

# Groton Daily Independent

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## 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 Mobridge: 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.

## Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



## 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.

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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.**

## Oct. 7, One Year Later

Today marks one year since Gaza-based militant group Hamas launched the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, killing over 1,200 people and taking over 250 people hostage, with 97 still in captivity. Israel's subsequent war in Gaza has killed over 41,900 people, per the Hamas-run Health Ministry. That death toll does not differentiate between militants and civilians but includes more than 17,600 identified women and children.

Hamas-led attacks targeted a music festival, civilian towns, and Israeli border posts. On Oct. 8, Hamas' allied Iranian proxy group, Hezbollah, began launching rockets into Israel from Lebanon. The Israel-Hamas war has wounded over 97,000 people in Gaza, displaced 1.9 million of the territory's prewar 2.3 million population, and damaged or destroyed around 60% of its buildings.

Today, the war between Israel and Iranian-sponsored groups has expanded. Last week, Israel launched a ground offensive in Lebanon following Israeli-attributed assassinations and device attacks killing 1,400 people. Iran has launched two bouts of direct missile attacks into Israel, to which Israel has pledged to respond. Yesterday, Israel launched a renewed ground campaign in northern Gaza and expanded airstrikes in Beirut.

## Hurricane Milton

Hurricane Milton is projected to make landfall in Florida Wednesday, prompting evacuation orders for millions of residents. Out of the state's 67 counties, 51 are under a state of emergency, with Tampa Bay bracing for potentially its worst hurricane in more than a century.

Milton gained hurricane strength yesterday in the Gulf of Mexico, on track to become the third storm this season to make landfall in Florida. It comes after Hurricane Helene made landfall in Florida's Big Bend as a Category 4 storm, killing at least 227 people across six states—the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland US since Katrina in 2005. Relief and recovery efforts for Helene are ongoing, with costs from the destruction expected to surpass \$30B.

Hurricane season runs from June through November. Experts had predicted this year would be particularly active, with between four and seven storms of Category 3 strength or higher.

## 'Bilt Different

Chaos reigned in college football over the weekend, with five of the country's top 11 teams losing Saturday, including four to unranked opponents. It marked just the fifth time in 20 years that five teams in the top 11 lost on the same day.

The marquee upset was notched in Nashville, where No. 1 Alabama fell to Vanderbilt. The Commodores entered the game 0-60 all-time against top five opponents. Students deconstructed and carried the goalposts 3 miles down the city's main street before tossing them in the Cumberland River.

The upset was followed by No. 4 Tennessee losing to Arkansas 19-14, No. 9 Missouri falling to No. 25 Texas A&M 41-10, No. 10 Michigan losing to Washington 27-17, and No. 11 USC coming up short against Minnesota. A sixth team, No. 8 Miami, narrowly avoided joining the group with a 39-38 win at California.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Shohei Ohtani homers in first-ever postseason game, leading Los Angeles Dodgers to Game 1 win over San Diego Padres in NL Division Series.

New York Liberty tops Las Vegas Aces to advance to WNBA Finals.

Allan Blye, two-time Emmy-winning writer and actor, dies at age 87.

Christopher Ciccone, artist and younger brother of Madonna, dies at age 63.

"Joker" sequel tops domestic box office with \$40M revenue, falling short of expected \$50M-\$60M haul; film topped overseas box office with \$81M.

## Science & Technology

Nobel Prize week begins, with the winners in physiology and medicine announced at 5:30 am ET this morning.

mRNA vaccine shown to protect against *C. difficile* bacteria in mice; roughly one in 11 elderly patients who contract the infection in healthcare settings dies within one month.

Engineers demonstrate artificial plant capable of generating electricity, clean indoor environments; researchers hope to eventually be able to charge cell phones and similar devices.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher Friday (S&P 500 +0.9%, Dow +0.8%, Nasdaq +1.2%) following September jobs report showing highest jobs growth in six months.

European Union member states vote to raise tariffs on Chinese electric vehicle imports to 45%, up from 10%.

Rivian misses Q3 delivery expectations, lowers production target for 2024, blaming shortage of components.

Boeing, production workers restart negotiations today to end three-week strike.

Jeep and Chrysler parent company, Stellantis, sues United Auto Workers union for threatening to strike mid-contract.

## Politics & World Affairs

Supreme Court reconvenes for 2024-25 term, with oral arguments scheduled on ghost guns case tomorrow; see biggest cases to watch.

Former President Donald Trump speaks at site of July assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, accompanied by billionaire Elon Musk.

Tunisia's incumbent President Kais Saied expected to win reelection in yesterday's election following disqualification and jailing of an opponent last month; turnout estimated at less than 30%.

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

In the 9th century, Ragnar Lodbrok invaded England with a Viking army. It was an onslaught from the beginning, and although the English army regrouped towards the end, Ragnar left victoriously. On Sunday, the Minnesota Vikings invaded England. And, just like their namesake, they got out to an early lead before their opponent came back to make it a closer contest. Ultimately, the Vikings got the victory, defeating the New York Jets 23-17. They are 5-0 this season and head into their bye week with a chance to recover and hopefully get T.J. Hockenson (who actually looks like a Viking) back from injury.

Similar to last week, the Vikings came out of the gates hot. The Jets got the ball to start the game, and were forced to punt three plays later. The Vikings got the ball and drove down the field to score a field goal. The Jets went three-and-out on their next possession as well, and the Vikings were driving once again until a fumble ended the drive. On the third play of their third drive, Aaron Rodgers threw an interception to Andrew Van Ginkel who returned it for a touchdown, making the score 10-0. On the third play of their fourth drive, Rodgers once again threw an INT, this time to Cam Bynum.

Both teams turned the ball over on downs to start the second quarter. On their next drive, the Vikings went 74 yards on eight plays, culminating in a TD run up the middle by C.J. Ham. The Jets were forced to punt on their next drive, and with two minutes left in the first half, the Vikings got the ball back with a chance to put even more points on the board and widen their lead. Unfortunately, the Vikings went three-and-out and gave the ball back to Rodgers, who only needed 46 seconds to finally find the endzone. The Jets were still down by 10 points, but they had all the momentum going into halftime.

The Vikings got the ball to start the second half but were unable to get anything going on offense. On their second drive of the second half, the Jets had a nice drive going, running 17 plays that went for 83 yards. The Vikings' defense stiffened up in the red zone, however, and the Jets were forced to kick a field goal. The game was within one score heading into the fourth quarter, 17-10.

Neither team could get much going on offense to start the fourth quarter, but thanks to excellent field position, the Vikings managed to hit a field goal, making it a two-score game again. After a Jets drive that lost yardage, the Vikings could have put this game away with a long drive. Unfortunately, Sam Darnold threw an interception, and Rodgers walked right down the field for a TD. Once again, the Vikings had a chance to put the game away, and although they showed some signs of life, they could only manage a field goal. The score was 23-17, and the suddenly red-hot Rodgers had three minutes to work with. Nine plays and 44 yards later, Rogers was facing a 3rd & ten from the Vikings' 26-yard line. The Vikings' newest cornerback, and former Defensive Player of the Year Stephon Gilmore, had great coverage and was able to pick off Rodgers to clinch the game. All that was left to do was roll out the Vikings' victory formation and take a knee.

Fun fact: through the first five games of the season, the Vikings have outscored their opponents 114-37 through the first three quarters of the game.

Sam Darnold had the worst game of his Vikings' career, only completing 14 of 31 passes for 179 yards, no touchdowns, and one interception. Aaron Jones was very effective on the ground, but he was injured in the first quarter and the Vikings' run game was never able to get back on track. As a whole, the Vikings ran the ball 30 times for only 82 yards. Justin Jefferson had six catches for 92 yards, but it took 14 targets for him to reach those numbers.

Harrison Smith, Ivan Pace Jr., and Harrison Phillips each had a sack. Andrew Van Ginkel, Camryn Bynum, and Stephon Gilmore each had an interception.

Looking ahead, the Vikings have a bye-week coming up. Skoll!



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## Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Police
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family



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# MANHART

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

### DISTRICT 1

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**General Election - Nov. 5**  
**Absentee Voting has begun**

## “Prairie Doc or Prairie Bot?”

Artificial Intelligence or A.I. has gone from Science Fiction to a reality. This technology continues to evolve and find new applications in the world, including the world of medicine. With any new advancement, there are pros and cons to be considered when implementing it into regular use, especially in medicine.

In 2023 the Journal of Medical Internet Research published an article where they had ChatGPT take 2 of the 3 USMLE exams. Step 1 is taken by third year medical students and all physicians must pass all three tests in order to become licensed as a physician. The program was given 4 different practice tests and scored between 44 to 64.4% correct. Over 60% is considered a passing score. The headlines read that ChatGPT passes medical boards.

While this headline was shocking, reading the article gives more nuances to that declaration. There were three different AI programs used, and only one had a passing score for one of the four sample tests, the easiest step 1. When the exams themselves were broken down, the AI was able to answer the “easy” questions with the greatest accuracy. Questions were graded on a score from 1 (easy) to 5 (difficult). However, it was unable to answer any of the level 5 questions. When the program was given a “hint”, the performance increased to 22% correct of the level 5 questions. Students taking the test do not get hints.

For this article I decided to ask Chat GPT to list “5 ways AI will improve the practice of medicine in the next 5 years” and “5 ways AI may harm the practice of medicine in the next 5 years.” Here is what the program came up with.

Here are the 5 ways ChatGPT thought AI could improve the practice of medicine

- 1) Improved diagnostics and early detection
- 2) Personalized treatment plans
- 3) Efficient administrative workflows
- 4) Virtual health assistants and remote monitoring
- 5) Drug discovery and development

Here are the 5 ways ChatGPT thought AI could worsen the practice of medicine

- 1) Over-reliance on AI
- 2) Bias in algorithms
- 3) Privacy and data security risks
- 4) Job displacement and role redefinition
- 5) Increasing costs for AI implementation

AI is a tool that can be used. Like any tool in medicine, it needs to be tested for safety, accuracy, and effectiveness before widespread implementation. While ChatGPT could easily write this entire article for me in a matter of seconds, it would not be providing you with the personal connection or with the level of reverence and responsibility that each Prairie Doc feels. We take our motto to provide you with health information that is based in science and built on trust very seriously. We will watch as this technology develops and advances. We embrace progress while holding fast to our prairie roots of connection and community. You do not need to worry about Prairie Doc being replaced by Prairie Bot.

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB or streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB), providing health information based on science, built on trust for 23 Seasons.



Jill Kruse, DO

## **COMMON CENTS IS MOVING TO THE GROTON COMMUNITY CENTER (109 N 3RD STREET) FOR A 3-DAY \$10 BAG SALE!!**

**SHOP**

**THURS, OCT. 10TH 2-7PM**

**FRI, OCT. 11TH 9AM-3PM**

**SAT, OCT. 12TH 9AM-3PM**



## Names Released in McCook County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 42 and 451st Avenue, four miles north of Monroe, SD

When: 6:07 p.m., Thursday, September 19, 2024

Vehicle 1: 2022 GMC Yukon

Driver 1: Samuel Ronald Wipf, 72-year-old male from Parkston, SD, minor injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Passenger 1a: Emma Wipf, 77-year-old female from Parkston, SD, minor injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Passenger 1b: Tammy Jo Wipf, 43-year-old female from Parkston, SD, minor injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Passenger 1c: Sarah P. Wipf, 51-year-old female from Parkston, SD, minor injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Vehicle 2: 2002 Ford Ranger

Driver 2: Billy Joe Poppenga, 61-year-old male from Lennox, SD, fatal injuries

Seatbelt Use: No

Passenger 2: Penny Sue Poppenga, 58-year-old female from Lennox, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seatbelt Use: Yes

McCook County, S.D.- A Lennox, SD man died Tuesday, Oct. 1, from injuries sustained in a September 19 crash in McCook County.

Preliminary crash information indicates Samuel R. Wipf, the driver of a 2022 GMC Yukon, was traveling westbound on SD Highway 42 near the intersection of 451st Avenue. The driver of a 2002 Ford Ranger, Billy Joe Poppenga, was southbound on 451st Avenue and stopped at a stop sign at the intersection with SD 42. Upon entering the intersection, the vehicles collided.

Wipf and three passengers in the Yukon all sustained minor injuries. Poppenga sustained life-threatening injuries, and his passenger, Penny Sue Poppenga, received serious, non-life-threatening injuries. Mr. Poppenga passed away from his injuries October 1.

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

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



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## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What are Native American tribes doing to transition to a green economy?

-- T.K., via e-mail

Native American tribes are increasingly playing a critical role in promoting the transition to a green economy, driven by their commitment to environmental stewardship, living harmoniously with nature, cultural preservation and self-determination. This transition aligns with their traditional values of sustainability while also addressing the challenges posed by climate change and environmental injustice.

One significant step is the development of renewable energy projects on tribal lands. For example, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe has integrated solar power with hydropower, creating a sustainable energy infrastructure that supports both environmental and economic goals.

Access to federal funding plays a vital role in supporting such projects. Programs like the Inflation Reduction Act and other federal investments enable tribes to pursue clean energy projects tailored to their needs, contributing to the broader goal of transitioning Indian Country to renewable energy sources. Over 200 tribes are now engaged in climate action planning, often in partnership with U.S. agencies. These plans stress reducing carbon emissions, mitigating climate impacts and enhancing the resilience of tribal lands and communities. Such initiatives protect ecosystems, preserve water resources, and address the environmental challenges that disproportionately affect Indigenous populations.

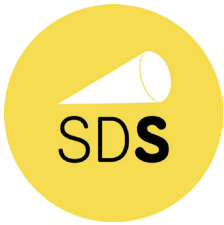
Indigenous tribes have long led the fight for environmental justice, using traditional ecological knowledge to advocate for equitable solutions. Climate change has worsened the health disparities faced by Native American communities, particularly in areas such as water scarcity, extreme weather and food insecurity.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe has taken proactive steps to reduce pollution from oil and gas operations, receiving significant federal funding to cut emissions and transition to cleaner energy sources.

Many tribes are drawing on traditional ecological knowledge to develop climate strategies. This centuries-old wisdom, combined with modern science, is helping Indigenous communities become more resilient to climate change. At the heart of these efforts is economic self-determination, which enables tribes to build sustainable, green economies that align with their cultural and environmental values. To further support Indigenous communities in their transition to a green economy, increased access to federal funding, technical assistance, and partnerships with private sector innovators can be expanded. Additionally, fostering education and training in renewable energy and environmental stewardship within these communities will empower future generations to continue building sustainable, resilient economies.



**Native American tribes are increasingly playing a critical role in promoting the transition to a green economy.** Credit: Pexels.com.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **COMMENTARY**

## **A short course on open meetings would be good for public boards** **State media association plans to support legislation this winter**

**by David Bordewyk**

The theme for this year's National Newspaper Week is "Telling Our Stories" – a reminder about the role of newspapers in reporting the important stories in their communities.

Stories that run the gamut: human-interest features, football game recaps, new businesses in town and, of course, local government meetings.

Keeping an eye on government and informing readers about public board meetings are among the most important jobs for a community newspaper. Sometimes, the local newspaper reporter may be the only person sitting in the audience for a city council or school board meeting.

South Dakota's open meetings laws provide a road map for how government boards must notify citizens about upcoming public meetings and how they conduct certain aspects of their meetings.

At times, the open meetings laws can be confusing and lead to misunderstanding. Over the years, newspapers have reported many stories about problems related to compliance with our state's open meetings laws.

Among the cases that have come before the South Dakota Open Meetings Commission since its inception in 2004 are those rooted in the fact that public officials did not properly understand the laws and unknowingly violated them.

That is why the South Dakota NewsMedia Association – which represents the state's newspapers and various digital news outlets – will support a bill in the 2025 Legislature that would require all public boards to review the open meetings laws once a year. We believe a little refresher course each year would go a long way toward eliminating those unintended violations and missteps involving these important laws.

The proposal as currently drafted is straightforward:

All public bodies of the state and its political subdivisions as part of their annual organizational meeting or at the first regular official meeting of each year shall review the open meetings laws in SDCL 1-25 or as explained in the "Guide to South Dakota's Open Meetings Laws," prepared by the South Dakota Attorney General's Office.

That's it. No heavy mandate and no expenditures of tax dollars. Just a bit of time devoted annually to reviewing the open meetings laws.

The open meetings guide prepared by the South Dakota attorney general is an ideal educational tool to help public boards complete an annual review. You can find it on the attorney general's website ([www.atg.sd.gov](http://www.atg.sd.gov)) under the "legal resources" tab.

Most government boards in South Dakota are comprised of citizens who volunteer their time and energy to serve in a public role. A little education will go a long way toward supporting our volunteer public officials in navigating an important set of open government laws. This would be especially helpful given the natural turnover of boards either by elections or other means.

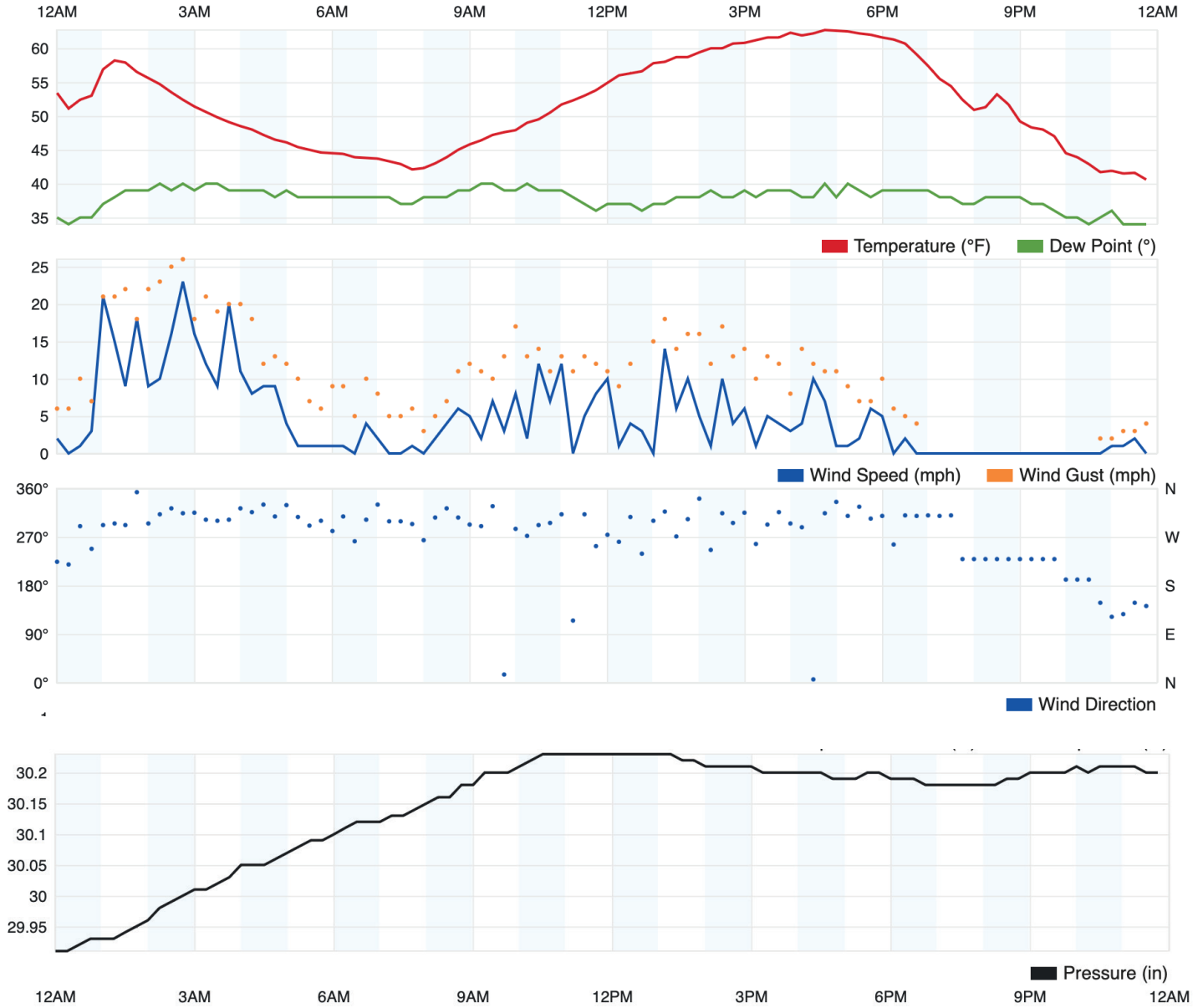
Open government is akin to good government. We believe our legislative proposal will reinforce both of those important ideals.

