

OPINION

The Florida Times-Union

Paul Runnestrand.....Executive Editor



Your Turn
Julie Proctor
Guest columnist

AMikids Jacksonville celebrates golden anniversary

Since 1973, AMikids Jacksonville (formerly the Jacksonville Marine Institute) has changed the lives of more than 6,000 at-risk teenagers. Violence, trauma and hunger are a part of their lives. Our motto says it all: “Separating a troubled past from a bright future.”

I joined the board of AMikids Jacksonville in 2016 when I took a tour of the program and could see the sparkle in the eyes of these teenagers. They had a glimpse of how they could turn their lives around. They were enthusiastic about their academic successes and their newly found anger management skills. They looked forward to the special events they could attend (an incentive for positive behavior.)

Most importantly, they had hope for the future. I remember one proud teen stated that at AMikids he learned, “how to be a man!”

Funded by the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Duval County School Board and private donations, our program serves both boys and girls, ages 14-18, who have averaged 6.5 prior arrests. Although our youth may come from anywhere in Duval County, the vast majority live in impoverished communities that may not allow them to obtain the crucial life tools and skills they need for success.

In addition to a regular Duval County Public School curriculum, we offer mental health counseling, behavior modification and job training. We offer construction skills training (NCCER certification) and ServSafe certification (from the National Restaurant Association). Among employers surveyed in the Jacksonville area, who have hired a youth from AMikids, 96% said they would hire the youth again. Employers also said AMikids helped them meet their employment needs and they were enthusiastic about working with AMikids in the future.

We are so fortunate to have the Propeller Club of Jacksonville as one of our major supporters. The Propeller Club advocates for the maritime industry in the Port of Jacksonville and has been a strong presence in Jacksonville since 1930. On April 10, the club holds its annual Spring Golf Outing at Hidden Hills Golf Club.

Funds raised from this major charity event of the year will go to support both AMikids Jacksonville and the future leaders within the Student Port Programs. For more information, visit PropClubJax.com.

Julie S. Proctor, board chairwoman, AMikids Jacksonville

This guest column is the opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of the Times-Union. We welcome a diversity of opinions.



An important component of the AMikids program — celebrating its 50th anniversary this year — is experiential education, and whitewater rafting is a favorite. PROVIDED BY AMIKIDS JACKSONVILLE

LETTERS POLICY: Letters of about 200 words are preferred. All letters are edited for space, clarity and newspaper style. Include a name, address, phone number and occupation. **Email:** letters@jacksonville.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't forget trees in downtown plan

The other day we received this letter from a tree at the former Jacksonville Landing site:

“Oh, the stories I could tell. I've seen dolphins frolicking, boats gliding and fireworks popping. I've heard neighbors stopping along their walks to say 'hi' to one another. I love to provide shade and comfort to those who work in busy downtown. Those hot sunny days are unbearable without the large, shaded canopies from me and my fellow trees.

“I cost close to nothing on cleaning and conditioning the air we breathe. On more than one occasion, passersby have said how I and my fellow trees make the neighborhood feel more like home and more hospitable. And for the birds, the pets and squirrels and tiny living things, I offer a comfortable lawn or sidewalk or perch to rest and enjoy the views of our majestic river.

“I've bent to storms, but have not yielded and I've drunk their water, holding back the occasional surge from your homes, your offices, your cafes and your restaurants. I am so excited about the revitalization prospects for our downtown and the many parks and public spaces planned for the riverfront. Please let me be a part of it. I've been here for years just waiting for something wonderful like this to happen and I don't want to miss it.”

The Late Bloomers Garden Club implores city leaders to protect this tree and our entire downtown tree canopy. With all of the exciting plans for the activation of the river, we must not forget that we already have a number of beautiful, established trees that will provide a lovely foundation for our new parks and the Riverwalk.

