjoo Co. The firm could not be reached for comment.

On Tuesday, a lawmaker and member of parliament's mine committee said the safety system of the mine was not working and "even the central alarm system was broke or did not exist."

Lawmaker Zahra Saeedi added that workers learned of the safety issue just before the disaster but couldn't leave in time. Two of the dead were health and safety experts at the mine, she said.

Iran's new reformist president, Masoud Pezeshkian, in New York for the U.N. General Assembly, has said he ordered all efforts be made to rescue those trapped and aid their families. He also said an investigation into the explosion was underway.

Iran's mining industry has been struck by disasters before. In 2017, a coal mine explosion killed at least 42 people. Then-President Hassan Rouhani, campaigning ahead of winning reelection, visited the site in Iran's northern Golestan province and angry miners besieged the SUV he rode in, kicking and beating the armored vehicle in a rage.

In 2013, 11 workers were killed in two separate mining incidents. In 2009, 20 workers were killed in several incidents. Lax safety standards and inadequate emergency services in mining areas were often blamed for the fatalities.

Floodwater reservoir becomes Poland's hero for preventing major flooding

By MONIKA SCISLOWSKA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Grateful Poles are heaping praise — and coming up with fond names — to honor their silent hero that just saved them: a floodwater reservoir that spared the cities of Opole and Wroclaw from imminent flooding that ravaged parts of Central Europe.

"National Hero," the "King of Gold" and "Raciborz Reservoir the Great." Some social media entries even suggest that the Lower Raciborz Reservoir floodplains should be named after Poland's famous goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny.

Located on the Oder River, the anti-flood reservoir was built following lesson from the 1997 "flood of the century" that devastated the two cities. It took a decade and some 2 billion zlotys (\$520 million) to build and two villages had to be resettled. Part of the funds came from the European Union and the World Bank.

It opened in 2020 on some 26 square kilometers (10 square miles) of wildland, and has the capacity of holding 185 million cubic meters of floodwater. It passed the test by effectively flattening the Oder's giant flood wave as torrential rains inundated Central Europe this month.

Mindful of the 1997 disaster, residents of Opole and Wroclaw watched with apprehension as the river

was cresting to the brims — but never spilled into the streets or houses.

Some places not covered by the Raciborz Reservoir system suffered heavy flooding as the amount of rain in just four days equaled a six-month volume.

Harris is more popular than Trump among AAPI voters, a new APIA Vote/APIA Data survey finds

By TERRY TANG and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is viewed more favorably by Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander registered voters than former President Donald Trump, according to a new poll. AAPI voters are also more likely to believe that she is the candidate who better represents their background and policy views.

The new survey from AAPI Data and APIAVote finds that around 6 in 10 AAPI voters have a very or somewhat favorable opinion of Harris, while about one-third have a somewhat or very unfavorable view. In comparison, 3 in 10 AAPI voters have a positive view of Trump and around two-thirds view him negatively.

That's an increase in favorability for Harris since October 2023, when an AP-NORC/APIA Data poll found that about half of AAPI adults had a somewhat or very favorable view of her. Opinions of Trump among this group have remained stable.

Harris is both Black and South Asian American, and has worked to rally AAPI voters in swing states like Georgia where their numbers are growing. But while the poll indicates that AAPI voters are much more likely to see their own cultural identity reflected in her than in Trump — about half of AAPI voters say Harris better represents their background and culture, while only about 1 in 10 say this about Trump — it's not clear how much this is influencing their perspectives on the candidates.

Only about 3 in 10 AAPI voters say that Harris' Asian Indian identity is extremely or very important to them, although some AAPI Americans may be more connected to her background than others. About 7 in 10 Asian Indian adults see Harris as the candidate who better represents their background and culture, which is higher than AAPI adults overall.

Ping Hackl, a 27-year-old Chinese American independent in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is planning to vote for Harris, but not because of the Democratic candidate's race or gender.

"I don't really care. She can be anybody," said Hackl.

Hackl says she worries about the preservation of democracy and divisiveness that could lead to political violence. Thus, she feels Trump "is very dangerous to the country."

In fact, the poll indicates that Harris' gender may be more salient to AAPI voters than her racial background. While the Harris campaign has avoided emphasizing that she could be the first female president, about half of AAPI women voters say her identity as a woman is extremely or very important to them.