*David Bordewyk is executive director of the South Dakota NewsMedia Association, which represents the state's newspapers and digital news outlets.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Tuesday

Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 71 °F

Low: 37 °F

High: 78 °F

Low: 43 °F

High: 83 °F

Frost then  
Sunny

Mostly Clear

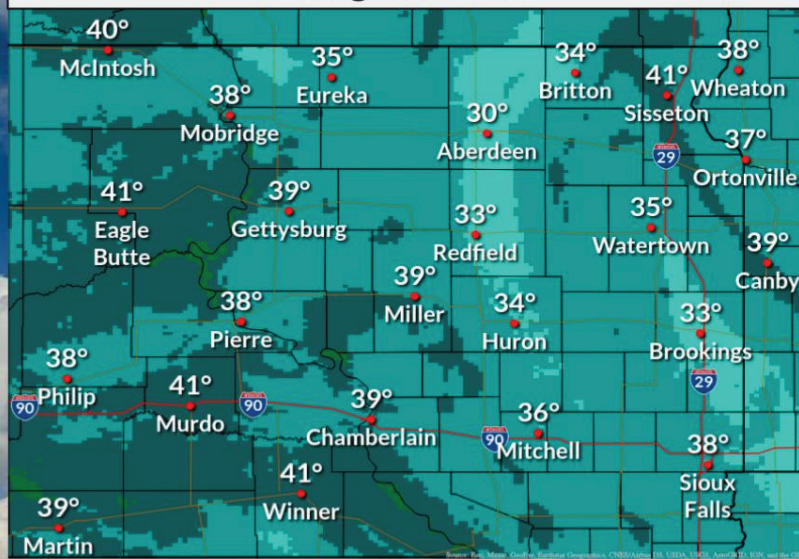
Sunny

Mostly Clear

Sunny

## Patchy Morning Frost (James Valley) Continued Dry Weather This Week

### Tonight's Lows



Monday



Highs: 67-76  
(High Smoke)

Tuesday



Highs: 73-81

We could see some frost in the James valley but its not expected to be widespread. Temperatures though the week look to continue to run above normal with negligible chances for moisture



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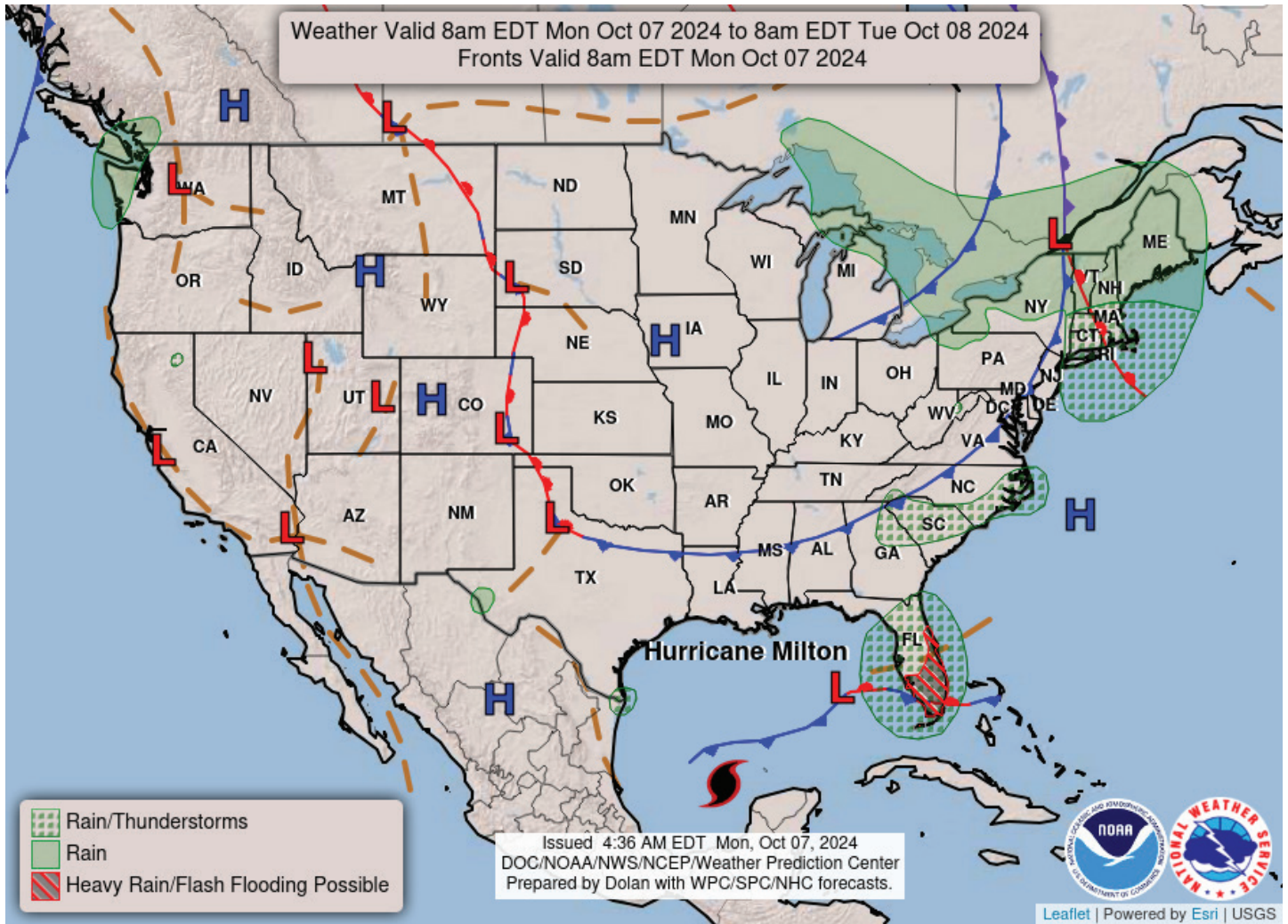
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 63 °F at 4:46 PM**  
**Low Temp: 42 °F at 11:13 PM**  
**Wind: 29 mph at 1:22 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 11 hours, 24 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1909  
Record Low: 14 in 2012  
Average High: 65  
Average Low: 38  
Average Precip in Oct.: 0.54  
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 18.87  
Precip Year to Date: 19.75  
Sunset Tonight: 7:02:12 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:39:04 am



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## Today in Weather History

October 7, 1970: On October 7th through the 10th, 1970, a record-breaking early season snowstorm hit parts of southern South Dakota. Snowfall of 5 to 9 inches was typical across the southwest and south-central on the 7th. Late on October 8th and into the 9th of 1970, the state's southeast portion was hit. The 5 inches that fell in Sioux Falls is the earliest significant snow on record for the area.

The heavy snows also affected portions of Kansas, Nebraska, western Iowa, and western Minnesota. Amounts of up to 7 inches were recorded in northwest Iowa. The heavy, wet snow snapped many tree branches and downed power lines. Sioux City recorded their heaviest snow for so early in the season. The snow was very wet and heavy but melted quickly over the next several days.

1825: Raging forest fires in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, Canada, destroy over 3 million acres of forest. As many as 500 people were killed. The blaze has been partly attributed to unusually hot weather in the fall and summer of 1825, coupled with outdoor fires by settlers and loggers.

1849: High winds swept the passengers of the St. John out to sea. This resulted in a loss of 143 people.

1959: The Soviet spacecraft, Luna 3, captured the first images of the far side of the Moon. The first image was taken at 3:30 UTC on the 7th of October.

1970 - Widespread flooding took place across Puerto Rico. Rainfall amounts for the day ranged up to seventeen inches at Aibonito. A slow moving tropical depression was responsible for six days of torrential rains across the island. Totals in the Eastern Interior Division averaged thirty inches, with 38.4 inches at Jayuya. Flooding claimed eighteen lives, and resulted in 62 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Seattle, WA, received four inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the city. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was another hot day in the southwestern U.S. Tucson, AZ, hit 101 degrees for the second day in a row to again equal their record for the month of October. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 103 degrees, and Blythe CA and Yuma AZ tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Morning fog in the central U.S. reduced the visibility to near zero at some locations. Morning lows of 28 degrees at Rockford IL and 24 degrees at Waterloo IA were records for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Hollywood FL and Miami FL were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms in central Texas drenched San Antonio with 3.10 inches of rain in six hours causing local flooding in northeastern sections of the city. Temperatures dipped below the freezing mark from the Northern Rockies to the Upper Mississippi Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

2016: Hurricane Matthew was off the northeast coast of Florida. Matthew brought intense rainfall to the Carolinas on the 8th and 9th.

2017: A tornado touched down near Jenner in Alberta, Canada.

2018: Only 8 hours after becoming a depression, the National Hurricane Center upgraded the system to Tropical Storm Michael. Tropical storm force winds and torrential downpours were affecting portions of the coastal east-central Yucatan Peninsula.



## HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

A homeless man was found dead trying to climb into a dumpster. When they looked in his pockets for his identification, they discovered several checks. They were worth thousands of dollars, but they did him no good. He never surrendered them to receive their cash value.

As we read God's Word, we find promise after promise – all having value to the believer. But as with the checks of the homeless man, they must be "turned into cash" to have any value for the Christian. We must go to God, through His Word, to claim His promises to meet our every need.

James said that God "does not resent your asking. But when you do ask Him, be sure you really expect Him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea..."

There are times when it is easier to believe in God than it is to believe in the fact that He deeply cares for each of us and our every need. Surely, if He is bound by His Word, then we can go to Him "in faith believing." We must always remember one simple fact: nothing is so small that it escapes His concern, or that any problem is so large that He cannot solve it.

We limit God by the limitations we place on Him. The problems we have with our faith are our problems – not God's. "Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you," said Jesus. What more can He say to assure us of His love and concern for our best?

Prayer: Father, give us a faith that is larger than our problems and a willingness to trust in Your power. Remind us that You are bigger than the universe You created. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. James 1:1-8

*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:

10.04.24

21 39 42 43 45 3

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$129,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 49  
DRAW: Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.05.24

8 15 17 32 36 2

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$10,870,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 4 Mins 2  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.06.24

1 8 10 26 34 10

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 19 Mins 2  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.05.24

5 9 11 18 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$53,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 19  
DRAW: Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.05.24

15 16 27 30 57 24

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 48 Mins 1  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.05.24

2 12 46 52 65 3

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$315,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 48 Mins 1  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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## Upcoming Groton Events

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

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Nobel Prize in medicine honors two Americans for discovery of microRNA**

By DANIEL NIEMANN and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Nobel Prize in medicine was awarded Monday to Americans Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for their discovery of microRNA, a fundamental principle governing how gene activity is regulated.

The Nobel Assembly said that their discovery is “proving to be fundamentally important for how organisms develop and function.”

Ambros performed the research that led to his prize at Harvard University. He is currently a professor of natural science at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Ruvkun’s research was performed at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard Medical School, where he’s a professor of genetics, said Thomas Perlmann, Secretary-General of the Nobel Committee.

Perlmann said he spoke to Ruvkun by phone shortly before the announcement.

“It took a long time before he came to the phone and sounded very tired, but he quite rapidly, was quite excited and happy, when he understood what, it was all about,” Perlmann said.

Last year, the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine went to Hungarian-American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman for discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 that were critical in slowing the pandemic.

The prize carries a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (\$1 million) from a bequest left by the prize’s creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel.

The announcement launched this year’s Nobel prizes award season.

Nobel announcements continue with the physics prize on Tuesday, chemistry on Wednesday and literature on Thursday. The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced Friday and the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences on Oct. 14.

The laureates are invited to receive their awards at ceremonies on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel’s death.

### **Milton increases to a Category 2 hurricane as Florida prepares for massive evacuations**

By JEFF MARTIN and FREIDA FRISARO Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (AP) — Milton increased to a Category 2 hurricane early Monday as Florida gears up for what could be its biggest evacuation in seven years as the storm heads toward major population centers including Tampa and Orlando.

Hurricane Milton was strengthening over the southern Gulf of Mexico as storm surge and hurricane watches for parts of Florida and a hurricane warning for the Mexican coast were issued, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said in a 5 a.m. advisory.

The storm, which the center said was likely to become a major hurricane Monday, was centered about 195 miles (314 kilometers) west-northwest of Progreso, Mexico, and 750 miles (1,207 kilometers) west-southwest of Tampa with maximum sustained winds of 100 mph (161 kph) while moving east-southeast at 8 mph (12.8 kph), the hurricane center said.

While forecast models vary widely, the most likely path suggests Milton could make landfall Wednesday in the Tampa Bay area and remain a hurricane as it moves across central Florida into the Atlantic Ocean. That would largely spare other southeastern states ravaged by Hurricane Helene, which caused catastrophic damage from Florida into the Appalachian Mountains and a death toll that rose Sunday to at least 230 people.

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The Mexican government issued a hurricane warning for the Yucatan Peninsula from Celestun to Rio Lagartos, the center said.

About 7 million people were urged to evacuate Florida in 2017 as Hurricane Irma bore down on the state. The exodus jammed freeways, led to hourslong lines at gas stations that still had fuel and left evacuees frustrated and, in some cases, vowing never to evacuate again.

Building on lessons learned during Irma and other previous storms, Florida is staging emergency fuel for gas vehicles and charging stations for electric vehicles along evacuation routes, Kevin Guthrie, executive director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, said at a Sunday briefing.

"We are looking at every potential, possible location that can potentially house someone, as what we refer to in emergency management, as a refuge of last resort," Guthrie added.

Hurricane Milton is intensifying rapidly and will likely be a major hurricane before slamming into the storm-ravaged Gulf Coast midweek.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Sunday that while it remains to be seen where Milton will strike, it's clear the state is going to be hit hard.

"I don't think there's any scenario where we don't have major impacts at this point," he said.

"You have time to prepare — all day today, all day Monday, probably all day Tuesday to be sure your hurricane preparedness plan is in place," DeSantis said. "If you're on that west coast of Florida, barrier islands, just assume you'll be asked to leave."

With Milton achieving hurricane status, this is the first time the Atlantic has had three simultaneous hurricanes after September, according to Colorado State University hurricane scientist Phil Klotzbach. There have been four simultaneous hurricanes in August and September.

The St. Petersburg-Tampa Bay area is still cleaning up extensive damage from Helene and its powerful storm surge. Twelve people perished as Helene swamped the coast, with the worst damage along the narrow, 20-mile (32-kilometer) string of barrier islands that stretch from St. Petersburg to Clearwater.

DeSantis expanded his state of emergency declaration Sunday to 51 counties and said Floridians should prepare for more power outages and disruption, making sure they have a week's worth of food and water and are ready to hit the road.

"We are preparing ... for the largest evacuation that we have seen, most likely since 2017, Hurricane Irma," Guthrie said.

People who live in homes built after Florida strengthened codes in 2004, who don't depend on constant electricity and who aren't in evacuation zones should probably avoid the roads, Guthrie said.

All classes and school activities in St. Petersburg's Pinellas County preemptively closed Monday through Wednesday as Milton approached. Officials in Tampa opened all city garages free of charge to residents hoping to protect their cars from floodwaters, including electric vehicles. The vehicles must be left on the third floor or higher in each garage.

As many as 4,000 National Guard troops are helping state crews to remove debris, DeSantis said, and he directed Florida crews dispatched to North Carolina in Helene's aftermath to return in preparation for Milton.

"All available state assets ... are being marshaled to help remove debris," DeSantis said. "We're going 24-7 ... it's all hands on deck."

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell defended her agency's response to Hurricane's destruction after Republicans' false claims, amplified by former President Donald Trump, created a frenzy of misinformation across devastated communities.

"This kind of rhetoric is not helpful to people and it's really a shame we're putting politics ahead of helping people," Criswell told ABC's George Stephanopoulos. It has created fear and mistrust among residents against the thousands of FEMA employees and volunteers on the ground across the southeast, she said.

Despite this, Criswell said the agency is already preparing for Milton, well before it's clear exactly where the storm will move across the Florida peninsula this week.

"We're working with the state there to understand what their requirements are going to be, so we can have those in place before it makes landfall," she said.

Federal disaster assistance has surpassed \$137 million since Helene struck more than a week ago, one



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of the largest mobilizations of personnel and resources in recent history, FEMA said Sunday.

Some 1,500 active-duty troops, more than 6,100 National Guardsmen and nearly 7,000 federal workers have been deployed, shipping more than 14.9 million meals, 13.9 million liters (3.6 million gallons) of water, 157 generators and 505,000 tarps, along with approving more than \$30 million in housing and other types of assistance for over 27,000 households, according to FEMA, the White House and the Department of Defense.

More than 800 people unable to return home are staying in lodging provided through FEMA and 22 shelters are still housing nearly 1,000 people as mobile feeding operations continue to help survivors. The response to Helene won't let up during Milton and its aftermath, because FEMA has the capacity to address multiple disasters simultaneously, the agency said.

"My Administration is sparing no resource to support families as they begin their road to rebuilding," Biden said. "We will continue working hand-in-hand with local and state leaders — regardless of political party and no matter how long it takes."

## Middle East latest: Palestinian militants in Gaza fire rockets into Israel as mourners mark Oct 7

By The Associated Press undefined

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired a barrage of rockets into Israel on Monday as mourners marked the anniversary of the Oct. 7 attack, without disrupting a nearby ceremony.

Hamas also said it attacked Israeli forces in different parts of Gaza. The Israeli military said it launched a wave of artillery and airstrikes overnight and into Monday to thwart what it said was an imminent attack. It said it targeted Hamas launch posts and underground militant infrastructure.

The fighting on the anniversary underscored the militants' resilience in the face of a devastating Israeli offensive that has killed around 42,000 Palestinians, according to local medical officials. It has also destroyed large areas of Gaza and displaced around 90% of its population.

Hamas-led militants blew holes in Israel's security fence and stormed into nearby army bases and farming communities in a surprise attack one year ago, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting another 250. They are still holding around 100 captives inside Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel is now at war with Hamas in Gaza and its ally Hezbollah in Lebanon. It has also vowed to strike Iran in response to a ballistic missile attack on Israel last week.

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Here is The Latest:

Hamas fires rockets from Gaza, setting off sirens in central Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV, Israel — The Israeli military said on Monday that projectiles fired from Gaza set off sirens in central Tel Aviv, as Israel marks a year to Hamas' Oct. 7 attack.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injury. The sirens came as Israelis were marking the anniversary to the deadliest attack in their country's history. That attack one year ago began with a volley of rockets from Gaza.

Israeli strikes hit locations used by Hamas-run police in central Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli strikes hit two makeshift points used by Hamas-run police at a hospital in central Gaza, wounding a journalist. There were no police present at the sites when they were hit early Monday.

Ali al-Attar, a journalist working for Al Jazeera, was hit by shrapnel while he was inside a tent used by reporters nearby, according to an Associated Press journalist.

Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007, operated a police force numbering in the tens of thousands before the war. They have adopted a low profile after being repeatedly targeted by Israeli strikes but still maintain control on the ground in Gaza.

Lebanon's Hezbollah group pledges to keep fighting Israel

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BEIRUT — The Lebanese Hezbollah militant group on Monday reaffirmed its commitment to support Hamas by fighting Israel along Lebanon's southern border.

The statement came a year after its allies from the Palestinian Hamas group staged a surprise attack into southern Israel, setting off the war, and amid ongoing intense Israeli airstrikes and a ground incursion into Lebanon.

Hezbollah maintains that it will stop its attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, and although its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed. Large swaths of southern and eastern Lebanon have been targeted in Israeli airstrikes.

"We are confident, God willing, in the ability of our resistance to repel the aggression, and in our great and resistant people to be patient, steadfast, and endure until this calamity is removed," Hezbollah said.

The Lebanese government estimates that some 1.2 million people in Lebanon have been displaced, mostly during the escalations less than a month ago.

Hezbollah also praised Iran and other Tehran-backed groups in the region, notably Yemen's Houthis and Iraqi Shiite militias for their attacks on Israel.

Families gather across southern Israel to mark anniversary of Oct 7 attack

BE'ERI, Israel — Across southern Israel on Monday, families gathered in spots where their loved ones were killed during Hamas' attack, marking a year since the assault that sparked the war in Gaza.

They crowded into roadside bomb shelters that became death traps when people seeking shelter from Hamas rockets and militants were sprayed with bullets or struck by grenades.

People were also visiting spots on the side of a main road marked with memorials.

In Kibbutz Be'eri, one of the hardest-hit communities struck in Hamas' attack, where roughly 100 residents were killed and 30 kidnapped on Oct. 7, hundreds marched silently holding signs bearing photos of people still being held captive in Gaza. They held a rally in front of homes destroyed in the attack.

French President Macron says pain of Oct 7 'as vivid as it was a year ago'

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron took to social media on Monday to mark the one-year anniversary since Hamas' attack on Israel.

"The pain remains, as vivid as it was a year ago. The pain of the Israeli people. Ours. The pain of wounded humanity," Macron said on X. "We do not forget the victims, the hostages, or the families with broken hearts from absence or waiting. I send them our fraternal thoughts."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot was in Israel for the anniversary and attended a memorial service at the site of the Nova music festival where hundreds were killed in Hamas' attack.

Barrot, talking to the families of victims, pledged France's support in the face of "the worst anti-Semitic massacre in our history since the Holocaust."

"The joyful dawn of what should have been a day of celebration was suddenly torn apart by unspeakable horror," he said. "France mourns alongside Israel our 48 compatriots victims of barbarism."

Barrot, who is expected to speak with his counterpart Israel Katz later Monday, said that Macron will also meet in Paris with family members of Israelis held hostage today.

Japan expresses condolences on anniversary of Hamas attack

TOKYO — Japan has expressed its condolences to families of victims on the one-year anniversary of the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks and demanded the immediate release of hostages.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters on Monday that Japan is seriously concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip amid continued fighting, the large number of civilian casualties and the ongoing security threats to both Israeli and Palestinian people.

"Japan continues to urge all parties including Israel to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, and strongly urges them to steadily work toward realization of a cease-fire," Hayashi said.

He added that Japan strongly supports mediation efforts by the United States, Egypt and Qatar in achieving negotiations for the release of the hostages and a cease-fire.

Group representing families of hostages announces death of a captive

TEL AVIV, Israel — A group representing the families of Israeli hostages announced on Monday the death

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of a captive whose body is still being held in Gaza.

The Hostages and Families Forum said Idan Shtivi, 28, was captured from the Nova music festival on Oct. 7. He was thought to have been taken alive.

Israeli media reported that he was killed that day and his body was taken into Gaza.

It was not immediately clear how Shtivi's death became apparent, but in previous such announcements, the Israeli military has discovered evidence indicating a hostage's death.

The announcement of Shtivi's death comes as Israelis are marking one year since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, where militants killed 1,200 people and kidnapped 250 others. About 100 remain in captivity, although more than a third of those are said to be dead.

Hundreds gather at Nova music festival site to remember Oct 7 victims

RE'IM, Israel — Hundreds of families and friends of people killed at the Nova music festival gathered Monday at the site of the attack, where nearly 400 were gunned down during Hamas' Oct. 7 assault.

Families gathered around photos of their loved ones, which were arranged in a semicircle around what was the DJ stage. Many lit candles and added mementos or photos, crying and embracing. Overhead, army helicopters circled and constant booms echoed across the area, causing many to flinch.

"We can't understand how a year has passed," said Shimon Busika, whose son, Yarden, 25, was killed at the festival. "It's the most natural place to be, to be here for this moment of silence," he said.

Busika said it took them a long time, piecing together testimony from other survivors, to understand what happened in Yarden's last moments. They now know he was killed around 9:20 near a yellow container at the festival where many others were killed, and they will hold a second minute of silence there at the moment he was killed.

The last sounds of the trance track that was playing at the Nova site on Oct. 7 one year ago stopped abruptly, as hundreds of family members and friends of the more than 300 victims stood in a moment of silence. One woman's piercing wail broke the silence as booms echoed from the fighting in Gaza, just a few kilometers (miles) away.

20 Indonesians who were evacuated from Lebanon arrive in Jakarta

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Twenty Indonesian nationals and a Lebanese evacuated from Lebanon arrived in Jakarta on a commercial flight early Monday and will likely be followed by 20 more in the afternoon, officials said.

President Joko Widodo has called to prioritize the evacuation of Indonesians in Lebanon as hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah escalate and fears of a wider regional war in the Middle East grow.

"I have directed the foreign affairs minister to take immediate action to ensure the safety and protection of our citizens and expedite their evacuation," Widodo said last week.

Indonesia's Embassy in Beirut had prepared evacuation procedures for citizens as part of its contingency planning since August. The Embassy evacuated 25 Indonesian citizens who returned safely to Indonesia last month, said Judha Nugraha, Director of Indonesian Citizen Protection at the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

There are 116 registered Indonesian citizens in Lebanon, most of them students, migrant workers and people married to Lebanese nationals. Many of them have chosen to remain there for various reasons, Nugraha said.