We urge our city leaders to plan around as many existing trees as possible and we encourage the planting of numerous, additional hardwood shade trees downtown. Jacksonville is embarking on a generational project to enhance our riverfront. Let's start by giving the Landing tree — and its neighbors — a chance to continue providing shade, beauty and resilience.

Then, let's provide it with lots of new friends.

Natalie Rosenberg and Debbie Early, Late Bloomers Garden Club, Jacksonville

‘One nation under God’ needs work

It has been apparent that our country is getting off track in many ways. I read comments that all we need is to bring back God into our lives. I am not into religiosity, but perhaps our nation should remember what God hates.

I happened to open my Bible recently and saw a glaring passage in Proverbs 6: 16-19, which listed six things that the Lord hates. Do any of these things relate to current times?

- He hates haughty eyes (pride of self);
- A lying tongue;
- Hands that shed innocent blood;
- A heart that devises wicked schemes;
- Feet that are quick to rush to evil; and
- A false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

It is obvious that, in recent years, religion and politics do not agree on what constitutes "One nation under God" in terms of honesty, ethics and equal treatment. How far are we, as a nation, going to allow things to continue to fester and degrade what our forefathers drafted in order to form a democracy for the future of a new nation?

If we, as a nation want to keep our freedoms, we need to vote, speak up and contact our leaders. We need to regain these values and deny those who would try to take our freedoms away.

Margaret E. Wright, Jacksonville

Restrictions a disservice to all

Reading the Bible doesn't make you a Christian. Reading the Koran doesn't make you a Muslim. Reading the U.S. Constitution doesn't make you a patriot. Reading “Mein Kampf” doesn't make you a Nazi. Reading Plato doesn't make you a philosopher. Read-



The on-ramp on the northwest side of the Main Street Bridge prior to demolition was photographed near the site of the demolished Jacksonville Landing in September 2020. WILL DICKEY/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

ing Dagwood doesn't make you a cartoon. And reading the newspaper doesn't make you a reporter.

We can all agree that these things are obvious, beyond question.

Why then do we think that reading about gay people will “indoctrinate” our children? Why are we afraid of exposing anyone to ideas that are different from our own? I want to understand white rage, as well as the conditions that brought about slavery. I want to understand why we went to Vietnam and Iraq. I want to understand what it means to be gay.

I want the freedom to recommend books that I've read to my children, without having any stigma attached to them by the state. I want teachers to have the freedom to lead discussions down paths that may not be comfortable, but may add to a child's understanding of the world. I also want children to have the right to explore — on their own — books and stories they may not have previously encountered.

Anything less than that is doing them (and our country) a disservice.

Mike Lawrence, Avondale

Kudos to Woods and Monroe

I am compelled to send congratulations and a thank you to Mr. Mark Woods and Mr. Nate Monroe. Their March 26 articles about Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Legislature were, in my mind, absolutely the most perceptive, informative and to-the-point articles (in a small amount of space) about the current political climate in the “free state of Florida” that I have seen.

Our state is looking and acting more “third world” every day. I particularly liked the treatise on guns, where the conservative legislature appears to want guns everywhere except where they themselves work. Why would that be? It's unbelievable. Hasn't anyone else found this strange?

I hope that everyone had a chance to read these two outstanding articles.

Ted Goin, Ponte Vedra Beach

Hypocrisy in gender identity debate

In the United States, a 10-year-old is considered not mentally developed or mature enough to vote, buy alcohol, join the military, purchase a firearm, sign a contract or be sentenced to death for a crime.

But, with the help and encouragement of teachers or administrators, it appears they can decide if they want to be male or female and pursue life-altering medical procedures.

I find the hypocrisy of the left to be appalling, abhorrent and very sad.