AAPI women are also more likely than AAPI men to say their own background as Asian or Asian American is at least "very" important to how they think of themselves, and they're also more likely to say this about their identity as a person of color. And younger AAPI voters, between the ages of 18 and 34, are especially likely to care about Harris' identity as a woman.

"We've seen so much organizing from young people as well as AAPI women who are really leading the different ethnic specific affinity groups like the South Asians for women, South Asians for Harris, Korean Americans for Harris, Chinese Americans for Harris," said Christine Chen, executive director of APIAVote.

And the survey suggests that AAPI voters may be hearing more from Democratic organizers. About 4 in 10 AAPI voters said they have been contacted by the Democratic Party "a great deal" or "some" in the last year, while about 3 in 10 said the same about the Republican Party.

Trump and Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance have also recently echoed old stereotypes about Asian Americans and food by amplifying false rumors that Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, are eating pets, and the poll found that the issue of racism is broadly important for this group. About 7 in 10 AAPI voters say they "could not ever" vote for a candidate who does not share their view on racism or

discrimination, making it a bigger "dealbreaker" issue than the economy.

Not all AAPI voters have a negative view of Trump, though. Jihua Ma, a 45-year-old naturalized citizen from China who lives in Boston, leans Republican and voted for Trump in 2020. Ma feels Trump is still the most effective leader.

"I recognize that he's mean, and he sometimes posts mean pictures," Ma said. "I'm electing someone to really run this country, not someone to be a friend, a nice person."

Ma wants someone who will get inflation and the border under control, and he's unsatisfied with Harris' proposals on those issues. "I don't see her policy has a solid platform," Ma said, adding that he couldn't think of any accomplishments Harris has made as vice president or as a senator from California.

And it's still possible that Trump could make inroads with AAPI voters, although the gap in popularity between the candidates leaves a lot of ground to make up. "An issue where the Republican Party could chip away AAPI support is on the economy and on crime," said Karthick Ramakrishnan, founder and executive director of AAPI Data. "And I think this is where, you know, Harris has tried to blunt some of those critiques by offering some proposals."

As Israel's fight with Hezbollah heats up, people of Gaza fear being forgotten

By JULIA FRANKEL and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

MUWASI, Gaza Strip (AP) — As the escalating conflict between Israel and Hezbollah grabs global attention, Palestinians in Gaza wonder: What will become of their plight after nearly a year of devastating war?

They are petrified that international concern has been diverted, and that a dark possibility looms: abandonment.

The families of Israeli hostages held in Gaza have the same worry.

Nezar Zaqout, one of some 1.9 million Palestinians forced to flee their homes since the Israel-Hamas war broke out, said he fears the fighting across the Israel-Lebanon border will overtake interest in the abysmal living conditions in Gaza and efforts to negotiate a cease-fire.

"We have become completely forgotten," said Zaqout, who is living in Khan Younis after fleeing from Gaza City months ago. "There is no news about us in the media."

Palestinians fret the miserable conditions in Gaza will become permanent. Ninety percent of the population is homeless, with hundreds of thousands in unsanitary tent camps struggling to find food and clean water.

"A year on, and no one cares about us. Every day there is bombing, every day there are martyrs, and every day there are injuries," said Saadi Abu Mustafa, who fled Khan Younis to Muwasi, a sprawling tent camp along Gaza's southern coast.

Since Hamas launched the war on Oct. 7, Israel's retaliatory invasion of Gaza has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians and wounded more than 95,000, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and militants, but says over half of the dead were women and children.

Months of intense air and ground assaults have razed entire housing blocks to the ground; researchers who study satellite imagery estimate nearly 60% of buildings in the Gaza Strip have likely been damaged since the start of the war.

Israel vowed to destroy Hamas after Oct. 7, when its militants killed some 1,200 people and abducted 250 others. While it has been badly hobbled, the militant group backed by Iran remains in power.

Israel's government says about 70 of the 100 hostages are still presumed alive. Their families dread the government's focus on ending the war is fading.

"My biggest concern is that all the public's attention and the world's attention would be gone to the north," said Udi Goren, a relative of Tal Haimi, an Israeli killed on Oct. 7 and whose body was taken to Gaza. "Eventually the hostages will just be completely left alone without anyone to bring them out."