Australian PM Albanese condemns Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement Monday that the day carried "terrible pain" and his government "unequivocally" condemned Hamas' attack on Israel a year ago.

Hamas militants stormed from the blockaded Gaza Strip into nearby Israeli towns on Oct. 7 a year ago, killing dozens and abducting others in an unprecedented surprise attack.

Albanese said that since the attack, Jewish Australians have "felt the cold shadows of antisemitism reaching into the present day — and as a nation we say never again."

"We unequivocally condemn all prejudice and hatred. There is no place in Australia for discrimination against people of any faith," Albanese said.

He added that “every innocent life matters” and the number of civilians killed in the conflict was “a devastating tragedy.”

“Today we reflect on the truth of our shared humanity, of the hope that peace is possible, and the belief that it belongs to all people,” Albanese said.

New Israeli strikes hit Beirut suburbs as Hezbollah claims blasts in Israel’s Haifa

BEIRUT — A new round of airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs late Sunday as Israel intensified its bombardment of northern Gaza and southern Lebanon. Palestinian officials said a strike on a mosque in Gaza killed at least 19 people.

Rocket sirens and blasts were heard in Haifa in northern Israel late Sunday, and Hezbollah claimed the attack.

Israel’s military said at least five projectiles were identified coming from Lebanon and “fallen projectiles” were found in the area. The military showed what appeared to be rubble along a street. The Magen David Adom ambulance service said it was treating a teen with shrapnel injuries to the head and a man who fell from a window due to a blast.

## Israelis, scarred and battling on multiple fronts, mark a year since Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack

By MELANIE LIDMAN and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

RE’IM, Israel (AP) — Israelis were holding vigils and somber ceremonies on Monday to mark a year since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack, the deadliest in the country’s history, which sparked the war in Gaza and scarred Israelis indelibly.

The surprise cross-border attack, which caught Israel unprepared on a major Jewish holiday, shattered Israelis’ sense of security and shook their faith in their leaders and their military.

Its aftershocks still ripple one year later. The war in Gaza rages on and Israel is fighting a new war against Hezbollah, which began attacking Israel on Oct. 8. There is also an escalating conflict with Iran — which backs both Hamas and Hezbollah militant groups — that threatens to drag the region into a far more dangerous conflagration.

And on Monday, Hamas showed that it was still putting up a fight. It launched rockets that set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv, as well as closer to the Gaza border.

In Gaza, which is still buckling under the weight of the ongoing war, no formal commemorative event is planned. The massive destruction and displacement are a constant reminder of the retaliatory Israeli assault on the territory, which has no end in sight.

Israelis were flocking to ceremonies, cemeteries and memorial sites around the country, remembering the hundreds of victims, the dozens of hostages still in captivity and the soldiers wounded or killed trying to save them.

At 6:29 a.m. — the exact minute Hamas launched its attack — the families of those killed at the Nova music festival, joined by Israeli President Isaac Herzog, gathered at the site where almost 400 revelers were gunned down and from where many others were taken hostage.

After briefly playing the same trance music that was blared during the festival, hundreds of family members and friends of the victims stood for a moment of silence. One woman’s piercing wail broke the silence as booms echoed from the fighting in Gaza, just a few kilometers away.

“When we are here, we are near our loved ones. This is the time they danced and fled,” said Sigal Bar-On, whose niece, Yuval Bar-On, 25, and her fiancé Moshe Shuva, 34, were supposed to get married in December 2023.

At 6:31 a.m., four projectiles were launched from Gaza toward the very Israeli communities that came under fierce assault last year, the Israeli military said. The ceremony was not disrupted.

Marking the moment Hamas’ attack began a year ago, the families of hostages still held in Gaza — about 100, a third of whom are said to be dead — gathered near Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Jerusalem residence and stood during a two-minute siren, replicating a custom from the the most solemn dates on



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the Israeli calendar, Holocaust Remembrance and Memorial Day.

"We are here to remind (the hostages) that we haven't forgotten them," said Shiri Albag, whose daughter Liri is among the captives. Her message to Netanyahu: "We won't let you rest until all of them are back, every last one of them," she told the crowd, which hoisted posters bearing the faces of the hostages.

A group representing the families of hostages announced that another captive was dead. Idan Shtivi, 28, was snatched from the Nova music festival and was believed to be alive. Israeli media reported he was killed during the attack and his body was taken into Gaza.

The flags at the Israeli Knesset were lowered to half-staff and an official state ceremony focusing on acts of bravery and hope is set to be aired on Monday evening. The ceremony was prerecorded without an audience — apparently to avoid potential disruptions — in the southern city of Ofakim, where over two dozen Israelis were killed.

But anger at the government's failure to prevent the attack and enduring frustration that it has not returned the remaining hostages prompted the families of those killed and taken captive to hold a separate event in Tel Aviv.

That event had been set to draw tens of thousands of people but was scaled back drastically over prohibitions on large gatherings due to the threat of missile attacks from Iran and Hezbollah.

Hamas' attack, which killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and dragged some 250 into Gaza as hostages, continues to cast a shadow over daily life in Israel. For the dozens of hostages still in captivity, there is no end in sight to their struggle. Border communities have been upended and tens of thousands were displaced. Soldiers are being killed in Gaza and Lebanon. Israel faces ongoing international criticism over its wartime conduct, with two world courts examining its actions.

The war in Gaza has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, displaced most of the territory's 2.3 million population and sparked a humanitarian crisis that has led to widespread hunger. It has also left the tiny coastal enclave ravaged beyond recognition as U.S.-led cease-fire efforts have repeatedly sputtered.

## Prescott throws TD pass to Tolbert with 20 seconds left to lift Cowboys past Steelers, 20-17

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Dak Prescott drifted to his left, then drifted some more. On a seemingly endless night, what was another couple of seconds going to hurt?

With a flick of the wrist as T.J. Watt and the rest of the Pittsburgh defense closed in, the NFL's highest-paid player delivered a money throw to Jalen Tolbert with 20 seconds to go that lifted the Dallas Cowboys to a 20-17 victory early Monday.

Prescott had spent the previous three-plus hours mixing brilliant plays and baffling ones in equal measure, throwing a pair of picks and fumbling once to almost single-handedly keep the sluggish Steelers in the game.

Yet when Dallas (3-2) got the ball back down four with 4:56 remaining, Prescott calmly led the Cowboys 70 yards in 15 plays, even alertly pouncing on a fumble by teammate Rico Dowdle when the ball came squirting free as Dowdle tried to leap into the end zone. The heads-up play gave Dallas two more shots, and after an incompleting, Prescott finished off his 352-yard performance by lifting the injury-ravaged Cowboys to a second straight victory.

"We talk about it, staying neutral, being resilient, understanding there's going to be ups and downs, ebbs and flows," Prescott said. "We just know who we are. (If) we just stay with it, we can come out with a win. This was a great example."

Pittsburgh (3-2) dropped its second consecutive game following a 3-0 start, this one a lethargic performance — particularly on offense — on a night the opening kickoff was delayed nearly 90 minutes due to severe weather.

The sky eventually cleared. The Steelers spent much of the night in a fog, particularly on offense, managing just 226 yards against a defense missing injured stars Micah Parsons and DeMarcus Lawrence.

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"I think the reoccurring thing is just shooting ourselves in the foot," Steelers quarterback Justin Fields said. "Penalties, false starts, it's just coming down to execution."

Pittsburgh got the ball back after Tolbert's go-ahead score, but a lateral-fest went nowhere and the Cowboys poured onto the field in victory in a game that finished a minute shy of 1 a.m.

Dowdle provided the league's worst rushing attack with a boost by running for 87 yards. He also added a sliding 22-yard touchdown reception on the third play of the fourth quarter to cap a 16-play, 90-yard drive that put Dallas 13-10.

It looked like that might be enough until Prescott heaved a deep ball into double coverage looking for the knockout blow with about 10 minutes to play. Instead, it ended up in the arms of Pittsburgh's Joey Porter Jr. and the Steelers slogged their way 63 yards in 12 plays, the last a 6-yard shovel pass from Fields to tight end Pat Freiermuth that gave the Steelers the lead.

Fields threw for 131 yards two scores and added 27 yards rushing but struggled with his accuracy, completing just 15 of 27 passes. With the calf that's sidelined veteran Russell Wilson for five weeks finally healing, Fields' uneven performance gave head coach Mike Tomlin some wiggle room to consider putting Wilson — who won the starting job during training camp — back into the lineup next week in Las Vegas.

"We just missed shots and shot ourselves in the foot again," Fields said.

The Cowboys let multiple chances to create some early breathing room slip away thanks to miscues by Prescott, who fumbled while getting sacked by T.J. Watt and Nick Herbig to end one drive deep in Pittsburgh territory in the first quarter. The half-sack boosted Watt's career total to 100, making the All-Pro the second-fastest player to reach that plateau in NFL history (109 games).

Prescott flubbed another opportunity in the second quarter when he threw late to Cee Dee Lamb in the end zone, giving Pittsburgh cornerback Donte Jackson time to step in front of the pass for an interception and keep the Steelers within striking distance.

It went that way much of the night, with Dallas' miscues — the Cowboys were also penalized 11 times for 87 yards — letting Pittsburgh hang around.

Yet just as he did in his first trip to Pittsburgh as a rookie eight years ago, Prescott engineered another late winning drive to give the Cowboys some momentum after consecutive losses to New Orleans and Baltimore left them shaken.

Behind a battered offensive line on a night Dallas' defense more than held its own without its two cornerstones, Prescott provided a reminder of why he's such an important part of the team's foundation, buying enough time to nudge his team's season in the right direction.

"We have a play call that we love, we're very confident in, regardless of the defense," Prescott said. "Offensive line did a great job, Tolbert came open to the left, just had to make the throw."

## INJURIES

Cowboys: DE Marshawn Kneeland, starting in place of DeMarcus Lawrence, left in the first quarter with a knee injury and did not return.

Steelers: Herbig hobbled off the field in the third quarter with a right hamstring injury that appeared serious. ... OLB DeMarvin Leal went down in the fourth quarter with a stinger, leaving Jeremiah Moon as the only other outside linebacker.

## UP NEXT

Cowboys: Host Detroit on Sunday.

Steelers: At Las Vegas on Sunday.

## LeBron and son Bronny James play together for the first time in a preseason game for the Lakers

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

PALM DESERT, Calif. (AP) — LeBron James grew up without a father, and the top scorer in NBA history has often said he savors every moment and milestone he can experience with his own three children.

When he stepped onto a court Sunday night to play alongside his son, Bronny, for the Los Angeles Lak-

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ers, this moment was more than basketball history to him.

It was the realization of a family dream.

LeBron and Bronny became the first father and son to play in any NBA game together during the first half of the Lakers' preseason contest against Phoenix, playing just over four minutes side-by-side in the second quarter.

"It's pretty cool for the both of us, and especially for our family," LeBron said. "It's definitely a moment that I will never forget."

The James family's remarkable moment coincidentally happened on Bronny's 20th birthday, and it felt like a celebration for the 39-year-old LeBron, who has spoken about his desire for this opportunity since Bronny was in high school.

Although LeBron knows they'll get more chances to play together in the Lakers' upcoming season, the first time on court together in uniform felt "not real" to the four-time NBA champion and 20-time All-Star.

"For a father, it means everything," LeBron said. "For someone who didn't have that growing up, to be able to have that influence on your kids and have that influence on your son, be able to have moments with your son — and the ultimate, to be able to work with your son — that's one of the greatest things that a father could ever hope for or wish for."

Bronny James entered the preseason game as a substitute to begin the second quarter, joining his father on court at Acrisure Arena in the Coachella Valley. Bronny was told by coach JJ Redick before the game that he would be playing alongside LeBron, but the rookie maintained his usual cool demeanor both before and after the moment.

"I was pretty psyched for that," Bronny said.

Although he's much less vocal about the whole situation than LeBron, Bronny is still learning how to navigate an on-court relationship with his father, who has repeatedly insisted that his son can't call him "Dad" on the court.

"I'm always thinking about, 'That's my dad!', because that's literally my dad," Bronny said. "But when I'm playing, he's just my teammate. That's all."

Their minutes together weren't as smooth as they'll be later in the season: Bronny committed two turnovers and LeBron made another in their first two minutes. Shortly after LeBron hit a 3-pointer moments later, LeBron got the ball to Bronny and set a screen for his son's 3-point attempt, but Bronny missed.

"I was really hoping that wing 3 would have gone in," Redick said with a smile. "That would have been a cool moment. But they'll have a lot of moments together, I'm sure."

Bronny came off for a substitute 4:09 into the second quarter, and LeBron came off 25 seconds later at the next dead ball. LeBron had 19 points, five rebounds and four assists in 16 minutes during the first half, and he watched the Lakers' second half from the bench alongside Anthony Davis.

Bronny played about nine minutes in the second half, but didn't score in the Lakers' 118-114 loss to the Suns.

"I just told him, 'Keep getting better,'" LeBron said. "He's young. He wants to continue to improve, and that's what's most important. So every time you get a moment out there, just continue to make winning plays. Continue to learn from his mistakes and make winning plays."

LeBron James is beginning his record-tying 22nd season in the NBA, while LeBron James Jr. — known to all as Bronny — was the Lakers' second-round draft pick this summer. After recovering from cardiac arrest over a year ago, Bronny played just one season at Southern California before entering the draft.

Redick had vowed that the pairing would only happen "in the flow of the game," and wouldn't be "gimmicky."

"I'm thrilled that I get to be a part of this, I really am," Redick said. "It's cool as a basketball fan. I think it speaks to LeBron's longevity, but also his competitive stamina that he's able to still be doing this in Year 22. It speaks to the work that Bronny has put in to get to this point, and really just the fatherly care, and certainly the motherly care from Savannah as well. Bronny, he's such a great kid and a pleasure to be around."

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The 6-foot-2 Bronny is expected to spend much of the upcoming season working on his game with the South Bay Lakers of the G League, but he will almost certainly get to play alongside his 6-foot-9 father in a real game early in the regular season.

The games that count begin Oct. 22 at home against Minnesota.

Although LeBron will turn 40 in late December, the top scorer in NBA history has shown no sign of slowing down with age. LeBron sat out of the Lakers' preseason opener against Minnesota last Friday night, resting up after a full week of training camp following a busy summer. Bronny had two points on 1-for-6 shooting and three blocked shots while playing 16 minutes against the Timberwolves.

LeBron was early in his second NBA season with the Cleveland Cavaliers when he and his high school sweetheart, Savannah Brinson, became parents for the first time in 2004. They had two more children — son Bryce and daughter Zhuri.

LeBron and Bronny have been preparing for the chance to play together ever since LeBron returned from a summer vacation after winning a gold medal with the U.S. team at the Paris Olympics.

The father and son have scrimmaged together repeatedly during workouts at the Lakers' training complex, both as teammates and opponents.

In the regular season, they'll join a short list of fathers and sons who have shared a playing field in North American professional sports. Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr. played together with the Seattle Mariners during parts of the 1990 and 1991 baseball seasons, while hockey great Gordie Howe played with sons Marty and Mark for the Houston Aeros in the WHA and the New England/Hartford Whalers in the WHA and NHL. \_\_\_\_

## Mideast violence is spiraling a year since the Gaza war began

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A year after Hamas' fateful attack on southern Israel, the Middle East is embroiled in a war that shows no signs of ending and seems to be getting worse.

Israel's retaliatory offensive was initially centered on the Gaza Strip. But the focus has shifted in recent weeks to Lebanon, where airstrikes have given way to a fast-expanding ground incursion against Hezbollah militants who have fired rockets into Israel since the Gaza war began.

Next in Israel's crosshairs is archenemy Iran, which supports Hamas, Hezbollah and other anti-Israel militants in the region. After withstanding a massive barrage of missiles from Iran last week, Israel has promised to respond. The escalating conflict risks drawing deeper involvement by the U.S., as well as Iran-backed militants in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

When Hamas launched its attack on Oct. 7, 2023, it called on the Arab world to join it in a concerted campaign against Israel. While the fighting has indeed spread, Hamas and its allies have paid a heavy price.

The group's army has been decimated, its Gaza stronghold has been reduced to a cauldron of death, destruction and misery and the top leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah have been killed in audacious attacks.

Although Israel appears to be gaining the edge militarily, the war has been problematic for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, too.

Dozens of Israeli hostages are languishing in Hamas captivity, and a year after Netanyahu pledged to crush the group in "total victory," remnants of the militant group are still battling in pockets of Gaza. The offensive in Lebanon, initially described as "limited," grows by the day. A full-on collision with Iran is a possibility.

At home, Netanyahu faces mass protests over his inability to bring home the hostages, and to many, he will be remembered as the man who led Israel into its darkest moment. Relations with the U.S. and other allies are strained. The economy is deteriorating.

Here are five takeaways from a yearlong war that has upended longstanding assumptions and turned conventional wisdom on its head.

A region is torn apart by unthinkable death and destruction

A long list of previously unthinkable events have occurred in mind-boggling fashion.



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The Oct. 7 attack was the bloodiest in Israel's history. Young partygoers were gunned down. Covering families were killed in their homes. In all, about 1,200 people died and 250 were taken hostage. Some Israelis were raped or sexually assaulted.

The ensuing war in Gaza has been the longest, deadliest and most destructive in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Gaza health authorities say nearly 42,000 people have been killed — roughly 2% of the territory's entire population. Although they do not give a breakdown between civilians and combatants, more than half of the dead have been women and children. Numerous top Hamas officials have been killed.

The damage and displacement in Gaza have reached unseen levels. Hospitals, schools and mosques — once thought to be insulated from violence — have repeatedly been targeted by Israel or caught in the crossfire. Scores of journalists and health workers have been killed, many of them while working in the line of duty.

Months of simmering tensions along Israel's northern border recently boiled over into war.

A growing list of Hezbollah officials — including the group's longtime leader -- have been killed by Israel. Hundreds of Hezbollah members were killed or maimed in explosions of pagers and walkie-talkies. Israel's ground offensive is its first in Lebanon since a monthlong war in 2006.

Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has displaced tens of thousands of Israelis and over 1 million Lebanese. Israel promises to keep pounding Hezbollah until its residents can return to homes near the Lebanese border; Hezbollah says it will keep firing rockets into Israel until there is a cease-fire in Gaza.

The leaders of Hamas and Israel appear in no rush for a cease-fire

When the war erupted, the days appeared to be numbered for both Netanyahu and Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.

Netanyahu's public standing plummeted as he faced calls to step aside. Sinwar fled into Gaza's labyrinth of tunnels as Israel declared him a "dead man walking."

Yet both men — facing war crimes charges in international courts — remain firmly in charge, and neither appears to be in a rush for a cease-fire.

The end of the war could mean the end of Netanyahu's government, which is dominated by hard-line partners opposed to a cease-fire. That would mean early elections, potentially pushing him into the opposition while he stands trial on corruption charges. Also looming is the prospect of an unflattering official inquiry into his government's failures before and during the Oct. 7 attack.

Fearing that, his coalition has hung together even through mass protests and repeated disagreements with top security officials pushing for a deal to bring home the hostages. After a brief period of post-Oct. 7 national unity, Israel has returned to its divided self — torn between Netanyahu's religious, conservative, nationalist right-wing base and his more secular, middle-class opposition.

Sinwar, believed to be hiding in Gaza's tunnels, continues to drive a hard bargain in hopes of declaring some sort of victory. His demands for a full Israeli withdrawal, a lasting cease-fire and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for scores of hostages have been rejected by Israel — even as much of the international community has embraced them.

With cease-fire efforts deadlocked and Netanyahu's far-right coalition firmly intact, the war could go on for some time. An estimated 1.9 million Palestinians remain displaced in Gaza while an estimated 68 hostages remain captive in Gaza, in addition to the bodies of 33 others held by Hamas.

Bitter enemies experience the limits of force

Early in the war, Netanyahu promised to destroy Hamas' military and governing abilities.

Those goals have been achieved in many ways. Israel says it has dismantled Hamas' military structure, and its rocket barrages have been diminished to a trickle. With Israeli troops stationed indefinitely in Gaza, it is difficult to see how the group could return to governing the territory or pose a serious threat.

But in other ways, total victory is impossible. Despite Israel's overwhelming force, Hamas units have repeatedly regrouped to stage guerrilla-style ambushes from areas where Israel has withdrawn.

Across the Middle East, bitter enemies are witnessing the limits of force and deterrence.

Israel's deepening invasion of Lebanon and repeated strikes on Hezbollah have failed to halt the rockets

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and missiles. Missile and drone attacks by Iran and its allies have only deepened Israel's resolve. Israel is vowing to strike Iran hard after its latest missile barrage, raising the likelihood of a broader, regionwide war.

Without diplomatic solutions, the fighting is likely to persist.

Israel and Gaza will never be the same

Israel is still deeply traumatized as people try to come to terms with the worst day in its history.

The Oct. 7 killings and kidnappings had an outsized impact on a tiny country founded in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Israelis' sense of security was shattered, and their faith in the military was tested like never before.

Photos of Israeli hostages are everywhere, and mass demonstrations are held each week calling on the government to reach a deal to bring them home. The prospect of ongoing war looms over families and workplaces as reserve soldiers brace for repeated tours of duty.

The trauma is far more acute in Gaza – where an estimated 90% of the population remains displaced, many of them living in squalid tent camps.

The scenes have drawn comparisons to what the Palestinian call the Nakba, or catastrophe – the mass displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during the war surrounding Israel's creation in 1948. The Palestinians now find themselves looking at a tragedy of even greater scale.

It remains unclear when displaced Palestinians in Gaza will be able to return home and whether there will be anything to return to. The territory has suffered immense destruction and is littered with unexploded bombs. Children are missing a second consecutive school year, virtually every family has lost a relative in the fighting and basic needs like food and health care are lacking.

After a hellish year, the Palestinians of Gaza have no clear path forward, and it could take generations to recover.

Old formulas for pursuing Mideast peace no longer work

The international community's response to this bloodiest of wars has been tepid and ineffective.

Repeated cease-fire calls have been ignored, and a U.S.-led plan to reinstate the Palestinian Authority in postwar Gaza has been rejected by Israel. It remains unclear who will run the territory in the future or who will pay for a cleanup and reconstruction effort that could take decades.

One thing that seems clear is that old formulas will no longer work. The international community's preferred peace formula – the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel – seems hopelessly unrealistic.

Israel's hard-line government opposes Palestinian statehood, says its troops will remain in Gaza for years to come and has further cemented its undeclared annexation of the West Bank. The internationally recognized Palestinian Authority has been pushed to the brink of irrelevance.

For decades, the United States has acted as the key mediator and power broker in the region – calling for a two-state solution but showing little political will to promote that vision. Instead, it has often turned to conflict management, preventing any side from doing anything too extreme to destabilize the region.