George Stringfellow, Jacksonville



Dozens of people attended a Feb. 21 rally at the University of North Florida, some of whom protested "fascism in education." The rally was organized by the Students for Democratic Society and Students United for Workers' Advocacy to urge protection of UNF's diversity efforts. COREY PERRINE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

INSIDE
UN food chief:
Billions needed to
avert unrest,
starvation. **8NN**

Trump
charges
a game
changer

Decades of perceived
invincibility are at stake

Jill Colvin
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK – When Donald Trump steps before a judge this coming week to be arraigned in a New York courtroom, it will not only mark the first time a former U.S. president has faced criminal charges. It will also be a reckoning for a man long nicknamed “Teflon Don,” who until now has managed to skirt serious legal jeopardy despite 40 years of legal scrutiny.

Trump, who is the early front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, is expected to turn himself in Tuesday. He faces charges including at least one felony offense related to hush money payments to women during his 2016 campaign. Like any other person facing trial, he will be booked, fingerprinted and photographed before being given the chance to enter a plea.

The Trump campaign, struggling to raise funds, announced Friday that it had raised over \$4 million in the 24 hours after the indictment became public.

held the distinction of being the first president to be impeached twice – has upended democratic norms. But on a personal level, the indictment pierces the cloak of invincibility that seemed to follow Trump through his decades in business and in politics, as he faced allegations of fraud, collusion and sexual misconduct.

“Boy, after all this time it’s a bit of a shock,” Trump biographer Michael D’Antonio said of the indictment. “You know I always thought of him as the Gingerbread Man, shouting, ‘You can’t catch me!’ as he ran away.”

“Given his track record,” he said, “I had trouble imagining he would ever be held accountable.”

“These are not things that Donald Trump ever thought in his entire life, nor I, for that matter, that he would ever be confronted with,” Michael Cohen, Trump’s longtime fixer and a key witness in the case who served jail time for the payments, told CNN.

See INVINCIBILITY, Page 5NN



Sullivan, Ind., Mayor Clint Lamb, center, and Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb, right, survey the damage caused by a tornado in Sullivan on Saturday. JOSEPH C. GARZA/THE TRIBUNE-STAR VIA AP

At least 21 dead
after tornadoes rake
Midwest and South

Confirmed, suspected twisters in
8 states level homes, businesses

Adrian Sainz and Andrew DeMillo
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WYNNE, Ark. – Storms that dropped possibly dozens of tornadoes killed at least 21 people in small towns and big cities across the South and Midwest, tearing a path through the Arkansas capital, collapsing the roof of a packed concert venue in Illinois, and stunning people throughout the region Saturday with the damage’s scope.

Confirmed or suspected tornadoes in at least eight states destroyed homes and businesses, splintered trees and laid waste to neighborhoods across a broad swath of the country. The dead included at least seven in one Tennessee county, four in the small town of Wynne, Arkansas, three in Sullivan, Indiana, and four in Illinois.

Other deaths from the storms that hit Friday night into Saturday were reported in Alabama and Mississippi, along with one near Little Rock, Arkansas, where city officials said more than 2,600 buildings were in a tornado’s path.

Residents of Wynne, Tennessee, a community of about 8,000 people 50 miles west of Memphis, woke Saturday to find the high school’s roof shredded and its windows blown out. Huge trees lay on the ground, their stumps reduced to nubs. Broken walls, windows and roofs pocked homes and businesses.

Debris lay scattered inside the shells of homes and on lawns: clothing, insulation, toys, splintered



The path of a tornado is seen through a building in Coralville, Iowa, on Saturday. JOSEPH CRESS/IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN VIA AP



Motorists pass by a destroyed SUV that was thrown into a ditch in Tupelo, Miss., on Saturday. THOMAS WELLS/NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI DAILY JOURNAL VIA AP

See TORNADOES, Page 10NN

Will there be a spring counteroffensive in Ukraine?



Ukrainian servicemen fire a Soviet-era Grad multiple rocket launcher at Russian positions in the Kharkiv area of Ukraine on Feb. 25. VADIM GHIRDA/AP FILE

Make-or-break period
may lie just ahead

Barry Hatton
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Europe’s biggest armed conflict since World War II is poised to enter a new phase in the coming weeks.