As the threat of all-out-war between Israel and Hezbollah has risen, Israel has drawn down its troop presence in Gaza to move key units to its northern border with Lebanon. Still, thousands of soldiers remain

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in Gaza, carrying out sporadic raids and preventing displaced Palestinians from returning home.

Daily strikes have continued in Gaza, too. An Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter in northern Gaza Saturday killed at least 22 people and wounded 30 others, mostly women and children, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Recent rains have made already difficult living conditions in the Israeli-designated "safe zone" of Muwasi unbearable. On Sunday, children living there walked barefoot through mud that reached above their ankles, while men dug through the muck to salvage precious canned goods and furniture.

"The entire kitchen in which we prepare food was filled with water. We did not know what to do. This is the beginning of winter. What will happen in the coming days?" said Rana Goza't, a mother displaced from Gaza City.

Others lamented water-logged mattresses and pleaded for international groups to help keep attention on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"We hope that all peoples care about us and see where we have reached," said Enas Kollab, who relocated to Muwasi from northern Gaza.

A flurry of diplomatic activity to broker an agreement between Israel and Hamas appears to have subsided, with each side accusing the other of negotiating in bad faith and making untenable demands.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel must keep troops in two areas of Gaza to prevent Hamas from rearming. But Hamas has said it will not agree to any deal that allows Israeli troops to remain.

Hopes for a deal have further dimmed as the United States, a key mediator in the talks, appears to be losing the ability to influence its closest ally. In a trip to the region last week, Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited only Egypt because U.S. officials believed having him travel to Israel in support of a deal might cause Netanyahu to say something that would undermine mediation efforts.

No clear vision has emerged for postwar Gaza — or who will guide and govern that process — but one thing is clear: Rebuilding the territory will take decades. The U.N. estimated this summer that just removing some 40 million tons of rubble would take 15 years.

Today in History: September 25, Military escorts Little Rock Nine into Central High

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 25, the 269th day of 2024. There are 97 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 25, 1957, nine Black students who had been forced to withdraw from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, because of unruly white crowds were escorted to class by members of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division and the National Guard.

Also on this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and sighted the Pacific Ocean.

In 1789, the first United States Congress adopted 12 amendments to the Constitution and sent them to the states for ratification. (Ten of the amendments became the Bill of Rights.)

In 1956, the first trans-Atlantic telephone cable officially went into service with a three-way ceremonial call between New York, Ottawa and London.

In 1978, 144 people were killed when a Pacific Southwest Airlines Boeing 727 and a private plane collided over San Diego.

In 2005, in the presence of disarmament observers, the Irish Republican Army decommissioned its arsenal of weapons, officially ending a 36-year armed campaign for a unified Irish state.

In 2012, President Barack Obama, speaking to the U.N. General Assembly, pledged U.S. support for Syrians trying to oust President Bashar Assad, calling him "a dictator who massacres his own people."

In 2013, skipper Jimmy Spithill and Oracle Team USA won the America's Cup with one of the greatest

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comebacks in sports history, speeding past Dean Barker and Emirates Team New Zealand in the winner-take-all Race 19 on San Francisco Bay.

In 2018, Bill Cosby was sentenced to three-to-10 years in prison for drugging and molesting a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home. (After serving nearly three years, Cosby went free in June 2021 after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned his conviction.)

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Hubie Brown is 91. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates is 81. Actor-producer Michael Douglas is 80. Model Cheryl Tiegs is 77. Actor Mimi Kennedy is 76. Film director Pedro Almodovar is 75. Actor-director Anson Williams is 75. Actor Mark Hamill is 73. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob McAdoo is 73. Actor Michael Madsen is 66. Actor Heather Locklear is 63. Actor Aida Turturro is 62. Actor Tate Donovan is 61. Actor Maria Doyle Kennedy is 60. Basketball Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen is 59. Actor Will Smith is 56. Actor Catherine Zeta-Jones is 55. Football Hall of Famer John Lynch is 53. Basketball Hall of Famer Chauncey Billups is 48. Actor Clea DuVall is 47. Rapper T.I. is 44. Actor-rapper Donald Glover (Childish Gambino) is 41. Actor Zach Woods is 40. Actor Jordan Gavaris is 35. Actor Leah Jeffries is 15.