This approach went up in smoke on Oct. 7. Since then, the U.S. has responded with a muddled message of criticizing Israel's wartime tactics as too harsh while arming the Israeli military and protecting Israel against diplomatic criticism. The result: The Biden administration has managed to antagonize both Israel and the Arab world while cease-fire efforts repeatedly sputter.

This approach has also alienated the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, complicating Kamala Harris' presidential aspirations. The warring sides appear to have given up on the Biden administration and are waiting for the Nov. 5 U.S. presidential election before deciding their next moves.

Whoever wins the race will almost certainly have to find a new formula and recalibrate decades of American policy if they want to end the war.

## Gaza is in ruins after Israel's yearlong offensive. Rebuilding may take decades

By JOSEPH KRAUSS and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

The Gaza Strip is in ruins.

There are hills of rubble where apartment blocks stood, and pools of sewage-tainted water spreading disease. City streets have been churned into dirt canyons and, in many places, the air is filled with the stench of unrecovered corpses.

Israel's yearlong offensive against Hamas, one of the deadliest and most destructive in recent history, has killed more than 41,000 people, a little over half of them women and children, according to local health officials. With no end in sight to the war and no plan for the day after, it is impossible to say when — or even if — anything will be rebuilt.

Even after the fighting stops, hundreds of thousands of people could be stuck living in squalid tent camps for years. Experts say reconstruction could take decades.

"This war is destruction and misery. It would make the stones cry out," said Shifaa Hejjo, a 60-year-old housewife living in a tent pitched on land where her home once stood. "Whoever sees Gaza ... It will make them cry."

Israel blames the destruction on Hamas. Its Oct. 7 attack on Israel — in which some 1,200 people were killed and around 250 taken hostage — ignited the war. Israel says Hamas embedded much of its military infrastructure, including hundreds of kilometers (miles) of tunnels, in densely populated areas where some of the heaviest battles were fought.

The fighting left roughly a quarter of all structures in Gaza destroyed or severely damaged, according to a U.N. assessment in September based on satellite footage. It said around 66% of structures, including more than 227,000 housing units, had sustained at least some damage.

If there's a cease-fire, around half of all families "have nowhere to go back to," said Alison Ely, a Gaza-based coordinator with the Shelter Cluster, an international coalition of aid providers led by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The devastation in Gaza rivals front-line towns in Ukraine

Almost as many buildings have been destroyed or damaged in Gaza as in all of Ukraine after its first two years of war with Russia, according to Corey Scher and Jamon Van Den Hoek, U.S.-based researchers who use satellite radar to document the wars' devastation.

To put that into perspective: Gaza is less than half the size of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

The amount of destruction in central and southern Gaza alone, Scher said, is roughly equivalent to what was lost in the front-line town of Bakhmut, the scene of one of the deadliest battles in the Ukraine war and where Russian forces destroyed nearly every building in their path to force Ukrainian troops to withdraw. The destruction in northern Gaza is even worse, he said.

Gaza's water and sanitation system has collapsed. More than 80% of its health facilities — and even more of its roads — are damaged or destroyed.

"I can't think of any parallel, in terms of the severity of damage, for an enclave or a country or a people," Scher said.



**Destruction left by the Israeli air and ground offensive is seen in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, Friday, Sept. 13, 2024.** (AP Photo/Abdel Kareem Hana)

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At the end of January, the World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion of damage — nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the southern border city of Rafah.

'I couldn't tell where people's homes were'

When Israeli ground forces pushed into the southern city of Khan Younis in January, Shifaa Hejjo and her family fled their four-story home with only the clothes they were wearing.

They spent months in various tent camps before she decided to return — and the sight brought her to tears.

Her entire neighborhood had been destroyed, her former home and the roads leading to it lost in a sea of rubble.

"I didn't recognize it," she said. "I couldn't tell where people's homes were."

Around 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced by the war, often multiple times, according to U.N. estimates. Hundreds of thousands have crowded into sprawling tent camps near the coast with no electricity, running water or toilets. Hunger is widespread.

Hejjo lived in a tent in the courtyard of a hospital. Before that, she was in Muwasi, the main tent camp in southern Gaza.

"It smelled bad," she said. "There were diseases spreading."

She said her husband, who was suffering from liver disease, was broken-hearted when he heard their home had been destroyed and he died shortly thereafter.

She was among the first to return after Israeli forces withdrew in April. Her neighbors stayed away, fearful they would find bodies or unexploded bombs.

But for her it was still home.

"It is better to live in my home, where I lived for 37 years, even though it is destroyed," she said.

Hejjo and her children dug through the rubble with shovels and their bare hands, going brick by brick and saving whatever could be reused. Torn clothes were used to feed cooking fires.

Rats had crept in, and swarms of mosquitoes hovered over the ruins. There was broken glass everywhere. They set up a tent fortified by corrugated metal sheeting and some bricks salvaged from her destroyed home. A light drizzle wet their clothes as they slept.

U.N. agencies say unemployment has soared to around 80% — up from nearly 50% before the war — and that almost the entire population is living in poverty. Even those with means would find it nearly impossible to import construction materials because of Israeli restrictions, ongoing fighting and the breakdown of law and order.

There are mountains of rubble, little water and no electricity

The first obstacle to any significant rebuilding is the rubble — mountains of it.

Where houses, shops and office buildings once stood, there are now giant drifts of rubble laced with human remains, hazardous substances and unexploded munitions.

The U.N. estimates the war has left some 40 million tons of debris and rubble in Gaza, enough to fill New York's Central Park to a depth of eight meters (about 25 feet). It could take up to 15 years and nearly \$650 million to clear it all away, it said.

There's also the question of where to dispose of it: The U.N. estimates about five square kilometers (about two square miles) of land would be needed, which will be hard to come by in the small and densely populated territory.

It isn't just homes that were destroyed, but also critical infrastructure.

The U.N. estimates nearly 70% of Gaza's water and sanitation plants have been destroyed or damaged. That includes all five of the territory's wastewater treatment facilities, plus desalination plants, sewage pumping stations, wells and reservoirs.

The employees who once managed municipal water and waste systems have been displaced, and some killed. And fuel shortages have made it difficult to keep operating facilities that are still intact.

The international charity Oxfam said it applied in December for a permit to bring in desalination units,



and pipes to repair water infrastructure. It took three months for Israel to approve the shipment, but it still has not entered Gaza, Oxfam said.

The destruction of sewage networks has left streets flooded with putrid water, hastening the spread of disease.

There has been no central power in Gaza since the opening days of the war, when its sole power plant was forced to shut down for lack of fuel, and more than half of the territory's electrical grid has been destroyed, according to the World Bank.

Can Gaza be rebuilt?

Wealthy Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have said they are only willing to contribute to Gaza's reconstruction as part of a postwar settlement that creates a path to a Palestinian state.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ruled that out, saying he won't allow Hamas or even the Western-backed Palestinian Authority to govern Gaza. He has said Israel will maintain open-ended security control and delegate civilian affairs to local Palestinians. But none are known to have volunteered, and Hamas has threatened to kill anyone who aids the occupation.

Rebuilding Gaza would also require the import of massive amounts of construction supplies and heavy equipment, which Israel is unlikely to allow as long as there's a potential for Hamas to rebuild its militant infrastructure. In any case, Gaza has only a small number of crossings with limited capacity.

The Israeli military body that coordinates civilian affairs in Gaza says it does not restrict the entry of civilian supplies and allows so-called dual-use items that could also be used for military purposes. Israel allowed some construction materials in before the war under what was known as the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, but it was subject to heavy restrictions and delays.

The Shelter Cluster estimates that it would take 40 years to rebuild all of Gaza's destroyed homes under that setup.

For now, aid providers are struggling just to bring in enough basic tents because of the limited number of trucks going into Gaza and the challenges of delivering aid. Efforts to bring in more robust temporary housing are still in the early stages, and no one has even tried to bring in construction materials, according to Ely.

In September, the Shelter Cluster estimated 900,000 people were still in need of tents, bedding and other items to prepare for the region's typically cold and rainy winters.

## **A year after the Hamas attack shattered this Israeli community, going home still feels impossible**

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

KFAR AZA, Israel (AP) — On a sun-dappled day in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, Liora Eilon stood at the spot where her son was killed. She stooped to pick a figurine from the pile of belongings scattered around an abandoned home nearby.

"Every time we come here, Tal leaves us a little message," the 71-year-old said, turning over the plastic soldier in her hands.

It has been a year since Hamas militants stormed into this community within sight of the border fence surrounding Gaza. Eilon's 46-year-old son, Tal, who was the Kfar Aza civilian defense commander, was killed in the early moments of the attack, as he ran to the kibbutz armory to grab a weapon.

Now living in a university dormitory in Israel's north, Liora Eilon wonders if she'll ever return home to this place, seared into Israeli history for that day of mass death, when the militants killed some 1,200 people in southern communities and took about 250 others hostage. The attack sparked an ongoing Israeli campaign in Gaza that has killed more than 41,600 Palestinians and laid waste to much of the territory.

"How can I trust the government who abandoned me here, who betrayed me, promised me that my family was safe here?" she said. "The government wants us to go back to Kfar Aza, but I need more to feel safe."

Only about 50 of Kfar Aza's 1,000 residents have returned. They live among the skeletons of houses

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burned by explosives, riddled with bullet holes or reduced to rubble by tank shells during the battle that raged for days.

The others are scattered in dorms and hotels further north. The Associated Press spoke to a dozen residents who shared feelings of extreme vulnerability to future attack and deep misgivings about Israel's military and government, and the Palestinians on the other side of the fence.

Some wondered whether such a scarred place could ever be lived in at all.

"Are we going to live inside a memorial? Are we going to see a plaque every few meters, he was killed here and he was killed here?" asked Zohar Shpack, 58, who has returned and serves in the civilian defense squad. "I don't know yet."

'It's still the seventh of October'

The seasons have spun by since Oct. 7. Relatively untended, Kfar Aza's orchards have borne new fruit. With few to harvest, soldiers guarding the community have their pick from loads of fresh avocados.

The land still holds traces of the day. On trees hung with fresh pomegranates, some of last year's fruit remains, charred and black like used grenades. Gardener Rafael Friedman says he still finds teeth and bones in the soil when he rakes back the overgrowth — likely remnants of Hamas militants killed in the fighting.

Kfar Aza has always been a close-knit place. It takes just 15 minutes to walk from one end to the other, past neighborhoods, orchards and a soccer pitch. Many residents grew up here and raised families alongside each other.

Now photos of slain young people, couples killed together and hostages are posted everywhere. During the day, former residents like Eilon guide tours, hold memorials and see familiar faces. When night falls, most disappear to hotel rooms to the north.

Every Friday, survivors gather on Shachar Schnorman's porch for dinner, filling the kibbutz with the rare sound of laughter.

"It's the only place where people can talk about the seventh and all the people at the table understand exactly what they are talking about," Schnorman said.

"We do whatever we can to try to build community, to try to show ... that people can live here," he said.

The government says it will rebuild. Meanwhile, it's constructing pre-fabricated houses for residents in another kibbutz, Ruhama, about 15 kilometers (10 miles) away. After two years there, they say authorities want them to return to Kfar Aza.

About two-thirds of the community plan to move into the temporary housing. On a recent tour, some enthusiastically examined the box-like structures. It's a chance, they said, to live together and rebuild on the southern land they're accustomed to.

But some weren't convinced Kfar Aza will be rebuilt and not sure they'd ever feel safe returning.

They want to know why it took so many hours before soldiers arrived at the kibbutz. The military has launched an investigation into what happened, but has not yet released its results. An investigation into the military's failures at neighboring Kibbutz Be'eri found a "lack of command and control, a lack of coordination and a lack of order" among the units that fought there.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has brushed off calls for accountability, saying it will investigate at war's end.

Simona Steinbrecher feels too frozen in time to make a decision now about whether to return. Her daughter, Doron, a veterinary nurse who spent her girlhood in Kfar Aza, was dragged by militants into Gaza on Oct. 7. She is among 66 Israelis still held captive. Hamas is believed to hold the bodies of 35 others.

The 65-year-old Steinbrecher last saw her daughter in a Hamas propaganda video. Doron's skin was pale, her voice weak.

"Without Doron, it's still the seventh of October," her mother said. "And we won't go home until she's home."

The military command structure collapsed when it was needed most

Hostage families and many residents of southern communities are boycotting the government's ceremony commemorating Oct. 7. To them, as long as it fails to bring hostages home and refuses to investigate and take responsibility for its mistakes, it has blood on its hands. Instead, residents of Kfar Aza will hold

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a small tribute and lower the kibbutz flag to half-mast.

Residents said they have nothing but admiration for the troops who fought that day. But they are furious at the military higher-ups, blaming them for a command structure that collapsed when the kibbutz needed it most.

When she recounts the day, Eilon is gripped with fury and astonishment — over 35 hours of horror her family endured and the military's response.

When the sirens began blaring that Saturday morning, Eilon thought it would take the army minutes to arrive, she told the AP as she toured the bullet-riddled remnants of her home.

It took hours.

Her family scrambled into their safe room. A son and daughter muscled the door shut against gunmen trying to get inside. Granddaughters, Gali and Mika, hid under the bed. Eilon got a message saying Tal had gone out to fight.

The five huddled in the saferoom, hearing the attackers' shouts and gunfire, not knowing whether Tal was dead or alive. Israeli troops finally gained control of their house, and Eilon said she saw how scared and confused the young soldiers looked.

Gali shared with them desperate texts from her friends across the kibbutz trying to escape the rampage. "She became a 15-year-old commander of an IDF elite unit," said Eilon, using the acronym for the Israeli military.

Still, the troops didn't evacuate the family. It was only on Sunday afternoon, as militants were hiding out in the house again, that soldiers hustled them out.

As she ran into her backyard, Eilon saw a tank swivel its cannon at her house. It fired, collapsing her home on the militants inside.

Soon after being rescued, Eilon learned Tal was dead.

"I'd known it all along," she said. "But some part of me was hoping that he was injured, that he was unconscious in some hospital."

'They could have saved them'

As the battle still raged, some residents were evacuated early and sped away in army jeeps. Hanan Dann, a young father, recounted passing a cluster of soldiers at a gas station just outside the kibbutz, who looked like they were waiting for orders.

"I wanted to say, there's fighting inside still, there're people dying," he said. "They could have saved them."

Soldiers and militants fought in Kfar Aza for days. By the end, militants had killed 64 civilians and 22 soldiers and dragged 19 hostages into Gaza.

Nearby, in the recesses of the Negev desert, stands a decrepit water tower. It's a remnant of Be'erot Yitzhak, a kibbutz abandoned after a deadly 1948 Egyptian attack during the war that led to Israel's creation.

"Will that be what Kfar Aza looks like 10 years from now?" asked Dann. "Just a stop on the highway I can point out to my kids?"

Even those who want to reinhabit it know Kfar Aza will never be the same.

Shpack, the civilian guard member, said he understands why no one would bring a child here now, pointing to the border fence. Every few minutes, an Israeli warplane drops a bomb on Gaza, puncturing the kibbutz's silence with a loud boom.

"And even once the bombs end, how can you raise him here?" Shpack asked. "How do you explain what happened here?"

For some, the kibbutz's fate is tied to Gaza.

Some want Israel to take a hard line in the future.

Marcus Scharfstein, 29, who lives in the kibbutz, said he won't feel completely safe until Israel reestablishes Jewish settlements in Gaza. Israel unilaterally withdrew its soldiers and some 8,000 Jewish settlers from Gaza in 2005.

"If I will know that in Gaza right now, there are 10, 20 villages of Jewish people," he said, "I will feel in control again," adding he did not feel that way before the Oct. 7 attack.

But others say as long as there is no peace agreement with Palestinians, they will again be on the front lines of another Oct. 7. Some of Gaza's Palestinians once lived in these same arid reaches of what is now southern Israel. Almost no trace is left of their villages after Israeli troops drove them out during the 1948 war.

"We've tried war enough times and it never led to anything good," Eilon said. She wants a new government that will talk to the Palestinians to find "some arrangement for us to live together on the same land." "I'm dreaming for the day with an open fence from here to the sea, with two people living together."

## Tips, overtime, Social Security: A look at Donald Trump's no-tax pledges and what they might cost

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

Donald Trump has pledged to end taxes on everything from tips to Social Security and overtime pay if he's elected to the White House again. But he hasn't detailed how he would fund those ideas and avoid creating a huge budget shortfall, beyond arguing he will usher in an economic boom.

He argues his ideas would improve Americans' personal financial standing and the overall U.S. economy. A debate about the tax code will be a dominant legislative issue next year given that tax cuts Trump signed in 2017 will be set to expire. If he's elected again, Trump could push Congress to enact some or all of his proposals, though that might be difficult if Democrats end up in control of either the House or the Senate.

Estimates from outside economic analyses of the costs of the various tax cuts ranged between nearly \$6 trillion and \$10 trillion over 10 years, depending on which ideas become policy and how they're implemented.

A look at Trump's various tax-related ideas:

'No tax on tips'

In June, Trump announced his plan to exclude workers' tips from federal taxes, saying he got the idea from a waitress at his Las Vegas hotel.

"To those hotel workers and people who get tips, you are going to be very happy, because when I get to office we are going to not charge taxes on tips, people making tips," Trump said, adding: "We're going to do that right away, first thing in office."

Trump made the announcement in Nevada, a key battleground state with six electoral votes and home to the highest concentration of tipped workers in the country. Nevada has an average of 25.8 waiters and waitresses per 1,000 jobs. President Joe Biden won the state in 2020, but the Trump campaign hopes to put it in play this fall.

Trump has not specified whether he wants to exempt tips from just income taxes or from the payroll tax — which funds Medicare and Social Security — as well.

Vice President Kamala Harris has echoed Trump's call for no taxes on tips, making a pledge that would apply to hospitality and service industry workers at a Nevada rally of her own two months after her GOP opponent's announcement.

Social Security tax cuts

Trump has also pledged tax cuts for older Americans, posting on Truth Social in July that "SENIORS SHOULD NOT PAY TAX ON SOCIAL SECURITY!"

The challenge is that taxes on Social Security benefits help to pay for the program. The loss of revenue could mean that Social Security would be unable to pay out its full benefits in 2033, two years ahead of the current estimate, according to Brendan Duke of the liberal Center for American Progress.

According to the Social Security Administration, recipients must currently pay federal income taxes if combined income — 50% of the benefit amount plus any other earned income — is higher than \$25,000 annually if filing individually, or \$32,000 if filing jointly.

While in the Senate, Harris co-sponsored a bill that would have required the wealthy to pay higher Social Security taxes and made benefits more generous for some. The White House has said her views on the program are similar to Biden's, but Harris hasn't talked in detail about Social Security during her campaign.

Overtime taxes



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Trump has also said he would support legislation to eliminate taxes on overtime pay.

"That gives people more of an incentive to work," Trump said in September at a campaign rally in Tucson, Arizona. "It gives the companies a lot, it's a lot easier to get the people."

Harris has not said if she would also call for cuts to taxes of overtime pay.

Corporate tax rates

Trump's plans include proposed breaks for businesses, too. He's called for lowering the U.S. corporate tax rate from 21% to 15%, but only for companies that produce in the U.S.

"We're putting America first," Trump said. "This new American industrialism will create millions and millions of jobs."

As president, Trump signed legislation in 2017 that cut the corporate tax rate to 21% from 35%.

Harris has said she believes that big corporations and the ultra-wealthy should pay more in taxes — including a 28% rate for corporations — and wants to use those revenues to help spur the construction of 3 million homes and offer tax breaks for parents.

SALT

Ahead of a September rally on Long Island, Trump pledged that he would "get SALT back," suggesting he would eliminate a cap on state and local tax deductions that were part of tax cut legislation he signed into law in 2017.

The so-called SALT cap has led to bigger tax bills for many residents of New York, New Jersey, California and other high-cost, high-tax states, and is an important campaign issue in those states, particularly among those New York Republicans serving in districts Biden won.

Some Democrats have pushed to lift the \$10,000 cap, a move many Republicans have said they oppose. Some, including Trump's former GOP primary foe Nikki Haley, have called for making the 2017 tax cuts permanent. Some of that notion is enshrined in Republicans' 2024 platform, although the permanence provision specifically calls out portions "that doubled the standard deduction, expanded the Child Tax Credit, and spurred Economic Growth for all Americans."

Harris has not said that she would try to preserve Trump-era tax cuts, which are set to run out at the end of next year. But, like Biden, she has vowed not to raise taxes for Americans who earn less than \$400,000 annually.

Tariffs

Angling to bring back more overseas jobs and manufacturing to the U.S., Trump has said repeatedly that he wants higher tariffs on imported goods, and has said the idea wouldn't increase inflation. He has floated the idea of a universal tariff as high as 20% on all imports and even higher tariffs on Chinese products and on U.S. companies that move factory jobs overseas.

In a recent speech at the Economic Club of New York, Trump suggested that tariffs could be used to solve seemingly unrelated challenges such as the rising cost of child care in the U.S., as part of a broader promise that tariffs can raise trillions of dollars to fund his agenda without those costs being passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices. That's a view with which many economists disagree since tariffs directly raise the prices of purchasing goods.

Particularly as it relates to the U.S. auto industry, it's a notion he called for again recently in Savannah, Georgia, where Trump said he'd put a 100% tariff on every car imported from Mexico. Calling for a "new American industrialism," Trump suggested that the only way to avoid those charges would be for an automaker to build the cars in the U.S.

Harris has described Trump's ideas for tariffs as a "sales tax" on American households that could cost a typical family roughly \$4,000 annually.

## Turning Point wants to revolutionize how Republicans turn out voters. Some are skeptical

By DAN MERICA and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Turning Point’s representatives have made two things clear in meetings with state and local Republican leaders — Donald Trump has blessed their conservative organization to help lead his get-out-the-vote effort, and local party officials ought to use the group’s new voter mobilization app.

Both prospects terrify fellow Republicans.

Soaring to prominence after Trump’s unexpected 2016 win, Turning Point earned a reputation for hosting glitzy events, cultivating hard-right influencers and raising prodigious sums of money while enriching the group’s leaders. They’ve had far less success helping Republicans win, especially in their adopted home state of Arizona.

Now the organization has leveraged its ties to Trump to expand its influence in a way that could be potentially lucrative. Turning Point has sought to lead an effort to remake the GOP’s get-out-the-vote effort based on the theory that there are thousands of Trump supporters who rarely vote but could be persuaded to in this year’s election. And they are pitching their new mobile app as vital to this effort’s success.