With no suggestion of a negotiated end to the 13 months of fighting between Russia and Ukraine, the Ukrainian defense minister said last week that a spring counteroffensive could begin as soon as April.

Kyiv faces a key tactical question: How can the Ukrainian military dislodge Kremlin forces from land they are

occupying? Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is working hard to keep his troops, and the general public, motivated for a long fight.

Here’s a look at how the fighting has evolved and how the spring campaign might unfold:

How did the war get here?

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 2022, but its attacks fell short of some main targets and lost momentum by July.

Ukrainian counteroffensives took back large areas from August through November.

See UKRAINE, Page 9NN

In the digital e-edition, you can click anywhere on the US map to get up-to-date forecasts, radar, MinuteCast® and more.

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation for Sunday. Temperature bands are high for the day.

Map showing weather systems and precipitation for Sunday. The map displays temperature bands (high for the day) and various weather systems (Low pressure systems, High pressure system, Cold front, Warm front, Stationary front). The map includes labels for major cities and their temperatures (High/Low):

- Seattle: 45/34
- San Francisco: 58/45
- Los Angeles: 66/52
- Denver: 67/31
- El Paso: 82/51
- Chihuahua: 87/55
- Monterrey: 86/67
- Houston: 81/71
- Miami: 88/73
- Winnipeg: 35/13
- Billings: 45/24
- Minneapolis: 47/31
- Chicago: 60/43
- Kansas City: 74/49
- Detroit: 45/39
- Toronto: 37/32
- Montreal: 34/25
- New York: 52/40
- Washington: 59/43
- Atlanta: 72/55

Legend for weather symbols:

- 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 100s, 110s
- Showers
- T-storms
- Rain
- Flurries
- Snow
- Ice
- Cold front
- Warm front
- Stationary front

INTERNATIONAL (excludes Antarctica)

High: **114** at Matam, Senegal

Low: **-37** at Kabardino, Russia

Precip: **5.71"** at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Eleven inches of snow fell at Boston Commons on April 2, 1887. Another 4 inches accumulated on April 18 that same year, making it the largest April snowfall in Boston, in the history of modern record-keeping.

Q: What is a tornado made of?

	High/low/W	Air Quality		High/low/W	Air Quality		High/low/W	Air Quality		High/low/W	Air Quality					
Aberdeen, SD	43/20/pc	31	●	Evansville, IN	64/50/s	25		Levittown, PA	52/31/s	40		Rochester, NY	38/30/pc	41		
Abilene, TX	82/56/t	41		Fall River, MA	51/25/s	25		Lincoln, IL	65/44/pc	25		Rockford, IL	62/36/s	25		
Accomac, VA	56/39/s	40		Farmington, NM	66/36/s	43		Louisville, KY	64/50/s	25		●	Ruidoso, NM	66/48/s	55	
Adrian, MI	50/41/s	25		Fayetteville, NC	68/47/s	40		Lubbock, TX	84/48/s	25		●	Salem, OR	48/33/sh	50	
Akron, OH	50/40/s	25		●	Fond du Lac, WI	54/35/c	25	●	Manitowoc, WI	45/35/pc	25		Salina, KS	77/52/s	41	
●	Alamogordo, NM	80/50/s	72		Fort Myers, FL	89/69/s	25		Mansfield, OH	50/42/s	25		Salinas, CA	58/44/c	25	
Alexandria, VA	58/40/s	25		●	Fort Smith, AR	73/55/s	54		Marshall, NC	64/43/s	40		Salisbury, MD	57/35/s	21	
Alliance, OH	51/40/s	25			Framingham, MA	49/24/s	25		Marshfield, WI	48/28/sh	25		San Angelo, TX	87/53/pc	39	
●	Amarillo, TX	81/48/s	75		Freeport, IL	61/36/pc	25		Massillon, OH	52/41/s	25		Sarasota, FL	84/67/s	25	
Ames, IA	67/34/pc	25			Fremont, OH	50/42/s	25		McLean, VA	57/40/s	25		Savannah, GA	75/56/pc	35	
Anderson, SC	71/47/s	50			Fort Collins, CO	64/32/s	75		Melbourne, FL	84/70/sh	25		Sheboygan, WI	46/36/pc	25	
●	Appleton, WI	49/32/pc	25		Gadsden, AL	70/51/pc	48		Memphis, TN	72/58/pc	47		Shelby, NC	68/46/s	40	
Asheville, NC	66/43/s	40			Gainesville, FL	83/56/pc	25		Middletown, NY	47/22/s	38		Sherman, TX	70/60/t	47	
Ashland, OH	51/41/s	25			Galesburg, IL	65/39/s	25		Milford, MA	48/24/s	25		●	Shreveport, LA	78/65/t	46
Athens, GA	74/50/pc	47			Gastonia, NC	68/46/s	40	●	Milwaukee, WI	54/41/c	25		Silver City, NM	74/39/s	55	
Augusta, GA	75/48/pc	46			Glen Rose, TX	77/59/t	37		Monroe, MI	43/40/pc	25		Sioux Falls, SD	52/32/pc	37	
Austin, TX	84/66/t	75		●	Gonzales, LA	79/69/c	55	●	Monroe, LA	76/64/t	44		Somerset, PA	47/35/s	21	
Bartlesville, OK	76/56/s	55			Great Falls, MT	42/20/sf	38		Montgomery, AL	73/55/pc	35		Somerville, NJ	53/26/s	40	
Battle Creek, MI	51/43/pc	25			Green Bay, WI	46/33/c	25		Muncie, IN	57/48/s	24		●	South Bend, IN	56/41/pc	25
Bedford, IN	60/47/s	41			Greenville, SC	70/46/s	50		Murfreesboro, TN	67/51/s	51		Spartanburg, SC	69/46/s	50	
Binghamton, NY	36/27/pc	38			Hackensack, NJ	52/34/s	38		Naples, FL	86/70/t	25		Springfield, IL	65/45/pc	25	
Bluffton, SC	69/59/pc	42			Hagerstown, MD	55/38/s	21		Nashville, TN	68/52/s	51		Springfield, MO	72/52/s	47	
Bremerton, WA	47/30/sh	21			Hattiesburg, MS	75/62/c	45		Neptune, NJ	53/38/s	40		St. Augustine, FL	78/63/c	25	
Brockton, MA	49/24/s	25			Henderson, KY	64/49/s	25		New Bedford, MA	51/24/s	25		St. Cloud, MN	43/26/pc	50	
Brownwood, TX	82/54/t	33			Hendersonville, NC	67/43/s	40		New Bern, NC	66/47/s	40		St. George, UT	71/49/s	25	
Burlington, IA	67/42/s	36			Herkimer, NY	41/24/s	42		New Philadelphia, OH	52/37/s	25		Staunton, VA	60/33/s	43	
Burlington, NC	66/43/s	40			Hillsdale, MI	50/41/s	24		Newark, OH	55/37/s	42		Stevens Point, WI	49/29/c	25	
Burlington, VT	36/26/s	40			Holland, MI	50/43/c	25		Newton, NJ	49/26/s	40		Stockton, CA	62/41/pc	42	
Cambridge, OH	54/39/s	28			Hornell, NY	43/30/pc	44		New York, NY	52/40/s	38		Stroudsburg, PA	48/25/s	40	
Camdenton, MO	74/52/s	45		●	Houma, LA	79/70/c	53		Norwich, CT	51/25/s	13		Stuart, FL	85/71/pc	25	
Canandaigua, NY	39/28/pc	38			Howell, MI	48/41/pc	25		Ocala, FL	87/59/pc						