The Associated Press obtained an unvarnished look at how Turning Point is promoting its strategy by obtaining several recordings of presentations made by its representatives to state and local Republican officials. In those presentations, Turning Point operatives honed in on churchgoers and hunters, citing statistics that purport to show how few of each group cast ballots in 2020. Their argument, which is questioned by critics, is if groups like Turning Point target such groups, Republicans will likely sweep the swing states for Trump, the recordings show.

The decision by Trump to rely on untested groups such as Turning Point could have sweeping implications for November’s election. Turning Point says it’s operating statewide in Arizona and Wisconsin, two must win states for Trump. It’s also working in two competitive House districts, one in Michigan and another in Nevada, that could also help tip the balance in the presidential race.

The difference of just a few thousand votes in battleground states could mean victory or defeat for candidates up and down the ballot. It’s also a risky move that dismisses independent voters, a small but significant portion of the electorate.

“Their strategy is bad. They know how to talk MAGA, they know how to message the base,” said Tyler Montague, a Republican strategist from Arizona and a longtime Turning Point critic, referring to the former president’s Make America Great Again movement. “But they literally don’t know what to say to a swing voter. They alienate these people.”

A Turning Point spokesman rebuffed such criticism, saying the group is performing an important role for conservative candidates. “We did this because we knew conservatives need” a way to identify and turn out voters, said spokesman Andrew Kolvet. He added that the effort reflects lessons Turning Point has learned from defeats Republicans suffered in Arizona in 2022 and elsewhere and how Democrats have embraced similar tactics.

From influencers to organizers

Turning Point was founded in suburban Chicago over a decade ago by Charlie Kirk, then a recent high school graduate, to nurture the next generation of conservatives. But as its leaders age out of the youth movement, the group’s brand of far-right politics hasn’t been very persuasive to Arizona’s general election voters, who rejected conservative candidates for statewide office in 2022, including gubernatorial nominee Kari Lake.

Turning Point’s leaders showed a degree of introspection after those losses. Not only had they failed to mobilize GOP voters, but Kirk had also amplified Trump’s false claims that voting by mail was rife with fraud, putting Republicans at a strategic disadvantage by discouraging a convenient way to cast a ballot.

They reversed course for the 2024 election and launched a campaign to raise \$108 million for a “ballot chasing” operation that would expand beyond Arizona to key presidential swing states, where they are canvassing reliably Republican areas and encouraging low-turnout voters to cast a ballot by mail. Kolvet,

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Turning Point's spokesman, said they have so far raised tens of millions of dollars as part of this effort.

Turning Point's get-out-the-vote work is part of a broader effort to elect Trump that includes 30,000 volunteers recruited by the former president's campaign, as well as work being done by such outside groups as Elon Musk's America PAC, which has paid at least \$45 million to voter canvassing firms this year.

Musk's PAC took over as the leader of voter mobilization efforts in Wisconsin, a position that Turning Point had previously held. Turning Point will now play a secondary role in the state, while directing much of their focus to Arizona, a development previously reported by Politico.

A straightforward, if questionable, strategy

The group's strategy isn't complicated: Its operatives believe there is a well of untapped conservative voters who have not backed Trump in recent elections. To get Trump back to the White House, they believe the best path is to activate those voters. The strategy appears to mostly ignore independents — or less hardened Republicans — because Turning Point's brand of hard-right politics is less likely to appeal to them.

In the recordings obtained by the AP, Turning Point's representatives fully embraced that strategy and believe it would have helped them win past elections and ensure victory in November.

"If we just have an ounce of ballot chasing, just in Arizona," Republicans would have won all their races, Matthew Martinez, a Turning Point official, said at a June event in Detroit, referring to the practice of convincing people to vote early while reaching out to those who haven't cast ballots

Martinez added that Republicans faced the same challenges in Michigan, Wisconsin and Georgia. In all three states, Martinez said, "Republicans are sincerely disengaged."

Kirk wrote this month that Turning Point had assigned a full-time staffer or volunteer to chase every low-propensity voter on their target list in Arizona.

Experts in voting patterns are doubtful Turning Point's efforts to mobilize infrequent Trump-inclined voters will do much to affect the election. Turnout in the past two presidential elections has already drawn a record number of voters to the polls, the experts noted, meaning the pool of voters they are seeking to turn out is small and particularly unlikely to vote.

"You had the highest turnout in Michigan in those presidential election years than you've ever had before. It's doubtful they're going to get any more," said Bernie Porn, a nonpartisan pollster who's worked in the state for more than 30 years.

'Just download the app'

For over a year, Turning Point has aggressively pitched its new voter mobilization app — a potentially lucrative venture that, if successful, critics believe could strengthen its grasp on key Republican Party machinery. In meetings with state and local Republican leaders, Turning Point operatives lean heavily into their close affiliation with Trump, who is a regular speaker at Turning Point conferences, according to the recordings obtained by the AP.

"We now are an official arm of the Trump campaign," Turning Point operative Luke Malace told the members of the Monroe County Republican Party in Michigan earlier this year while urging the group to become a paying "client" of the company that made the Turning Point app.

Martinez, at the June event, told attendees concerned about helping Republicans win that the best way to help was to use the app.

"Sir, just download the app — and everybody in here, too, download the app," said Martinez, a Turning Point official.

The app was designed by Superfeed, a company with direct ties to Turning Point's leaders. Tyler Bowyer, Turning Point's chief operating officer, sits on the company's board and was formerly the company's chairman, business filings show. Kirk's mother-in-law also serves on Superfeed's board.

It's unclear how much the company has made from apps it designed for Turning Point and over a dozen other GOP and conservative groups, including state parties in Arizona, Nevada and Delaware. Recent state and federal campaign finance disclosures do not show any payments to Superfeed.

In private, a Turning Point representative did not seek to disguise the connection between the app and their group.

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"It's all in-house," Malace told the county party in Michigan.

Malace did not respond to a request for comment. Superfeed officials also did not respond to a request for comment.

Kolvet, the Turning Point spokesman, said that Malace mischaracterized the organization's relationship with the app maker. Turning Point does not receive any money earned by Superfeed, and the conservative group isn't "financially involved" with the app maker, Kolvet said.

"Our relationship with Superfeed is we are a client and they are a vendor," Kolvet said.

The app and Turning Point's data plans draw criticism

Some Republicans told the AP that there are major issues with Turning Point's app, which has minimal protections to secure voters' personal information.

The platform allows anyone who uses it, including an AP reporter, to quickly gain access to detailed personal information, including voters' full names, addresses, ages and cellphone numbers. That's a departure from the security protocols adopted by other such platforms. Such protocols are designed to safeguard personal information and prevent rival parties from stealing data or spying on a campaign's strategy.

But not everyone is critical of the app.

Matt Brown, chair of the Yakima County Republican Party in Washington, said he learned about the app during a talk at a Turning Point conference in December. Brown was wowed and decided to become a Superfeed client, and began using the app a few months ago. He declined to say how much the party pays Superfeed, but praised Turning Point's new focus.

"They are doing the work that no one else wants to do and the party is not doing it," Brown said of the group.

The app is seen by Republican strategists as the latest example of Turning Point becoming more focused on using data as a way to strengthen its Republican role in the future. And those strategists are concerned that Turning Point is not playing by established traditions of sharing data within the Republican ecosystem and is unprepared to do the kind of work needed to elect Republicans in swing states.

"We have had good ground games in the past, really good ground games. And they were run by the RNC," said Ron Kaufman, a longtime Republican who is so closely associated with the Republican National Committee he has been referred to as "Mr. RNC" in the past. "It doesn't make sense to turn that operation over to an outside organization that doesn't have the institutional knowledge that the committee has."

Turning Point, for example, is not sharing its voter data with Data Trust, a Republican information clearinghouse that allows GOP campaigns and groups to use data collected by groups throughout the party's ecosystem. Other Republican operatives said Turning Point is not sharing data with key statewide campaigns in the battlegrounds they are prioritizing.

Such data is the "lifeline" of modern electioneering, said Montague, the Arizona Republican who has been critical of Turning Point.

He said the group's foray into providing other groups data is further evidence it is attempting "to take over the party at the national level."

Turning Point's spokesman denied the charge, saying the group was not seeking to take over the GOP and blaming their lack of sharing with the Data Trust on not having access when they started this work.

"It's just craziness," Kolvet said. "We don't want the job."

## US spends a record \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since last Oct. 7

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States has spent a record of at least \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report for Brown University's Costs of War project, released on the anniversary of Hamas' attacks on Israel.

An additional \$4.86 billion has gone into stepped-up U.S. military operations in the region since the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, researchers said in findings first provided to The Associated Press. That includes



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the costs of a Navy-led campaign to quell strikes on commercial shipping by Yemen's Houthis, who are carrying them out in solidarity with the fellow Iranian-backed group Hamas.

The report — completed before Israel opened a second front, this one against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, in late September — is one of the first tallies of estimated U.S. costs as the Biden administration backs Israel in its conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon and seeks to contain hostilities by Iran-allied armed groups in the region.

The financial toll is on top of the cost in human lives: Hamas militants killed more than 1,200 people in Israel a year ago and took others hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed nearly 42,000 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count.

At least 1,400 people in Lebanon, including Hezbollah fighters and civilians, have been killed since Israel greatly expanded its strikes in that country in late September.

The financial costs were calculated by Linda J. Bilmes, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, who has assessed the full costs of U.S. wars since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and fellow researchers William D. Hartung and Stephen Semler.

Here's a look at where some of the U.S. taxpayer money went:

Record military aid to Israel

Israel — a protege of the United States since its 1948 founding — is the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in history, getting \$251.2 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars since 1959, the report says.

Even so, the \$17.9 billion spent since Oct. 7, 2023, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is by far the most military aid sent to Israel in one year. The U.S. committed to providing billions in military assistance to Israel and Egypt each year when they signed their 1979 U.S.-brokered peace treaty, and an agreement since the Obama administration set the annual amount for Israel at \$3.8 billion through 2028.

The U.S. aid since the Gaza war started includes military financing, arms sales, at least \$4.4 billion in drawdowns from U.S. stockpiles and hand-me-downs of used equipment.

Much of the U.S. weapons delivered in the year were munitions, from artillery shells to 2,000-pound bunker-busters and precision-guided bombs.

Expenditures range from \$4 billion to replenish Israel's Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems to cash for rifles and jet fuel, the study says.

Unlike the United States' publicly documented military aid to Ukraine, it was impossible to get the full details of what the U.S. has shipped Israel since last Oct. 7, so the \$17.9 billion for the year is a partial figure, the researchers said.

They cited Biden administration "efforts to hide the full amounts of aid and types of systems through bureaucratic maneuvering."

Funding for the key U.S. ally during a war that has exacted a heavy toll on civilians has divided Americans during the presidential campaign. But support for Israel has long carried weight in U.S. politics, and Biden said Friday that "no administration has helped Israel more than I have."

U.S. military operations in the Middle East

The Biden administration has bolstered its military strength in the region since the war in Gaza started, aiming to deter and respond to any attacks on Israeli and American forces.

Those additional operations cost at least \$4.86 billion, the report said, not including beefed-up U.S. military aid to Egypt and other partners in the region.

The U.S. had 34,000 forces in the Middle East the day that Hamas broke through Israeli barricades around Gaza to attack. That number rose to about 50,000 in August when two aircraft carriers were in the region, aiming to discourage retaliation after a strike attributed to Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. The total is now around 43,000.

The number of U.S. vessels and aircraft deployed — aircraft carrier strike groups, an amphibious ready group, fighter squadrons, and air defense batteries — in the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has varied during the year.

The Pentagon has said another aircraft carrier strike group is headed to Europe very soon and that could

increase the troop total again if two carriers are again in the region at the same time.

The fight against the Houthis

The U.S. military has deployed since the start of the war to try to counter escalated strikes by the Houthis, an armed faction that controls Yemen's capital and northern areas, and has been firing on merchant ships in the Red Sea in solidarity with Gaza. The researchers called the \$4.86 billion cost to the U.S. an "unexpectedly complicated and asymmetrically expensive challenge."

Houthis have kept launching attacks on ships traversing the critical trade route, drawing U.S. strikes on launch sites and other targets. The campaign has become the most intense running sea battle the Navy has faced since World War II.

"The U.S. has deployed multiple aircraft carriers, destroyers, cruisers and expensive multimillion-dollar missiles against cheap Iranian-made Houthi drones that cost \$2,000," the authors said.

Just Friday, the U.S. military struck more than a dozen Houthi targets in Yemen, going after weapons systems, bases and other equipment, officials said.

The researchers' calculations included at least \$55 million in additional combat pay from the intensified operations in the region.

## **New analysis suggests national debt could increase under Harris, but it would surge under Trump**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — No one is likely to be happy with the projected higher deficits laid out in a new analysis of Kamala Harris' and Donald Trump's economic plans.

The analysis released Monday by the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget suggests a Harris presidency could increase the national debt over 10 years by \$3.5 trillion. That's even though the vice president's campaign insists her proposed investments in the middle class and housing would be fully offset by higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy. Her campaign policy guide states that Harris is "committed to fiscal responsibility — making investments that will support our economy, while paying for them and reducing the deficit at the same time."

The same analysis says former President Trump's ideas could heap another \$7.5 trillion onto the debt and possibly as much as \$15.2 trillion. That's even though he suggests growth would be so strong under his watch that no one would need to worry about deficits.

The 34-page report released by the fiscal watchdog group puts a spotlight on the issue of government borrowing that will confront the winner of November's election. Total federal debt held by the public now tops \$28 billion and is expected to keep climbing as revenues can't keep up with the growing costs of Social Security, Medicare and other programs. The analysis noted that the expense of servicing that debt in dollar terms has "eclipsed the cost of defending our nation or providing health care to elderly Americans."

Drawing on the candidates' speeches, campaign documents and social media posts, the analysis warns bluntly: "Debt would continue to grow faster than the economy under either candidates' plans and in most scenarios would grow faster and higher than under current law."

Neither candidate has meaningfully stressed budget deficit reduction in their pitch to voters. But multiple analyses show a clear difference of Harris being much more fiscally responsible than Trump.

Harvard University professor Jason Furman, who was the top economist in the Obama White House, estimated in an opinion article for The Wall Street Journal that Harris' plans could cut deficits by \$1.5 trillion or raise them by \$1.5 trillion. Meanwhile, his estimates show that Trump's plans would increase deficits by \$5 trillion, though that figure does not include his plans to charge no taxes on overtime pay and scrap the limit on deductions of state and local taxes.

There are other estimates by The Budget Lab at Yale and the Penn Wharton Budget Model that also show Harris would be better at keeping the deficit in check.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget analysis estimates that Harris' policy ideas could add \$3.5 trillion to the national debt through 2035. That conclusion depends on its treatment of how much

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various programs could cost.

It forecasts that Harris would implement \$4.6 trillion in tax reductions, including extensions of some of the expiring 2017 tax cuts that Trump signed into law and tax breaks for parents and no taxes on tipped income for hospitality workers. Roughly \$4 trillion in higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy would be insufficient to cover the total cost of her agenda and the additional interest on the debt that it could generate.

Still, the analysis notes that its numbers depend on various interpretations of what Harris has said. It's possible that Harris' agenda would add nothing to baseline deficits, but the report also said it might plausibly add as much as \$8.1 trillion in debt in what appears to be a worse-case scenario.

By contrast, Trump's ideas would likely add another \$7.5 trillion to the debt. His \$2.7 trillion in tariff revenues would be unable to cover \$9.2 trillion in tax cuts and additional expenditures such as \$350 billion to secure the border and deport unauthorized immigrants.

But the analysis includes other possibilities that show far higher deficits under Trump. If his tariffs raised less money and there were higher costs for his mass deportations and tax breaks, the national debt could jump by \$15.2 trillion.

On the other hand, if the tariffs raised \$4.3 trillion and there were no costs tied to deportations, Trump's plans could only increase the debt by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years.

## **For US adversaries, Election Day won't mean the end to efforts to influence Americans**

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Soon, the ballots will be cast, the polls will close and a campaign marked by assassination attempts, animosity and anxiety will come to an end. But for U.S. adversaries, the work to meddle with American democracy may be entering its most critical phase.

Despite all the attention on efforts to spread disinformation in the months before the Nov. 5 election, the hours and days immediately after voting ends could offer foreign adversaries like Russia, Iran and China or domestic extremist groups the best chance to mess with America's decision.

That's when Americans will go online to see the latest results or share their opinions as the votes are tabulated. And that's when a fuzzy photo or AI-generated video of supposed vote tampering could do its most damage, potentially transforming online outrage into real-world action before authorities have time to investigate the facts.

It's a threat taken seriously by intelligence analysts, elected officials and tech executives, who say that while there's already been a steady buildup of disinformation and influence operations, the worst may be yet to come.

"It's not like at the end of election night, particularly assuming how close this election will be, that this will be over," said Sen. Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee. "One of my greatest concerns is the level of misinformation, disinformation that may come from our adversaries after the polls close could actually be as significant as anything that happens up to the closing of the polls."

Analysts are blunter, warning that a particularly effective piece of disinformation could be devastating to public confidence in the election if spread in the hours after the polls close, and if the group behind the campaign knows to target a particularly important swing state or voting bloc.

Possible scenarios include out-of-context footage of election workers repurposed to show supposed fraud, a deepfake video of a presidential candidate admitting to cheating or a robocall directed at non-English speakers warning them not to vote.

When a false or misleading claim circulates weeks before the election, there's time for local election officials, law enforcement or news organizations to gather the facts, correct any falsehoods and get the word out. But if someone spreads a deceptive video or photo designed to make a big chunk of the electorate distrust the results the day after the election, it can be hard or even impossible for the truth to catch up.

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It happened four years ago, when a drumbeat of lies about the 2020 results spurred the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Often, those arrested on accusations of trying to interfere with the transfer of power have cited debunked election fraud narratives that circulated shortly after Election Day.

An especially close election decided in a handful of swing states could heighten that risk even further, making it more likely that a rumor about suitcases of illegal ballots in Georgia, to cite an example from 2020, could have a big impact on perceptions.

President Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump in 2020 wasn't especially close, and no irregularities big enough to affect the result were found — and yet false claims about vote-rigging were still widely believed by many supporters of the Republican, who's running for president again.

The relatively long run-up to Inauguration Day on Jan. 20 gives those looking to sow doubt about the results ample time to do so, whether they are propaganda agencies in Moscow or extremist groups in the U.S. like the Proud Boys.

Ryan LaSalle, CEO of the cybersecurity firm Nisos, said he won't feel relief until a new president is sworn in without any serious problems.

"The time to stay most focused is right now through the peaceful transfer of power," LaSalle said. "That's when real-life activities could happen, and that's when they would have the greatest chance of having an impact on that peaceful transfer."

Another risk, according to officials and tech companies, is that Russia or another adversary would try to hack into a local or state election system — not necessarily to change votes, but as a way of making voters question the security of the system.

"The most perilous time I think will come 48 hours before the election," Microsoft President Brad Smith told lawmakers on the Senate Intelligence Committee last month. The hearing focused on American tech companies' efforts to safeguard the election from foreign disinformation and cyberattacks.

Election disinformation first emerged as a potent threat in 2016, when Russia hacked into the campaign of Democrat Hillary Clinton and created networks of fake social media accounts to pump out disinformation.

The threat has only grown as social media has become a leading source of information and news for many voters. Content designed to divide Americans and make them mistrust their own institutions is no longer tied only to election seasons. Intelligence officials say Russia, China and other countries will only expand their use of online disinformation and propaganda going forward, a long-range strategy that looks beyond any one election or candidate.

Despite the challenges, election security officials are quick to reassure Americans that the U.S. election system is impervious to any attack that could alter the outcome of the vote. While influence operations may seek to spread distrust about the results, improvements to the system make it stronger than ever when it comes to efforts to change votes.

"Malicious actors, even if they tried, could not have an impact at scale such that there would be a material effect on the outcome of the election," Jen Easterly, director of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, told The Associated Press.

## **Harris talks abortion and more on 'Call Her Daddy' podcast as Democratic ticket steps up interviews**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris opened a media blitz by the Democratic ticket on Sunday by appearing on the popular "Call Her Daddy" podcast about abortion, sexual abuse and other issues that resonate with women, working in some digs at her GOP opponent along the way.

In the roughly 40-minute interview, taped last week, the Democratic presidential nominee spoke about the grit it takes to be a woman seeking public office, the toughness her mother instilled in her and the importance of reproductive rights in this election.

The program is the most-listened-to podcast for women and it has millions of fans tuning in for talk about relationships, sex, mental health and women's empowerment. The discussion with Harris was on



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the tame side for the show, with the vice president keeping her message focused, in part, on the value of ignoring people who have doubted her.

"I don't hear no. I urge all the 'Daddy Gang,' don't hear no, just don't hear it," she said. "I think it's really important not to let other people define you."

The interview was part of a broader media outreach effort by Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, as the Democrats seek to boost their support in the final 30 days of the campaign against Republicans Donald Trump and JD Vance.

Harris has been criticized for not doing more media interviews.

On the podcast, the Democratic nominee largely stuck to her usual messaging on abortion, and said that in her travels she's seen that even people who have strong opposition to abortion tell her they "are now seeing what's happening and saying 'Hmm, I didn't intend for all this to happen'" when they see the health problems arising since *Roe v. Wade* was repealed.

Harris dinged Trump as she has in recent speeches, leaning in on his integrity and saying "this guy is full of lies" when he talks about abortion and other issues. She dismissed Vance's comments about "childless cat ladies" as "mean, and mean-spirited."

Trump has continued to stress that abortion policy should be left to the states and that doctors have a duty to provide emergency care to women whose lives are in danger. Vance, for his part, has said his remark about childless women were misinterpreted and that he wants to support families.

There's much more to come from Harris and Walz.

Harris has taped an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that will air Monday night. She is booked Tuesday on Howard Stern's satellite radio show, ABC's "The View" and "The Late Show" with Stephen Colbert on CBS. Walz will be on Jimmy Kimmel's ABC show on Monday.

In a "60 Minutes" excerpt released Sunday, Harris navigated around a question about whether Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "a real close ally," saying that "The better question is: Do we have an important alliance between the American people and the Israeli people? And the answer to that question is yes."

And nearly a week after his verbal stumbles in the only vice presidential debate, Walz used his debut campaign appearance on a Sunday news show to try to fend off criticism of his stand on abortion rights and to "own up" to past misstatements.

Walz's Fox appearance also touched on the turmoil in the Middle East, with anchor Shannon Bream pressing the Minnesota governor on whether Israel has a right to preemptively attack Iran's nuclear and oil facilities in response to Tehran's firing of missiles against Israel. It was a question that Walz did not fully answer during his debate this past week with Vance, an Ohio senator.

Walz said Sunday that "specific operations will be dealt with at the time" and he spoke of "consequences for what they do."