Air Quality Index: 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous

	Sunday	Monday		Sunday	Monday		Sunday	Monday		Sunday	Monday
	High/low/W	High/low/W		High/low/W	High/low/W		High/low/W	High/low/W		High/low/W	High/low/W
Acapulco	87/69/s	87/70/pc	● Cape Town	73/61/s	72/56/pc	La Paz	58/37/sh	57/38/sh	San Jose	87/67/pc	87/68/sh
● Addis Ababa	75/55/sh	72/54/sh	Caracas	88/73/pc	90/73/t	Lagos	90/80/t	89/80/t	San Salvador	91/66/s	90/67/s
Algiers	65/46/pc	67/45/sh	● Casablanca	76/48/pc	79/53/s	Lima	82/72/c	82/72/pc	Santiago	85/52/s	80/50/s
Amman	70/51/s	81/56/s	Colombo	89/75/t	89/76/t	Lisbon	72/50/s	72/56/pc	Sao Paulo	71/63/c	78/65/pc
Amsterdam	51/32/s	50/32/s	Copenhagen	46/30/s	43/32/pc	London	55/34/s	55/33/s	Sarajevo	58/41/t	44/30/r
Ankara	63/48/c	68/43/pc	Damascus	73/45/c	80/48/s	Madrid	65/35/s	68/40/s	Shanghai	76/53/s	73/62/c
Asuncion	93/70/s	96/72/s	Dublin	53/40/pc	52/39/c	● Manila	93/78/pc	94/79/s	● Singapore	86/76/t	87/76/t
Athens	64/56/t	65/55/t	● Geneva	50/43/r	52/34/s	Mexico City	85/57/s	87/57/pc	Stockholm	38/19/s	38/17/pc
Auckland	72/59/pc	68/55/pc	Guatemala City	83/59/pc	83/61/c	Milan	66/45/pc	63/43/pc	● Sydney	70/61/r	72/64/pc
Baghdad	73/47/s	78/53/s	Hanoi	86/75/t	88/74/s	Mombasa	92/78/r	91/78/t	Taipei	78/63/pc	82/65/s
Bangkok	97/82/s	101/81/s	Harare	78/56/s	80/56/pc	Montevideo	77/59/pc	72/60/c	Tegucigalpa	84/59/s	87/59/s
Beijing	72/53/c	65/49/c	Havana	90/67/s	89/69/pc	Montreal	34/25/s	48/34/c	Tehran	60/43/s	66/47/s
Beirut	69/57/c	75/62/s	Helsinki	36/25/s	35/22/s	● Moscow	49/41/c	53/41/c	● Tokyo	62/49/c	62/48/s
Belgrade	62/43/c	48/31/r	● Hong Kong	79/71/c	77/72/t	Nairobi	83/61/t	81/60/t	Toronto	37/32/pc	58/39/c
Berlin	47/28/pc	43/27/pc	Jakarta	90/75/sh	89/75/t	New Delhi	86/66/pc	89/66/s	● Tunis	60/53/sh	64/53/sh
Bogota	66/49/sh	67/51/sh	Jerusalem	68/46/s	77/52/s	Panama City	93/75/c	93/73/c	Vancouver	46/35/c	48/35/sf
Brussels	49/33/pc	50/31/s	Johannesburg	73/56/s	71/55/pc	Paris	51/41/pc	55/34/s	● Vienna	53/38/sh	46/29/pc
Bucharest	63/42/t	59/38/r	● Kabul	61/45/c	55/39/t	Port-au-Prince	96/70/sh	95/70/s	Warsaw	41/28/r	42/27/pc
● Budapest	60/41/sh	51/28/c	Khartoum	95/70/pc	98/73/s	Rio de Janeiro	81/70/r	82/73/s	Yerevan	54/36/pc	60/41/pc
● Buenos Aires	72/64/sh	72/63/c	● Kyiv	49/43/r	46/33/r	Riyadh	77/53/pc	82/56/s	● Zagreb	60/37/sh	51/29/c
Cairo	82/61/s	88/66/s	Kingston	88/75/s	86/76/pc	● Rome	63/48/t	67/42/c	● Zurich	53/38/sh	47/28/pc