He said Israel has a right to defend itself and that Harris worked with Israel this past week to repel the Iranian attack. President Joe Biden said last week he would not support an Israeli strike on sites related to Tehran's nuclear program.

Walz defended a law that he signed as governor to ensure abortion protections, saying it "puts the decision with the woman and her health care providers."

Trump has said he would not sign a national abortion ban into law, and during the interview Sunday, Walz was asked whether he was calling that "a flat-out lie."

"Yes ... of course," Walz said.

Walz also faced questions in the interview about misstatements related to his military service, drunken driving arrest, infertility treatment for his family and claims to have been in Hong Kong during the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in China.

"I will own up when I misspeak," Walz said. "I will own up when I make a mistake."

He said he believes voters are more concerned by the fact that Vance could not acknowledge during their debate that Trump lost the 2020 election to Biden and that there could be restrictions on the infertil-

ity treatments, like the intrauterine insemination that his wife, Gwen, received.

"I think they're probably far more concerned with that than my wife and I used IUI to have our child and that Donald Trump would restrict that," Walz said. "So I think folks know who I am."

Bream noted that Trump has come out in support of fertility treatments, even as he has said that abortion questions should be decided by states.

## More Black and Latina women are leading unions — and transforming how they work

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press

Women make up roughly half of U.S. labor union membership, but representation in top level union leadership positions has lagged, even in female-dominated industries and particularly for women of color.

But Black and Latina women are starting to gain ground, landing top positions at some of the biggest unions in the U.S. That has translated into wins at the bargaining table that focus more attention on family-friendly benefits like parental leave and health care coverage, as well as protections against sexual harassment.

Often when people think about unions, "they think of a white guy in a hard hat. But in fact, studies show that about two-thirds of working people who are covered by a union contract are women and/or people of color," said Georgetown University labor historian Lane Windham.

Indeed, hospitality union UNITE HERE's membership is majority women and people of color. And last month, more than 12,000 of them across six states went on strike to push for wage increases, fair workloads and more affordable health care under the leadership of Gwen Mills, who in June became the first woman to be elected union president in its 130-year history.

Data from the U.S. Department of Labor shows that Black and Latina women experience a particularly wide gender pay gap. They also face intersectional headwinds of both racism and sexism in their careers, making them even more attuned to inequities in the workplace and motivating them to increasingly step up the fight as union leaders.

Black and Latina women are driving labor union growth in the U.S. amid a decades-long decline in membership. In 2023, Black women's union membership rate notched a slight bump from 10.3% to 10.5%, while Latinas went up from 8.5% to 8.8%. But that's still more than white men and women as well as Asian women, whose membership experienced a decrease during the same time period.

Momentum for Black and Latina women rising into labor union leadership has picked up in the last five years. But the work began long before that by "our foremothers who laid this foundation and have been pushing and kicking those doors open for decades," according to Liz Shuler, who in June 2022 became the first woman in history to lead the AFL-CIO, a federation of 60 national and international labor unions.

"The #MeToo movement, I think, has really emboldened women across the board, including in labor, to say, you know what? I'm not going to be sitting on the sidelines," Shuler said. The pandemic also put a spotlight on essential workers such as nurses, service workers and care workers, who are predominantly women and minorities.

Today's examples of diverse union leaders include Becky Pringle, a Black woman who leads the National Education Association, the nation's largest union; Bonnie Castillo, the first Latina to serve as executive director of National Nurses United; and April Verrett, who in May became the first Black woman to lead the Service Employees International Union, which says about 60% of its service worker members are people of color, and two-thirds are women.

"If we want to build power on those who are perceived to have the least amount of power, then we've got to create space for our people of those identities to be able to lead," Verrett told The Associated Press.

But while female-dominated fields have made strides in union leadership diversity, "there is still a long way to go" for unions in male-dominated fields like building and manufacturing trades, said University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign labor historian Emily Twarog. Despite some headway through DEI and apprenticeship programs, "there hasn't been that kind of culture shift."

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Men still have a higher union membership rate than women — 10.5% versus 9.5% respectively, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. And workplace sexual harassment and biases still run rampant in many places, including for Chicago-based Lisa Lujano, a journey-level carpenter and member of Carpenters Union Local 13.

Things might get better, she said, if more Black and Latina women held union leadership roles and were more aware of their memberships' needs, including safety gear that fits women's bodies, or parental leave, which Lujano does not have.

"I think we would get more respect out in the field," she said.

Here's a look at the impact women union leaders have had at the bargaining table:

## Education

Teachers' unions have in recent years begun to use their collective power to push for wraparound benefits to help their surrounding community in a method known as "bargaining for the common good," which aims to go beyond wages and benefits at the bargaining table and tackle wider social issues. The Chicago Teachers Union, for example, included demands for affordable housing citywide during a strike in 2019 — in part organized by then-vice president Stacy Davis Gates, who is now CTU president.

Some teachers' unions are also fighting for racial justice, including the United Teachers Los Angeles, which demanded that the school district stop subjugating students to random metal detector screenings and locker checks without cause, decrying the practice as disproportionately targeting Black and minority students.

"We need to address the inequities that are built into every single social system in this country that determine whether our students come to school ready to learn every day," Pringle said. "It was our female leaders, particularly our leaders of color, who really leaned into that."

## Hospitality

Unionized hotel workers like Maria Mata have made strides toward fighting the rampant sexual harassment in their profession.

Mata, a Hispanic housekeeper and UNITE HERE union leader at the W San Francisco, helped lead a successful push at her hotel for workers to be equipped with panic buttons in 2018 to summon security help in an emergency, now implemented by several major hotel chains.

"We needed more protection," especially during night shifts spent cleaning entire floors alone, explained Mata, who has herself twice experienced sexual harassment on the job. "It's very dangerous."

It's also vital for the women doing the work to also sit at the bargaining table, "because sometimes as women, we need something that the men don't know," said Mata, whose hotel is currently in bargaining for a new contract.

## Flight attendants

Keturah Johnson in 2022 became the first queer woman of color to serve as international vice president for flight attendant union AFA-CWA, which is led by Sara Nelson and represents over 50,000 flight attendants at 20 airlines.

People often think of a flight attendant as "a white woman with hair put up in a bun," and Black flight attendants frequently face microaggressions from managers about their appearance, Johnson said. "It's happened to me many times because of my natural hair."

And for gender nonconforming flight attendants, being able to wear a uniform that reflects their gender identity is important, Johnson said. So she's leading the fight to update uniform standards to be gender inclusive and permit natural hairstyles, which has resulted in several airlines making changes.

United Airlines, for instance, updated its uniform standards to include gender neutral options in 2021, and Alaska Airlines management adopted gender neutral uniform and appearance standards in 2022, according to AFA. Frontier allowed natural hairstyles for flight attendants in 2021, and this year implemented standardized pricing for all uniforms regardless of size or gender.

"We're not just there to serve Diet Coke. And so it's our job to make sure that flight attendants are represented and seen just as they are," Johnson said. "The world is changed now."

## Israel intensifies bombardment of Gaza and southern Lebanon ahead of Oct. 7 anniversary

By WAFAA SHURAFI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — A new round of airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs late Sunday as Israel intensified its bombardment of northern Gaza and southern Lebanon in a widening war with Iran-allied militant groups across the region. Palestinian officials said a strike on a mosque killed at least 19 people.

A year after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, Israel has opened a new front in Lebanon against Hezbollah, which has traded fire with Israel since the war in Gaza began.

Israel's military confirmed a Hezbollah attack on the northern city of Haifa, though it was not immediately clear whether shrapnel from "fallen projectiles" was from rockets or interceptors. Hezbollah said it tried to hit a nearby naval base. The Magen David Adom ambulance service said it treated 10 people, most of them hurt by shrapnel.

Israel also has vowed to strike Iran after a ballistic missile attack on Israel last week. The widening conflict risks further drawing in the United States, which has provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Israel. Iran-allied militant groups in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have joined in with long-distance strikes on Israel.

Israel is on high alert ahead of memorial events for the Oct. 7 attack, while rallies continue around the world marking the anniversary.

### Israel bombards southern Beirut

Beirut's skyline lit up again late Sunday with new airstrikes, a day after Israel's heaviest bombardment of the southern suburbs known as the Dahiyeh since it escalated its air campaign on Sept. 23. It was not immediately clear if there were casualties.

Israel confirmed the strikes and says it targets Hezbollah. The militant group, the strongest armed force in Lebanon, has called its months of firing rockets into Israel a show of support for the Palestinians.

A separate Israeli strike earlier Sunday in the town of Qamatiyeh southeast of Beirut killed six people, including three children, Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported more than 30 strikes overnight into Sunday, while Israel's military said about 130 projectiles had crossed from Lebanon into Israeli territory.

"It was very difficult. All of us in Beirut could hear everything," resident Haytham Al-Darazi said. Another resident, Maxime Jawad, called it "a night of terror."

One strike killed three sisters and their aunt in the coastal village of Jiyyeh. "This is a civilian home, and the biggest evidence is those martyred are four women," said a neighbor, Ali Al Hajj.

Last week, Israel launched what it called a limited ground operation into southern Lebanon after a series of attacks killed longtime Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and most of his top commanders. The fighting is the worst since Israel and Hezbollah fought a month-long war in 2006.

At least 1,400 Lebanese, including civilians, medics and Hezbollah fighters, have been killed and 1.2 million driven from their homes. Israel says it aims to drive the militant group from its border so tens of thousands of Israeli citizens can return home.

The Israeli military is now setting up a forward operating base close to a U.N. peacekeeping mission on the border in southern Lebanon, a U.N. official told The Associated Press. The base puts peacekeepers at risk, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

UNIFIL, created to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon after Israel's 1978 invasion, refused the Israeli military's request to vacate some of its positions ahead of the ground incursion.

### New evacuation orders in northern Gaza

An Israeli strike hit a mosque where displaced people sheltered near the main hospital in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah. Another four were killed in a strike on a school-turned-shelter near the town. The military said both strikes targeted militants. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital morgue.

Israel's military announced a new air and ground offensive in Jabaliya in northern Gaza, home to a refu-



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gee camp dating to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. Israel has carried out several operations there only to see militants regroup. The military said three soldiers were severely wounded in Sunday's fighting in northern Gaza.

Israel reiterated its call for the complete evacuation of heavily destroyed northern Gaza, where up to 300,000 people are estimated to have remained.

"We are in a new phase of the war," the military said in leaflets dropped over the area. "These areas are considered dangerous combat zones." A later statement said three projectiles were identified crossing from northern Gaza into Israeli territory, with no injuries reported.

Frantic residents fled again. "Since Oct. 7 to the present day, this is the 12th time that I and my children, eight individuals, have been homeless and thrown into the streets and do not know where to go," said one, Samia Khader.

The Civil Defense — first responders operating under the Hamas-run government — said it recovered three bodies, including a woman and a child, after a strike hit a home in the Shati refugee camp.

Residents mourned. Imad Alarabid said on Facebook an airstrike on his Jabaliya home killed a dozen family members, including his parents. Hassan Hamd, a freelance TV journalist whose footage had aired on Al Jazeera, was killed in shelling on his home in Jabaliya. Al Jazeera reporter Anas al-Sharif confirmed his death.

Nearly 42,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the war began, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. It does not say how many were fighters, but says a little over half were women and children.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people in the Oct. 7 attack and took another 250 hostage. They still hold around 100 captives, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

U.K. advises against travel while France seeks partial arms embargo on Israel

The United Kingdom on Sunday advised its citizens against non-essential travel to Israel due to the violent clashes in the Mideast. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office also advised against all travel in parts of northern and southern Israel, most of the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

Last week the UK advised its citizens against all travel to Lebanon.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday reiterated his call for a partial arms embargo on Israel, which had prompted an angry response from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Netanyahu had described such calls by Macron as a "disgrace." Macron's office insisted that "France is Israel's unfailing friend" and called Netanyahu's remarks "excessive."

Later on Sunday, Netanyahu's office said the two leaders had spoken and agreed to promote "a dialogue" on the matter. Macron's office called the discussion "frank" and said both leaders "accepted their divergence of views."

## Over 6,000 people in Haiti leave their homes after gang attack killed dozens

By PIERRE-RICHARD LUXAMA and ELÉONORE HUGHES Associated Press

SAINT-MARC, Haiti (AP) — Nearly 6,300 people have fled their homes in the aftermath of an attack in central Haiti by heavily armed gang members that killed at least 70 people, according to the U.N.'s migration agency.

Nearly 90% of the displaced are staying with relatives in host families, while 12% have found refuge in other sites including a school, the International Organization for Migration said in a report last week.

The attack in Pont-Sondé happened in the early hours of Thursday morning, and many left in the middle of the night.

Gang members "came in shooting and breaking into the houses to steal and burn. I just had time to grab my children and run in the dark," said 60-year-old Sonise Mirano on Sunday, who was camping with hundreds of people in a park in the nearby coastal city of Saint-Marc.

Bodies lay strewn on the streets of Pont-Sondé following the attack in the Artibonite region, many of them killed by a shot to the head, Bertide Harace, spokeswoman for the Commission for Dialogue, Rec-

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conciliation and Awareness to Save the Artibonite, told Magik 9 radio station on Friday.

Initial estimates put the number of those killed at 20 people, but activists and government officials discovered more bodies as they accessed areas of the town. Among the victims was a young mother, her newborn baby and a midwife, Herace said.

Prime Minister Garry Conille vowed that the perpetrators would face the full force of the law in comments in Saint-Marc on Friday.

"It is necessary to arrest them, bring them to justice, and put them in prison. They need to pay for what they have done, and the victims need to receive restitution," he said.

The U.N. Human Rights Office of the Commissioner said in a statement that it was "horrified by Thursday's gang attacks."

The European Union also condemned the violence in a statement on Friday, which it said marked "yet another escalation in the extreme violence these criminal groups are inflicting on the Haitian people."

Haiti's government deployed an elite police unit based in the capital of Port-au-Prince to Pont-Sondé following the attack and sent medical supplies to help the area's lone, and overwhelmed, hospital.

Police will remain in the area for as long as it takes to guarantee safety, Conille said, adding that he didn't know whether it would take a day or a month. He also appealed to the population, saying "the police cannot do it alone."

Gang violence across Artibonite, which produces much of Haiti's food, has increased in recent years. Since that uptick, Thursday's attack is one of the biggest massacres.

Similar ones have taken place in the capital of Port-au-Prince, 80% of which is controlled by gangs, and they typically are linked to turf wars, with gang members targeting civilians in areas controlled by rivals. Many neighborhoods are not safe, and people affected by the violence have not been able to return home, even if their houses have not been destroyed.

More than 700,000 people — more than half of whom are children — are now internally displaced across Haiti, according to the International Organization for Migration in an Oct. 2 statement. That was an increase of 22% since June.

Port-au-Prince hosts a quarter of the country's displaced, often residing in overcrowded sites, with little to no access to basic services, the agency said.

Those forced to flee their homes are mostly being accommodated by families, who have reported significant difficulties, including food shortages, overwhelmed healthcare facilities, and a lack of essential supplies on local markets, according to the agency.

## How important is Wisconsin? Trump's now visited 4 times in 8 days

By SCOTT BAUER and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

JUNEAU, Wis. (AP) — Donald Trump on Sunday visited Wisconsin for the fourth time in eight days as his campaign showers attention on a pivotal state where Republicans fret about his ability to match Democrats' enthusiasm and turnout machine.

"They say that Wisconsin is probably the toughest of the swing states to win," Trump said in his opening remarks at an airplane hangar in a rural Juneau where the overflow crowd spilled out on to the tarmac. "I don't think so."

Voters in Wisconsin are already casting absentee ballots and in-person early voting begins Oct. 22. Trump stood on stage for nearly two hours, touching the third rail of Wisconsin politics by overlapping with a Green Bay Packers game, drawing derision from Democrats. But that didn't stop thousands of people from sticking with Trump as he urged supporters to begin to vote by mail and early, when the time comes, so they turn out "in record numbers."

"If we win Wisconsin, we win the presidency," Trump said.

Wisconsin is perennially tight in presidential elections but has gone for the Republicans just once in the past 40 years, when Trump won the state in 2016. A win in November could make it impossible for Democratic nominee Kamala Harris to take the White House.

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"In the political chatter class, they're worried," said Brandon Scholz, a retired Republican strategist and longtime political observer in Wisconsin who voted for Trump in 2020 but said he is not voting for Trump or Harris this year. "I think Republicans are right to be concerned."

Trump won the state in 2016 over Democrat Hillary Clinton by fewer than 23,000 votes and lost to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020 by just under 21,000 votes.

On Tuesday, Trump made his first-ever visit to Dane County, home to the liberal capital city of Madison, in an effort to turn out the Republican vote even in the state's Democratic strongholds. Dane is Wisconsin's second most-populous and fastest-growing county; Biden received more than 75% of the vote four years ago.

"To win statewide you've got to have a 72-county strategy," former Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, said at that event.

Juneau is a town of 2,000 about 50 miles north of Madison in Dodge County, which Trump won in 2020 with 65% of the vote.

Early arrivals filled the hangar, far exceeding the available seating. One large banner behind the bleachers inside said "Vote Early."

"Make sure we turn out because guess what, I've been to Madison," said U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald, who is from Juneau, at the event. "I've been to liberal Madison and they're going to show up. We need to do the same thing because we are the firewall to keep this country independent and free."

Jack Yuds, chairman of the county Republican Party, said support for Trump is stronger in this part of the state than it was in 2016 or 2020.

"I can't keep signs in," Yuds said. "They want everything he's got. If it says Trump on it, you can sell it."

Trump's campaign and outside groups supporting his candidacy have outspent Harris and her allies on advertising in Wisconsin, \$35 million to \$31 million, from when she became a candidate on July 23 through Oct. 1, according to the media-tracking firm AdImpact.

Harris and outside groups supporting her candidacy had more advertising time reserved in Wisconsin from Oct. 1 through Nov. 5, more than \$25 million compared with \$20 million for Trump and his allies.

The Harris campaign has 50 offices across 43 counties with more than 250 staff members in Wisconsin, said her spokesperson Timothy White. The Trump campaign said it has 40 offices in the state and dozens of staffers.

Harris rallied supporters in Madison in September at an event that drew more than 10,000 people. On Thursday, she made an appeal to moderate and disgruntled conservatives by holding an event in Ripon, the birthplace of the Republican Party, along with former U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, one of Trump's most prominent Republican antagonists.

Harris and Trump are focusing on Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, the "blue wall" states that went for Trump in 2016 and flipped to Biden in the next election.

While Trump's campaign is bullish on its chances in Pennsylvania as well as the Sunbelt states, Wisconsin is seen as more of a challenge.

"Wisconsin, tough state," said Trump campaign senior adviser Chris LaCivita, who worked on Republican Sen. Ron Johnson's winning reelection campaign in 2022.

"I mean, look, that's going to be a very tight — very, very tight, all the way to the end. But where we are organizationally now, comparative to where we were organizationally four years ago, I mean, it's completely different," LaCivita said.

He also cited Michigan as more of a challenge. "But again, these are states that Biden won and carried and so they're going to be brawls all the way until the end and we're not ceding any of that ground."

The candidates are about even in Wisconsin, based on a series of polls that have shown little movement since Biden dropped out in late July. Those same polls also show high enthusiasm among both parties.

Mark Graul, who ran then-President George W. Bush's 2004 campaign in Wisconsin, said the number of campaign visits speaks to Wisconsin's decisive election role.

The key for both sides, he said, is persuading infrequent voters to turn out.

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"Much more important, in my opinion, than rallies," Graul said.

Mark Seelman, from Watertown, said the energy and size of the crowd sends a message that Trump is strong in Wisconsin.

"Everybody's into it," he said during Trump's speech. "It's time for a change."

## Pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli crowds rally across the world on the eve of Oct. 7 anniversary

By SYLVIE CORBET and GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Crowds were participating in pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli protests and memorial events across Europe, North Africa and Asia on Sunday on the eve of the first anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel.

Sunday's events followed massive rallies that took place Saturday in several European cities, including London, Berlin, Paris and Rome. Other events are scheduled through the week, with an expected peak on Monday, the date of the anniversary.

At a march in Berlin, near the Brandenburg Gate, hundreds of pro-Israeli demonstrators set off up the famed Unter den Linden behind a banner that read "Against all antisemitism," accompanied by a police escort.

With many Israeli flags waving over head, some Jewish leaders led a song about "shalom" — peace — while marchers chanted "Free Gaza from Hamas!" and "Bring them home," referring to hostages still held in the Gaza Strip.

Thousands gathered in Paris for a Jewish memorial event featuring speakers and artists paying tribute to those killed in the Oct. 7 attack and stand with those still in captivity.

Ayelet Samerano, mother of Jonathan Samerano, who died after he was shot and kidnapped on Oct. 7 at the Supernova festival, said "we are a united people. Together we are strong ... no enemy will bring us down. With this unity and strength, we will bring our loved ones home."

In London, thousands gathered in Hyde Park in a similar memorial event. The crowds chanted "Bring them home" and waved Israeli flags and placards with the faces of hostages still held by Hamas.

Around a thousand people gathered in Brazil's capital Brasilia for a pro-Israel demonstration, responding to a joint call from Israeli ambassador Daniel Zohar Zonshine and the Council of Evangelical Pastors in Brazil's Federal District.

Demonstrators in cars and motorbikes gathered at Television Tower in central Brasilia and then headed to the Ministries Esplanade, where they prayed for the victims of Oct. 7.

### Massive protests

Meanwhile, people took to the streets from Pakistan to Morocco in massive pro-Palestinian demonstrations.

In Morocco's capital, Rabat, thousands marched by the parliament and called on the government to revoke its 2020 agreement formalizing the country's ties with Israel.

Abdelilah Miftah, from Casablanca, said Palestinians and Lebanese were now facing "Israeli arrogance."

"Israel is not respecting any laws and is waging an aggressive war against them," Miftah said.

The protest in Rabat was among the largest in months. Morocco's government has spoken out against the war in Gaza but retained its ties with Israel.

In the southern Pakistani city of Karachi, a massive pro-Palestinian rally was organized by the country's largest religious political party, Jamaat-e-Islami. Its chief, Hafiz Naeem Ur Rehman, said the protest "is to wake up the world. ... This protest is to tell the U.S. that it is supporting terrorists."

Earlier on Sunday in Australia, thousands of people rallied in support of Palestinians and Lebanon. A pro-Israeli rally also took place in Melbourne.

Samantha Gazal said she came to the rally in Sydney "because I can't believe our government is giving impunity to a violent extremist nation and has done nothing. ... We're watching the violence play out on livestream, and they're doing nothing."

In Melbourne, supporters of Israel held up posters showing Israeli hostages who are still missing.