● Denotes possible travel delays Sunday

Weather(W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

NOTABLE DEATHS

Emil Bocek, 100, the last living Czech pilot who fought the Nazis while serving with Britain’s Royal Air Force during World War II, has died. A community center for war veterans in the Czech Republic city of Brno said he died March 25. The Czech Defense Ministry confirmed his death. No further details were given. Bocek fled Czechoslovakia in 1939 at age 16 following the country’s occupation by Germany. He fought the Nazis in France and then moved to Britain, where he joined an RAF fighter squadron as a pilot in 1944. Bocek received several decorations in both his homeland and in Britain from the Czech and British governments.

John Brockington, 74, a former All-Pro fullback who ranks fourth on the Green Bay Packers’ career rushing list, has died. The Packers announced that Brockington died Friday in San Diego. Brockington played for the Packers from 1971 to 1977 and rushed for 5,024 yards during that stretch. He was the first running back in NFL history to rush for over 1,000 yards in each of his first three seasons. He earned All-Pro honors and was named the NFL offensive rookie of the year in 1971.

Ken Buchanan, 77, the Scottish boxer who became the undisputed world lightweight champion in 1971 and won his first 33 fights, has died. His death was announced Saturday in a Facebook post from the Ken Buchanan Foundation, which said that he “passed away peacefully in his sleep.” Buchanan’s son revealed last year that the former boxer was suffering from dementia and living in a nursing home. The boxer won the WBA lightweight title in 1970 by defeating Ismael Laguna in a famous fight in Puerto Rico and added the WBC crown a year later by defeating Ruben Navarro. He was stripped of the WBC title for failing to defend it against Pedro Carrasco and then lost the WBA belt when he controversially suffered just a second defeat against the great Roberto Duran.

Nick Galifianakis, 94, a former Democratic U.S. representative who represented central North Carolina for several years before two unsuccessful Senate bids, died on March 27 at age 94. A family spokesman told a newspaper that Galifianakis, who had Parkinson’s for many years, died at a Raleigh retirement community. He served in the state General Assembly and in Congress for over a decade, having been elected to Congress for the first time in 1966. He unseated the Democratic incumbent in the 1972 Democratic primary but lost to arch-conservative Jesse Helms in the general election.

Mel King, 94, a longtime Boston civil rights activist whose 1983 campaign for mayor helped the city repair some of the racial divisions sparked during the school busing crisis, has died. King became the first Black man to reach a general mayoral contest in Boston, facing off against fellow state Rep. Ray Flynn, who would go on to win. The election was a test for the city, which had undergone years of strife following the court-ordered desegregation of the public schools in the mid-1970s.

Gordon Moore, 94, the Intel Corp. co-founder who set the breakneck pace of progress in the digital age with a simple 1965 prediction of how quickly engineers would boost the capacity of computer chips, has died. Intel and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation say Moore died March 24 at his home in Hawaii. Moore made his famous observation three years before he helped start Intel in 1968.

From wire reports

SUNDAY NEWS SHOWS

Guest lineups

ABC’s “This Week” – Joe Tacopina, a lawyer for former President Donald Trump; former Gov. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark.; Eric Schmidt, former Google CEO and chairman.

NBC’s “Meet the Press” – Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va.; former Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.; former Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker, the new NCAA president.

CBS’ “Face the Nation” – Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn.; John Bolton, a former national security adviser; Editor-in-Chief Emma Tucker of The Wall Street Journal; Preet Bharara, a former U.S. attorney in New York.

CNN’s “State of the Union” – Tacopina, Manchin; Lanny Davis, lawyer for former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen; Reps. Mike Turner, R- Ohio, and Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas.