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"We feel like we didn't do anything to deserve this," said Jeremy Wenstein, one of the participants. "We're just supporting our brothers and sisters who are fighting a war that they didn't invite."

## Heightened security alerts

Security forces in several countries warned of heightened levels of alert in major cities, amid concerns that the escalating conflict in the Middle East could inspire new terror attacks in Europe or that some of the protests could turn violent.

France's interior minister was to hold a special security meeting on Sunday evening to assess the "terror threat," his office said.

On Sunday, Italy's Premier Giorgia Meloni expressed her "full solidarity" with police, the day after security forces used tear gas and water cannons to disperse violent demonstrators in Rome.

Meloni firmly condemned clashes between a few pro-Palestinian demonstrators and law enforcement officers, saying it was "intolerable that dozens of officers are injured during a demonstration."

Thirty police officers and four protesters were hurt in clashes at the pro-Palestinian march in Rome Saturday, local media said. In Rome's central Piazzale Ostiense, hooded protesters threw stones, bottles and even a street sign at the police, who responded using water cannons and tear gas.

Pope Francis, celebrating his Sunday Angelus prayer from the Vatican, issued a new appeal for peace "on every front." Francis also urged his audience not to forget the many hostages still held in Gaza, asking for "their immediate liberation."

The pope called for a day of prayer and fasting on Monday, the first anniversary of the attack.

## Risk of a regional escalation

On Oct. 7 last year, Hamas launched a surprise attack into Israel, killing 1,200 Israelis, taking 250 people hostage and setting off a war with Israel that has shattered much of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

More than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed since then in Gaza, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between fighters and civilians. It says more than half were women and children.

Nearly 100 Israeli hostages remain in Gaza, with fewer than 70 believed to be alive. Israelis have experienced attacks — missiles from Iran and Hezbollah, explosive drones from Yemen, fatal shootings and stabbings — as the region braces for further escalation.

In late September, Israel shifted some of its focus to Hezbollah, which holds much of the power in parts of southern Lebanon and some other areas of the country, attacking the militants with exploding pagers, airstrikes and, eventually, incursions into Lebanon.

## What to know about fighting in Lebanon and Gaza

Associated Press undefined

Israel launched a new air and ground offensive in northern Gaza Sunday, hours after pounding Beirut's southern suburbs in the heaviest bombardment since it stepped up its pursuit of the Hezbollah militant group last month.

The intensified campaign on two fronts, including an overnight strike on a Gaza mosque that killed 19, came as Israel remained on high alert ahead of memorial events to mark the surprise attack a year ago that triggered the ongoing war.

About 1,200 people were killed and 250 others were taken hostage when Hamas militants swept into southern Israel from Gaza. In the months since, more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between fighters and civilians. It says more than half were women and children.

In recent weeks, Israel has significantly expanded its targeting of Hezbollah and its stronghold in southern Lebanon.

Israel has also promised to retaliate against Iran, which backs both Hamas and Hezbollah, after it fired a barrage of missiles at the country last week.

Here's what to know:

What's the status of Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip?

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An Israeli strike hit a mosque in central Gaza early Sunday where displaced people were sheltering, killing at least 19, Palestinian officials said. Another four were killed in a strike on a school-turned-shelter near the town.

The Israeli military said both strikes targeted militants, without providing evidence. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital morgue. Hospital records showed that those killed at the mosque were all men.

The Israeli military announced a new air and ground offensive in Jabaliya, in northern Gaza, home to a refugee camp dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. Israel has carried out several large operations there during the past year, only to see militants regroup.

The military said three soldiers were severely wounded in Sunday's fighting in northern Gaza.

What's the latest on Israel's operations in Lebanon?

Airstrikes rocked the southern suburbs of Beirut overnight as Israel targeted what it said were Hezbollah militant sites.

Some strikes set off a series of explosions, suggesting that ammunition stores were hit. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the area was hit by more than 30 strikes.

Hezbollah, the strongest armed force in Lebanon, began firing rockets into Israel almost immediately after Hamas' attack last October, calling it a show of support for the Palestinians.

But tensions in the region have soared since Israel ramped up its fight against Hezbollah last month, killing longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah and most of his top commanders and launching what it says is a limited ground operation in southern Lebanon. The fighting is the worst since Israel and Hezbollah fought a month-long war in 2006.

U.N. refugee agency chief Filippo Grandi said during a visit to Beirut Sunday that Lebanon is seeing a "major displacement crisis" and that some of the strikes have violated international law.

Nearly 2,000 people have been killed in Lebanon in the latest conflict, according to the country's health ministry. Government officials estimate that the fighting has forced 1.2 million people from their homes.

What's happening in Israel and beyond as the anniversary of last October's attack approaches?

A day before the anniversary of last October's attack, crowds joined both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli protests and memorial events across Europe, North Africa and Asia.

Sunday's events follow massive rallies that took place Saturday in several European cities, including London, Berlin, Paris and Rome.

In Israel, a stabbing and shooting attack at the central bus station in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba left one person dead and 10 wounded, according to first responders. Police said the woman killed was a border police officer. They did not identify the assailant but said they were treating it as a terror attack.

In northern Israel, police said rockets fired from Lebanon caused heavy damage in the town of Ma'alot Tarshiha. Israeli media showed images of a makeshift structure outside a home in the town engulfed by fire. There were no reports of injuries.

The Israeli military said dozens of rockets and numerous drones entered Israeli territory from Lebanon on Sunday, most were intercepted or fell in open areas.

Where do relations stand between Israel, the U.S. and its other key allies?

French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday reiterated his call for a partial arms embargo on Israel, drawing anger from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a statement, Macron's office said he favors a halt to arms exports for use in Gaza because a cease-fire is needed to stop the mounting violence and "clear the way to the political solutions needed for the security of Israel and the whole Middle East."

Macron's earlier, similar remarks led Netanyahu to release a statement in which he referred to such calls as a "disgrace." Macron's office insisted that "France is Israel's unfailing friend" and called Netanyahu's remarks "excessive."

Later on Sunday the two leaders indicated they had spoken and agreed to promote "a dialogue" on the matter. Macron's office called it a "frank" discussion and said both leaders "accepted their divergence of views, as well as their desire to be well understood by each other."

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Vice President Kamala Harris said that the U.S. was dedicated to supplying Israel with the military aid needed to protect itself. But in excerpts from a taped interview with CBS' '60 Minutes' released Sunday, she said the Biden administration would continue pushing Israel to end the war.

"And we're not going to stop in terms of putting that pressure on Israel and in the region, including Arab leaders," she said.

## **US disaster relief chief blasts false claims about Helene response as a 'truly dangerous narrative'**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's top disaster relief official said Sunday that false claims and conspiracy theories about the federal response to Hurricane Helene — spread most prominently by Donald Trump — are "demoralizing" aid workers and creating fear in people who need recovery assistance.

"It's frankly ridiculous, and just plain false. This kind of rhetoric is not helpful to people," said Deanne Criswell, who leads the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "It's really a shame that we're putting politics ahead of helping people, and that's what we're here to do. We have had the complete support of the state," she said, referring to North Carolina.

Republicans, led by the former president, have helped foster a frenzy of misinformation over the past week among the communities most devastated by Helene, promoting a number of false claims, including that Washington is intentionally withholding aid to people in Republican areas.

Trump accused FEMA of spending all its money to help immigrants who are in the United States illegally, while other critics assert that the government spends too much on Israel, Ukraine and other foreign countries.

"FEMA absolutely has enough money for Helene response right now," Keith Turi, acting director of FEMA's Office of Response and Recovery said. He noted that Congress recently replenished the agency with \$20 billion, and about \$8 billion of that is set aside for recovery from previous storms and mitigation projects.

There also are outlandish theories that include warnings from far-right extremist groups that officials plan to bulldoze storm-damaged communities and seize the land from residents. A falsehood pushed by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., asserts that Washington used weather control technology to steer Helene toward Republican voters in order to tilt the presidential election toward Democrat Kamala Harris.

Criswell said on ABC's "This Week" that such baseless claims around the response to Helene, which caused catastrophic damage from Florida into the Appalachian mountains and a death toll that rose Sunday to at least 230, have created a sense of fear and mistrust from residents against the thousands of FEMA employees and volunteers on the ground.

"We've had the local officials helping to push back on this dangerous -- truly dangerous narrative that is creating this fear of trying to reach out and help us or to register for help," she said.

President Joe Biden said in a statement Sunday that his administration "will continue working hand-in-hand with local and state leaders -- regardless of political party and no matter how long it takes."

Meantime, FEMA is preparing for Hurricane Milton, which rapidly intensified into a Category 1 storm on Sunday as it heads toward Florida.

"We're working with the state there to understand what their requirements are going to be, so we can have those in place before it makes landfall," she said.

## **'Joker 2' stumbles at box office amid poor reviews from audiences and critics**

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

"Joker: Folie à Deux" is the No. 1 movie at the box office, but it might not be destined for a happy ending.

In a turn of events that only Arthur Fleck would find funny, the follow-up to Todd Phillips' 2019 origin story about the Batman villain opened in theaters nationwide this weekend to a muted \$40 million, ac-

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According to studio estimates Sunday, less than half that of its predecessor. The collapse was swift and has many in the industry wondering: How did the highly anticipated sequel to an Oscar-winning, billion-dollar film with the same creative team go wrong?

Just three weeks ago, tracking services pegged the movie for a \$70 million debut, which would still have been down a fair amount from "Joker's" record-breaking \$96.2 million launch in Oct. 2019. Reviews were mixed out of the Venice Film Festival, where it premiered in competition like the first movie and even got a 12-minute standing ovation.

But the homecoming glow was short-lived, and the fragile foundation would crumble in the coming weeks with its Rotten Tomatoes score dropping from 63% at Venice to 33% by its first weekend in theaters. Perhaps even more surprising were the audience reviews: Ticket buyers polled on opening night gave the film a deadly D CinemaScore. Exit polls from PostTrak weren't any better. It got a meager half star out of five possible.

"That's a double whammy that's very difficult to recover from," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "The biggest issue of all is the reported budget. A \$40 or \$50 million opening for a less expensive movie would be a solid debut."

"Joker: Folie à Deux" cost at least twice as much as the first film to produce, though reported figures vary at exactly how pricey it was to make. Phillips told Variety that it was less than the reported \$200 million; Others have it pegged at \$190 million. Warner Bros. released the film in 4,102 locations in North America. About 12.5% of its domestic total came from 415 IMAX screens.

Internationally, it's earned \$81.1 million from 25,788 screens, bringing its total global earnings estimate to \$121.1 million. In the next two weeks, "Joker 2" will also open in Japan and China.

Second place went to Universal and DreamWorks Animation's "The Wild Robot," which added \$18.7 million in its second weekend, bringing its domestic total to nearly \$64 million. Globally, it's made over \$100 million. Warner Bros.' "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" took third place in weekend five, Paramount's "Transformers One" landed in fourth and Universal and Blumhouse's "Speak No Evil" rounded out the top five.

The other big new release of the weekend, Lionsgate's "White Bird," flopped with just \$1.5 million from just over 1,000 locations, despite an A+ CinemaScore.

Overall, the weekend is up from the same frame last year, but "Joker's" start is an unwelcome twist for theater owners hoping to narrow the box office deficit.

Phillips and star Joaquin Phoenix have said they aspired to make something as "audacious" as the first film. The sequel added Lady Gaga into the fold, as a Joker superfan, and delved further into the mind of Arthur Fleck, imprisoned at Arkham and awaiting trial for the murders he committed in the first. It's also a musical, with elaborately imagined song and dance numbers to old standards. Gaga even released a companion album called "Harlequin," alongside the film.

In his review for The Associated Press, Jake Coyle wrote that "Phillips has followed his very antihero take on the Joker with a very anti-sequel. It combines prison drama, courthouse thriller and musical, and yet turns out remarkably inert given how combustible the original was."

The sequel has already been the subject of many think pieces, some who posit that the sequel was deliberately alienating fans of the first movie. In cruder terms, it's been called a "middle finger." But fans often ignore the advice of critics, especially when it comes to opening their wallets to see revered comic book characters on the big screen.

"They took a swing for the fences," Dergarabedian said. "But except for a couple of outliers, audiences in 2024 seem to want to know what they're getting when they're going to the theater. They want the tried and true, the familiar."

It has some high-profile defenders too: Francis Ford Coppola, who last week got his own D+ CinemaScore for his pricey, ambitious and divisive film "Megalopolis," entered the Joker chat with an Instagram post.

"@ToddPhillips films always amaze me and I enjoy them thoroughly," Coppola wrote. "Ever since the wonderful 'The Hangover' he's always one step ahead of the audience never doing what they expect."

"Megalopolis," meanwhile, dropped a terminal 74% in its second weekend with just over \$1 million, bringing its total just shy of \$6.5 million against a \$120 million budget.



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Deadline editor Anthony D'Alessandro thinks the problem started with the idea to make the Joker sequel a musical. "No fan of the original movie wanted to see a musical sequel," he wrote on Saturday.

The first film was also divisive and the subject of much discourse, then about whether it might send the wrong message to the wrong type of person. And yet people still flocked to see what the fuss was about. "Joker" went on to pick up 11 Oscar nominations, including best picture and best director, and three wins. It also made over \$1 billion and was the highest-grossing R-rated film of all time, until this summer when Marvel's "Deadpool & Wolverine" took the crown.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Joker: Folie à Deux," \$40 million.
2. "The Wild Robot," \$18.7 million.
3. "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice," \$10.3 million.
4. "Transformers One," \$5.4 million.
5. "Speak No Evil," \$2.8 million.
6. "Sam and Colby: The Legends of Paranormal," \$1.8 million.
7. "White Bird," \$1.5 million.
8. "Deadpool & Wolverine," \$1.5 million.
9. "The Substance," \$1.3 million.
10. "Megalopolis," \$1.1 million.

## AP Top 25: Texas returns to No. 1, Alabama drops to No. 7 after upsets force reshuffling of rankings

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

It was a week of upheaval in The Associated Press college football poll, with Texas returning to No. 1 on Sunday after a one-week absence following Vanderbilt's monumental upset of Alabama.

The Commodores' win as more than three-touchdown underdogs caused the Crimson Tide to drop from No. 1 to No. 7. The last top-ranked team to fall so far was Ohio State, which plunged to No. 11 in 2010 following an October loss to Wisconsin.

Texas, which had an open date, received 52 out of 61 first-place votes and became the first team in two years to bounce in and out of the top spot in a span of three polls. The Longhorns also were just the third team since 2008 to be voted No. 1 after not playing the day before.

Ohio State beat Iowa for its fourth straight easy win, received nine first-place votes and moved up a spot to No. 2.

Oregon and Penn State each rose three spots, with the Ducks up to No. 3 and the Nittany Lions fourth. Georgia remained No. 5.

Miami, which came back from a 25-point second-half deficit to beat California 39-38, rose two spots to No. 6.

The mayhem wasn't limited to Alabama.

Six of the 18 AP Top 25 teams that played lost to unranked opponents (33%), the highest mark since six of 16 (38%) lost the first week of October 2020.

The Tide were among four teams in the top 11 to lose to unranked opponents — the first time that's happened since Nov. 12, 2016, when five teams did it, according to Sportradar.

Tennessee lost to Arkansas and went from No. 4 to No. 8. Michigan lost at Washington and went from No. 10 to No. 24. Southern California lost at Minnesota and went from No. 11 to out of the Top 25. The Trojans were first among teams also receiving votes.

Texas A&M soundly beat Missouri at home in the only Top 25 matchup. That earned the Aggies a promotion from a tie for No. 25 to No. 15 and the Tigers a demotion from No. 9 to No. 21.

Poll points

The Big Ten dominates the top five, but the Southeastern Conference maintains its grip on the top 10.

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No. 2 Ohio State, No. 3 Oregon and No. 4 Penn State are bookended by the SEC's Texas and Georgia. The SEC also has Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi in the top 10.

Double-digit drops by Missouri, Michigan and USC mark the first time since Nov. 13, 2016, that three teams fell 10 or more spots in the same poll. That week it happened to Auburn (8 to 18), Texas A&M (10 to 23) and North Carolina (15 to receiving votes).

The biggest upward movers were Texas A&M (25 to 15), Clemson (15 to 10) and Iowa State (16 to 11).

In-and-out

SMU (5-1) was rewarded for knocking off Louisville on the road and enters the rankings at No. 25. The Mustangs have appeared in the Top 25 all but one season (2022) since 2019. Louisville (3-2) has lost two of three and dropped out.

Pittsburgh won at North Carolina to start 5-0 for the first time since 1991 and enters the rankings at No. 22 for its first appearance in two years.

USC (3-2) has lost two of its first three Big Ten games and is out, as is UNLV, whose first-ever Top 25 appearance was spoiled by an overtime home loss to Syracuse.

Conference call

SEC — 9 (Nos. 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, T-18, 21).

Big Ten — 6 (Nos. 2, 3, 4, T-18, 23, 24).

Big 12 — 4 (Nos. T-11, 14, 16, T-18).

ACC — 4 (Nos. 6, 10, 22, 25).

Mountain West — 1 (No. 17).

Independent — 1 (No. 11).

Ranked vs. Ranked

— No. 1 Texas vs. No. 18 Oklahoma, at Dallas. It's their first head-to-head SEC meeting, and it's a Top 25 matchup for the sixth time in eight games. Sooners scored with 15 seconds left last year to hand Texas its only regular-season loss. Both teams are coming off open dates.

— No. 2 Ohio State at No. 3 Oregon. Entering the season, this was billed as a midseason preview of the Big Ten championship game. It still could be. The Buckeyes have won nine of 10 previous meetings, the only loss coming in the most recent one (2021).

— No. 9 Mississippi at No. 13 LSU. Huge College Football Playoff implications here. Rebels' Jaxson Dart prevailed 55-49 last year in a dizzying matchup with Heisman winner Jayden Daniels.

## Mexican immigrant families plagued by grief, questions after plant workers swept away by Helene

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

ERWIN, Tenn. (AP) — With shaking hands, Daniel Delgado kissed a photo of his wife, Monica Hernandez, before lighting a candle in a supermarket parking lot. Family members hugged pictures printed on poster board, some collapsing into them in tears as search helicopters flew overhead in the direction of the hills.

Days after six workers at a plastics factory disappeared under surging floodwaters caused by Hurricane Helene, loved ones and supporters have been gathering for vigils in front of churches, a high school and a grocery store to honor them.

Most nights, prayers in Spanish are spoken over rosary beads: "Mary, mother of Jesus, intercede and help us find them."

The storm, which claimed the lives of at least 230 people across six states, quickly overwhelmed Erwin, an Appalachian town of around 6,000, on Sept. 27 and resulted in more than 50 people being rescued by helicopter from the roof of a submerged hospital.

The scar it left behind has been especially devastating within the small Latino community that makes up a disproportionate number of workers at the factory: Four of the six workers swept away were Mexican American.

Two state investigations have been launched into Impact Plastics and whether the company should have

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done more to protect workers as the danger grew.

The families of those lost say they still can't comprehend the ferocity of the storm —or why their loved ones didn't get out of the factory earlier to avoid the raging floodwaters.

"We ask: Why? Why did she go to work? Why did she stay?" Hernandez's sister Guadalupe Hernandez-Corona said, through a translator, after a Thursday night vigil. "We're all still wondering."

Impact Plastics President Gerald O'Connor has said no employees were forced to keep working and they were evacuated at least 45 minutes before the massive force of the flood hit the industrial park.

"There was time to escape," he said in a video statement, adding that he was among the last to leave the plant after ensuring everyone was out. The National Guard rescued five employees by helicopter.

But surviving workers say the evacuation began too late. Some clung to pipes on truck flatbeds for up to six hours while making frantic 911 calls and saying goodbyes to loved ones. Some saw coworkers carried off by the current.

Emergency dispatchers said resources were spread thin as a rescue operation was underway over a mile downriver at Unicoi County Hospital.

Normally running 2 feet (about 60 centimeters) deep, the Nolichucky River rose to a record 30 feet (9.1 meters) that day, running at more than 1.4 million gallons (5.3 million liters) per second, which is twice as much as Niagara Falls.

The plastics plant was open, even as local schools shuttered. Robert Jarvis, who began his shift at 7 a.m., said employees continued to work while receiving phone alerts about possible flooding. Many stayed even after management asked them to move cars because 6 inches of water had accumulated in the parking lot.

Employees were finally told to evacuate after the power went out and when the water was about a foot (30 centimeters) high, he said. Jarvis said he survived only because he was pulled into the bed of someone's lifted truck, which labored up an all-terrain road for three hours.

Jarvis said the six lost coworkers were "like family" and he feels a responsibility to them to share his experience.

"They shouldn't have been at work that day," he said. "None of us should have."

Annabel Andrade, whose cousin's daughter Rosy Reynoso is still missing, said evacuation routes were insufficient. And O'Connor's statement angered her: "He left safely. Why was he able to save himself and leave these other employees stranded?"

Alma Vazquez, a Catholic Charities case manager who met some of the lost workers decades ago after she first made her home in Erwin at a migrant farm camp, said the deaths were "completely preventable."

"People didn't have to die at the place where they work," she said.

Many of the victims had deep ties to Erwin. It is more than 90% white with around about 8% of the population, around 500 people, identifying as Hispanic in 2022 up from 3.8% a decade earlier, according to Census Bureau figures.

Lidia Verdugo, Bertha Mendoza and Hernandez, all Mexican Americans, lived in the community for two decades. Hernandez began working at Impact Plastics shortly after arriving, her sister said.

The most recent arrival to Erwin, eight years ago, was 29-year-old Rosy Reynoso. She and her husband had just moved into their own apartment after living with her mother, whom she still visited daily. Her 10-year-old son is in Mexico, and she was working to bring him here, Andrade said.

Two white plastics workers, Sibrina Barnett and Johnny Peterson, were also swept away.

There has been frustration in the Hispanic community over the fact that state officials did not immediately send translators to assist survivors of the disaster, and families became more upset when workers answering phone lines for missing persons tips spoke only English.

When a Tennessee Emergency Management Agency director was asked why these resources weren't available until over a day into the search, he said they hadn't been aware of the size of the Spanish-speaking population in the area.

"For them, it was very heartbreaking to hear that," said Ana Gutierrez, an organizer with the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition who has been assisting families.

Gutierrez also said families felt their plight had been overshadowed by the hospital rescue, which made

news the day it happened while the plant workers did not.

Some comfort has been found at nightly vigils, where people prayed in both Spanish and English and lit candles as the names of the workers were read.

Erwin Mayor Glenn White said he was moved to see the crowd, a mix of Hispanic and white residents, coming together in solidarity and grief.

"We are one people. Our country's motto says that, 'Out of many, come one,'" White said.

At Saint Michael The Archangel, where the vast majority of the 225 parishioners are Hispanic, families gather to comfort each other and eat Mexican pozole as donations of water, food and other supplies were delivered.

Andrade's family was one of the first Hispanic families to settle in Erwin in the 1980s. When her 19-year-old son died in 2017, she became the first in the community to lay a family member to rest here, in the cemetery next to Saint Michael, instead of sending the body back to Mexico for burial.

Reynoso's husband, who remains hopeful her body will be found, initially planned to inter her in Mexico but later decided her body, if found, will stay in Tennessee. "You've made a life here — your family's going to be here," Andrade told him. "This is your home."

Engraved Spanish prayers adorn the cemetery's tombstones, which Andrade sees as a symbol of the life Hispanic immigrants have made in America.

"It's a way to keep them with us," she said.

## **A Tennessee nurse and his dog died trying to save a man from floods driven by Hurricane Helene**

By MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

As the Hurricane Helene-driven waters rose around the Nolichucky River in Tennessee, Boone McCrary, his girlfriend and his chocolate lab headed out on his fishing boat to search for a man who was stranded by floodwaters that had leveled his home. But the thick debris in the water jammed the boat's motor, and without power, it slammed into a bridge support and capsized.

McCrary and his dog Moss never made it out of the water alive.

Search teams found McCrary's boat and his dog's body two days later, but it took four days to find McCrary, an emergency room nurse whose passion was being on his boat in that river. His girlfriend, Santana Ray, held onto a branch for hours before rescuers reached her.

David Boutin, the man McCrary had set out to rescue, was distraught when he later learned McCrary had died trying to save him.

"I've never had anyone risk their life for me," Boutin told The Associated Press. "From what I hear that was the way he always been. He's my guardian angel, that's for sure."

The 46-year-old recalled how the force of the water swept him out his front door and ripped his dog Buddy — "My best friend, all I have" — from his arms. Boutin was rescued by another team after clinging to tree branches in the raging river for six hours. Buddy is still missing, and Boutin knows he couldn't have survived.

McCrary was one of at least 230 people killed by Hurricane Helene's raging waters and falling trees across six states — Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia — and was among a group of first responders who perished while trying to save others. The hurricane caused significant damage in nearby Unicoi County, where flooding swept away 11 workers at an plastics factory and forced a rescue mission at an Erwin, Tennessee, hospital.

McCrary, an avid hunter and fisherman, spent his time cruising the waterways that snake around Greenville, Tennessee. When the hurricane hit, the 32-year-old asked friends on Facebook if anyone needed help, said his sister, Laura Harville. That was how he learned about Boutin.

McCrary, his girlfriend and Moss the dog launched into a flooded neighborhood at about 7 p.m. on Sept. 27 and approached Boutin's location, but the debris-littered floodwaters clogged the boat's jet motor. Despite pushing and pulling the throttle, McCrary couldn't clear the junk and slammed into the bridge



about two hours into the rescue attempt.

"I got the first phone call at 8:56 p.m. and I was a nervous wreck," Harville said. She headed to the bridge and started walking the banks.

Harville organized hundreds of volunteers who used drones, thermal cameras, binoculars and hunting dogs to scour the muddy banks, fending off copperhead snakes, trudging through knee-high muck and fighting through tangled branches. Harville collected items that carried McCrary's scent — a pillowcase, sock and insoles from his nursing shoes — and stuffed them into mason jars for the canines to sniff.

On Sunday, a drone operator spotted the boat. They found Moss dead nearby, but there was no sign of McCrary.

Searchers had no luck on Monday, "but on Tuesday they noticed vultures flying," Harville said. That was how they found McCrary's body, about 21 river miles (33 kilometers) from the bridge where the boat capsized, she said.

The force of the floodwaters carried McCrary under two other bridges, under the highway and over the Nolichucky Dam, she said. The Tennessee Valley Authority said about 1.3 million gallons (4.9 million liters) of water per second was flowing over the dam on the night McCrary was swept away, more than double the flow rate of the dam's last regulated release nearly a half-century ago.

Boutin, 46, isn't sure where he will go next. He is staying with his son for a few days and then hopes to get a hotel voucher.

He didn't learn about McCrary's fate until the day after he was rescued.

"When the news hit, I didn't know how to take it," Boutin told the AP. "I wish I could thank him for giving his life for me."

Dozens of McCrary's coworkers at Greenville Community Hospital have posted tributes to him, recalling his kindness and compassion and desire to help others. He "was adamant about living life to the fullest and making sure along the way that you didn't forget your fellow man or woman and that you helped each other," Harville said.

McCrary's last TikTok video posted before the hurricane shows him speeding along the surface of rushing muddy water to the tune, "Wanted Dead or Alive." He wrote a message along the bottom that read:

"Some people have asked if I had a 'death wish.' The truth is that I have a 'life wish.' I have a need for feeling the life running through my veins. One thing about me, I may be 'crazy,' Perhaps a little reckless at times, but when the time comes to put me in the ground, you can say I lived it all the way."

## **A year into the Israel-Hamas war, students say a chill on free speech has reached college classrooms**

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As a junior at George Washington University, Ty Lindia meets new students every day. But with the shadow of the Israel-Hamas war hanging over the Washington, D.C., campus, where everyone has a political opinion, each new encounter is fraught.

"This idea that I might say the wrong thing kind of scares me," said Lindia, who studies political science. "You have to tiptoe around politics until one person says something that signifies they lean a certain way on the issue."

He has seen friendships — including some of his own — end over views about the war. In public, he keeps his stance to himself for fear that future employers could hold it against him.

"Before Oct. 7, there wasn't really a big fear," said Lindia, of Morristown, New Jersey.

A year after Hamas' attack in southern Israel, some students say they are reluctant to speak out because it could pit them against their peers, professors or even potential employers. Social bubbles have cemented along the divisions of the war. New protest rules on many campuses raise the risk of suspension or expulsion.

Tensions over the conflict burst wide open last year amid emotional demonstrations in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attack. In the spring, a wave of pro-Palestinian tent encampments led to some 3,200 arrests.

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The atmosphere on U.S. campuses has calmed since those protests, yet lingering unease remains. Students reconsider what to say in classes

In a recent class discussion on gender and the military at Indiana University, sophomore Mikayla Kaplan said she thought about mentioning her female friends who serve in the Israeli military. But in a room full of politically progressive classmates, she decided to stay quiet.

"In the back of my head, I'm always thinking about things that I should or shouldn't say," Kaplan said.

Kaplan, who proudly wears a Star of David necklace, said that before college she had many friends of different faiths, but after Oct. 7, almost all of her friends are Jewish.

The war began when Hamas-led fighters killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. They abducted another 250 people and are still holding about 100 hostages. Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed at least 41,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

At the University of Connecticut, some students said the conflict doesn't come up as much in classes. Ahmad Zoghol, an engineering student, said it remains a tense issue and he has heard of potential employers scrutinizing political statements students make in college.

"There's definitely that concern for a lot of people, including myself, that if we speak about it there's going to be some sort of repercussion," he said.

Campuses grapple with divisions

Compared with the much larger campus protests of the Vietnam War era, when few students openly supported the war, campuses today appear more divided, said Mark Yudof, a former president of the University of California system. For many, the issues are more personal.

"The faculty are at odds with each other. The student body is at odds with each other. There's a war of ideologies going on," he said.

Some universities are trying to bridge the divide with campus events on civil discourse, sometimes inviting Palestinian and Jewish speakers to share the stage. At Harvard University in Massachusetts, a recent survey found that many students and professors are reluctant to share views in the classroom. A panel suggested solutions including "classroom confidentiality" and teaching on constructive disagreement.

Meanwhile, many campuses are adding policies that clamp down on protests, often banning encampments and limiting demonstrations to certain hours or locations.

At Indiana University, a new policy forbids "expressive activity" after 11 p.m, among other restrictions. Doctoral student Bryce Greene, who helped lead a pro-Palestinian encampment last semester, said he was threatened with suspension after organizing an 11:30 p.m. vigil.

That's a startling contrast to past protests on campus, including a 2019 climate demonstration that drew hundreds of students without university interference, he said.

"There's definitely a chilling effect that occurs when speech is being restricted in this manner," said Greene, who is part of a lawsuit challenging the new policy. "This is just one way for them to restrict people from speaking out for Palestine."

New rules allow protests, but with conditions

The tense atmosphere has led some faculty members to rethink teaching certain subjects or entering certain debates, said Risa Lieberwitz, general counsel for the American Association of University Professors.

Lieberwitz, who teaches labor law at Cornell University, has been alarmed by the growing number of colleges requiring students to register demonstrations days in advance.

"It's so contradictory to the notion of how protests and demonstrations take place," she said. "They're oftentimes spontaneous. They're not planned in the way that events are generally planned."

Protests have continued on many campuses, but on a smaller scale and often under the confines of new rules.

At Wesleyan University in Connecticut, police last month handcuffed pro-Palestinian students participating in a sit-in at a campus building before they agreed to leave. Wesleyan President Michael Roth said he supports students' free speech rights, but they "don't have a right to take over part of a building."

Wesleyan is offering new courses on civil disagreement this year, and faculty are working to help foster discussion among students.

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"It's challenging for students, as it is for adults — most adults don't have conversations with people who disagree with them," Roth said. "We're so segregated into our bubbles."

Schools try to find balance on free speech

American universities pride themselves as being places of open discourse where students can engage across their differences. Since Oct. 7, they have been under tremendous pressure to uphold free speech while also protecting students from discrimination.

The U.S. Education Department is investigating more than 70 colleges for reports of antisemitism or Islamophobia. Leaders of several prestigious colleges have been called before Congress by Republicans who accuse them of being soft on antisemitism.

Yet finding the line where protected speech ends is as hard as ever. Leaders grapple with whether to allow chants seen by some as calls of support for Palestinians and by others as a threat against Jews. It's especially complicated at public universities, which are bound by the First Amendment, while private colleges have flexibility to impose wider speech limits.

At George Washington University, Lindia said the war comes up often in his classes but sometimes after a warming-up period — in one class, discussion loosened after the professor realized most students shared similar views. Even walking to class, there is a visible reminder of the tension. Tall fencing now surrounds University Yard, the grassy space where police broke up a tent encampment in May.

"It's a place for free expression, and now it's just completely blocked off," he said.

Some students say moderate voices are getting lost.

Nivriti Agaram, a junior at George Washington, said she believes Israel has a right to defend itself but questions America's spending on the war. That opinion puts her at odds with more liberal students, who have called her a "genocide enabler" and worse, she said.

"It's very stifling," she said. "I think there's a silent majority who aren't speaking."

## Russia strikes Ukraine with drones and missiles

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces attacked Ukraine overnight with 87 Shahed drones and four different types of missiles, officials said Sunday.

A 49-year-old man was killed in the Kharkiv region after his car was hit by a drone, said regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. A gas pipeline was also damaged and a warehouse set alight in the city of Odesa, Ukrainian officials reported.

Ukraine's air force said in a statement that air defenses had destroyed 56 of the 87 drones and two missiles over 14 Ukrainian regions, including the capital, Kyiv.

Another 25 drones disappeared from radar "presumably as a result of anti-aircraft missile defense," it said.

The barrage comes a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that he will present his "victory plan" at the Oct. 12 meeting of the Ramstein group of nations that supplies arms to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy presented his plan to U.S. President Joe Biden in Washington last week. Its contents have not been made public but it is known that the plan includes Ukrainian membership in NATO and the provision of long-range missiles to strike inside Russia.

In a statement Sunday, the Ukrainian leader paid tribute to the country's troops, which he also described as "preparing (for) the next Ramstein."

"They demonstrate what Ukrainians are capable of when they have enough weapons and sufficient range," he said in a statement on social media. "We will keep convincing our partners that our drones alone are not enough. More decisive steps are needed — and the end of this war will be closer."

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that it had shot down four Ukrainian drones over the country's Kursk, Voronezh and Belgorod regions. \_\_\_\_

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

## Pope names 21 new cardinals, significantly increasing the pool who will one day elect his successor

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis named 21 new cardinals Sunday, significantly increasing the size of the College of Cardinals and further cementing his mark on the group of prelates who will one day elect his successor.

They include a man who will be the oldest cardinal — Monsignor Angelo Acerbi, a 99-year-old retired Vatican diplomat who was once held hostage for six weeks in Colombia by leftist guerrillas — and the youngest — the 44-year-old head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Melbourne, Australia, Bishop Mykola Bychok, named in a nod to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The new cardinals will get their red hats at a ceremony, known as a consistory, on Dec. 8, an important feast day on its own that officially kicks off the Christmas season in Rome. It will be Francis' 10th consistory to create new princes of the church and the biggest infusion of voting-age cardinals into the college in Francis' 11-year pontificate. Acerbi is the only one of the new intake who is over 80 and hence too old to vote for new pope.

Usually the college has a limit of 120 on voting-age cardinals but popes often exceed the cap temporarily to keep the body robust as existing cardinals age out. As of Sept. 28, there were 122 cardinal-electors; that means the new infusion brings their numbers up to 142.

Among those named by history's first Latin American pope were the heads of several major dioceses and archdioceses in South America. They are the archbishop of Santiago del Estero, Argentina, Vicente Bokalic Iglic; the archbishop of Porto Alegre, Brazil, Jaime Spengler; the archbishop of Santiago, Chile, Fernando Natalio Chomali Garib; the archbishop of Guayaquil, Ecuador, Luis Gerardo Cabrera Herrera; and the archbishop of Lima, Peru, Carlos Gustavo Castillo Mattasoglio.

That stands in sharp contrast to the lone new cardinal from North America: the archbishop of Toronto, Francis Leo.

Showing the universality of the church around the world, Francis also tapped the archbishop of Tehran, Iran, Monsignor Dominique Joseph Mathieu, and the bishop of Bogor, Indonesia, Monsignor Paskalis Bruno Syukor. They both belong to the Franciscan religious order and are two of the four new Franciscan cardinals.

In addition to Syukor, Asia gets two more cardinals in Monsignor Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi, the archbishop of Tokyo; and Monsignor Pablo Virgilio Sinogco David, the bishop of Kalookan, Philippines.

Aside from Asia the other region where the church is growing is Africa, which got two new cardinals: the archbishop of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Monsignor Ignace Bessi Dogbo, and the bishop of Algiers, Algeria, Monsignor Jean-Paul Vesco.

"Francis has again continued to extend the reach of the college of cardinals," said Christopher Bellitto, a church historian at Kean University in Union, New Jersey. "Like his predecessors, but even more so, he's making sure that Catholic leaders from the church's edges have a voice at the big table."

Even before Sunday's announcement, Francis had already named the vast majority of the voting-age cardinals who will one day vote in a conclave. According to Vatican statistics, before Sunday, 92 of the cardinals under 80 had been named by Francis, compared with 24 named by Pope Benedict XVI and six by St. John Paul II.

Added to their ranks on Sunday were two Vatican officials who hold positions that don't usually carry with them a cardinal's rank: the official in charge of the migrants section of the Vatican development office, the Rev. Fabio Baggio, and the official who organizes the pope's foreign travels, the Rev. George Jacob Koovakad.

In a nod to the current synod underway at the Vatican this month debating the future of the church, Francis also tapped the Rev. Timothy Radcliffe, a British theologian who is one of the spiritual advisers for the meeting.

Bellitto said it was "nonsense" to read the new cardinals as Francis doing something unique to try to stack the deck. "Every school superintendent, president, and prime minister picks people in their image to help their vision," he said in an email.



The nomination of Bychok gave Ukraine its only cardinal and sent a subtle political message as Russia's war grinds on. Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See, Andrii Yurash, praised the nomination, even though Francis chose the head of Ukraine's Greek Catholic Church in Australia over the Kyiv-based head, His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk.

## **Top US trade official sees progress in helping workers. Voters will decide if her approach continues**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the U.S. trade representative, Katherine Tai is legally required to avoid discussing the presidential election. But her ideas about fair trade are on the ballot in November.

Voters are essentially being asked to decide whether it is best to work with the rest of the world or threaten it. Do they favor pursuing worker protections in trade talks, as Tai has done on behalf of the Biden-Harris administration? Or should the United States jack up taxes on almost everything it imports as Donald Trump has pledged to do?

After nearly four years in her job, Tai feels she is making progress on getting the U.S. and its trade partners to focus more on workers' rights. Decades of trade deals often prioritized keeping costs low by finding cheap labor that could, in some cases, be exploited.

"You can't do trade policy by yourself," Tai said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I am confident that the path that we are on is the right path to be on. I think the only question is how much progress we are able to make in these next years."

It is an approach that has drawn criticism from business leaders, economists and Republicans who say that the U.S. has not made enough progress on new trade partnerships and countering China's rise.

"There have been no trade deals, no talks to expand free trade agreements," Rep. Carol Miller, R-W.Va., said in an April congressional hearing with Tai. "Compared to China's ambitious agenda, the United States is falling behind in every region in the world."

Trump says that broad tariffs of at least 20% on all imports — and possibly even higher on some products from China and Mexico — would bring back American factory jobs. Most economists say they would hurt economic growth and raise inflation, though the former president has dismissed those concerns.

"If you're a foreign country and you don't make your product here, then you will have to pay a tariff, a fairly substantial one, which will go into our treasury, will reduce taxes," Trump, the Republican presidential nominee this year, said at a recent rally in Erie, Pennsylvania.

An Ivy League background and a blue-collar perspective

Tai has degrees from Yale University and Harvard Law School, but strives for a blue-collar perspective on trade. She said that she has injected once-excluded labor union voices into the trade process.

The Biden-Harris administration has not rejected tariffs. It kept the ones on China from Trump's presidency. It has imposed a 100% tariff on Chinese electric vehicles, even though there is not much of a U.S. market for these vehicles that can cost, without tariffs, as little as \$12,000. Tai sees that as a way to shield an emerging industry against subsidized and unfair competition.

But the administration also is looking to bolster U.S. workers in the face of competition from China through other industrial policies, such as funding for computer chip factories and tax breaks for technology in renewable energy sources.

The reality, according to some economists, is that domestic factories did not simply lose jobs to China. There were productivity gains that meant some manufacturers needed fewer employees and there was a broader shift as more workers moved away from manufacturing and into the services sector. Those factors often get less emphasis from Tai, said Mary Lovely, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"It seems to me that she's focusing on the easy one — the one where you can blame the 'bad guy,' China," Lovely said.

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There is unfinished work.

The trade pillar of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework spearheaded by Tai remains incomplete. That effort by Washington and its allies in Asia is meant to counterbalance China's ascendance without needing a trade deal, but it puts more of a focus on workers' rights and environmental protections than past proposals.

"What I have discovered is that we actually all want the same thing," Tai said. "Fundamentally, what we're doing is innovating the way you do trade policy, innovating the way globalization is going to play out into the future."

Tai said she is trying to foster a trade policy with other countries that "allows for us to build our middle class together and to stop pitting them against each other, because that's been the model we've been pursuing for the last several decades."

William Reinsch at the Center for Strategic and International Studies said it is not surprising that Asian countries involved in the initiative would say they support their middle-class workers. But he said Democrats have not provided the access to U.S. markets that trade partners want in return for the focus on workers.

"The consistent message we have gotten from the Asian partners is that they are looking for tangible benefits, and the U.S. is not providing any," he said. "Trying to rearrange the traditional social order, however meritorious that would be, can be an uphill battle."

The revised North American trade agreement is a model

Tai sees herself as having a proof of concept that her approach to trade can thrive. It just happens to come from the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the revised North American trade deal signed during the Trump administration and cited by Trump as evidence that he knows how to negotiate with the rest of the world.

In her interview, Tai said the agreement includes a "rapid response mechanism" that enables the government to penalize factories that violate workers' rights. Tai said that as of late September, the U.S. government has invoked the mechanism 28 times and concluded 25 of those efforts.

Tai said that has directly benefited 30,000 Mexican workers who could elect their own union representation, allowing them to receive higher wages, back pay and other benefits.

"We are empowering workers through trade," she said. "And by empowering Mexico's workers, we are ensuring that America's workers do not have to compete with workers in our neighboring country who are being exploited and who are being deprived of rights."

Praise for the agreement appears to be a rare point of convergence on trade between Trump and the Biden-Harris administration. But their perspectives are different. Trump tells voters that his threats of massive tariffs can cause foreign governments to accept America's terms on trade and immigration.

"I ended NAFTA, the worst trade deal ever made and replaced it with the USMCA, the best trade deal ever made," he said Monday, referring to the North America Free Trade Agreement signed by Democratic President Bill Clinton.

Tai, barred by the federal Hatch Act from weighing in on the presidential campaign from her office, is cautious in her remarks. But she disputes Trump's claim.

She notes that there were actually two negotiations on trade with Canada and Mexico. The first negotiation was among the Trump administration and the other two nations. But the second was between Trump's team and congressional Democrats who needed to ratify the deal and that led to worker protections, a component Tai worked on when she was a congressional staffer.

But then, she added, just getting a written deal on trade protections and rights is never enough. The text needs to be backed up by action.

"They're just words on the page unless it's implemented," she said.

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## Today in History: October 7

### Surprise attacks spark Israel-Hamas War

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Oct. 7, the 281st day of 2024. There are 85 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants launched air and ground attacks on Israel, killing nearly 1,200 and taking more than 250 hostages. The attacks, followed hours later by Israeli counterattacks, marked the beginning of the current Israel-Hamas War.

Also on this date:

In 1765, the Stamp Act Congress convened in New York to draw up colonial grievances against England.

In 1913, the first moving assembly line began operation at the Ford Motor Company factory in Highland Park, Michigan.

In 1916, in the most lopsided victory in college football history, Georgia Tech defeated Cumberland University 222-0 in Atlanta.

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) in the Mediterranean Sea. The hijackers shot and killed Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish American tourist in a wheelchair, and pushed him overboard, before surrendering on Oct. 9.

In 1992, trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initialed the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, in the presence of President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was beaten and left tied to a wooden fencepost outside of Laramie, Wyoming; he died five days later. Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney are serving life sentences for Shepard's murder.

In 2001, the war in Afghanistan started as the United States and Britain launched air attacks against military targets and Osama bin Laden's training camps in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

In 2003, California voters recalled Gov. Gray Davis and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger their new governor.

Today's Birthdays: Author Thomas Keneally is 89. Comedian and talk-show host Joy Behar is 82. Singer John Mellencamp is 73. Rock musician Tico Torres (Bon Jovi) is 71. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is 69. Recording executive and TV personality Simon Cowell is 65. Singer-actor Toni Braxton is 57. Rock singer-musician Thom Yorke (Radiohead) is 56. Actor Nicole Ari Parker is 54. Football Hall of Famer Charles Woodson is 48. Singer Taylor Hicks is 48. Actor Omar Miller is 46. MLB outfielder Mookie Betts is 32.