“Fox News Sunday” – Manchin; Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La.; Jim Trusty, a lawyer for Trump; former Attorney General William Barr.

Associated Press

Areas reopen near Fukushima nuclear plant, but few return

Orders lifted in time for cherry blossom season

Mari Yamaguchi
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO – Evacuation orders were lifted in small sections of a Japanese town just southwest of the wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant on Saturday, in time for the area’s popular cherry blossom season, and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida joined a ceremony to mark the reopening.

The area of about 1.5 square miles where entry restrictions were lifted is part of Tomioka town, most of which had already been reopened since an earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 triggered triple meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Former residents and visitors celebrated the latest reopening as they strolled along a street known as “the cherry blossoms tunnel.”

Koichi Ono, 75, was back to the neighborhood where he grew up and lived all his life until he was forced to evacuate. “After 12 years, I can finally return to my life here,” he told NHK television. “The disaster hit when I was just starting my retirement life, so I’m starting all over again.”

Ono, who learned indigo and vegetable dying while evacuating, wants to open a workshop to serve as a meeting place for people. “I hope more people come and visit.”

At the ceremony, Kishida pledged to keep working to reopen all no-go zones.

“The lifting of the evacuation is by no means a final goal, but the start of the recovery,” Kishida said.

The 2011 disaster caused massive amounts of radiation to leak from the plant, and more than 160,000 residents had to evacuate from across Fu-



Visitors take photos of cherry blossoms in Tomioka, Japan, on Saturday.
KYODO NEWS VIA AP

kushima, including about 30,000 who are still unable to return home.

Tomioka is one of 12 nearby towns fully or partially designated as no-go zones. The two sections in Tomioka that reopened for the first time in 12 years represent one-fifth of the worst-hit no-go zone and were selected by the government along with several other locations in the region for intensive decontamination.

But jobs, daily necessities and infrastructure remain insufficient, making it difficult for younger people to return, and families with small children worry about possible radiation effects.

“The living environment and many other things still need to be sorted out,” Tomioka Mayor Ikuo Yamamoto told reporters.

In the newly reopened Yonomori and Osuge districts of Tomioka, just over 50

of about 2,500 registered residents have reportedly returned or expressed intention to go back to live. Only about 10% of the town’s pre-disaster population of 16,000 have returned since large areas of Tomioka reopened in 2017.

Town surveys show a majority of former residents say they have decided not to return because they have already found jobs and educations and built relationships elsewhere.

The evacuation order was lifted in several sections of another hard-hit town, Namie, northwest of the plant, on Friday. The reopened area accounts for only about 20% of the town.

“I have mixed feelings because there are many residents who still cannot return or have no idea when they can return,” said Namie Mayor Eiko Yoshida at an evacuation-lifting ceremony on Friday.

IN BRIEF

Presidents of Taiwan, Guatemala visit Mayan pyramid

Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and the Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei toured the archaeological site of Tikal on Saturday during a trip by Tsai that aims to shore up the self-governing island’s ties with its remaining allies in Central America.

The Taiwanese leader will visit Guatemala and Belize, the island’s only two remaining allies in Central America, where Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama and Costa Rica have all switched their support to China. Honduras broke relations with Taipei a week ago.

Under a blazing sun Saturday, Tsai and Guatemalan Foreign Minister Mario Búcaro, representing Giammattei – who suffers from multiple sclerosis – climbed one of the Mayans’ most important pyramids: Temple II, also called Temple of the Masks.

Before arriving in Guatemala, the Taiwanese president visited the United States. She will culminate her visit to Central America with a stop in Belize, before returning to the U.S.

The trip also is aimed to solidifying ties in Latin America as China funnels money into the region and pressures its countries to break off relations with the self-governed democratic island.

Israelis still protest legal overhaul despite suspension

TEL AVIV, Israel – Tens of thousands of Israelis protested on Saturday against a controversial plan to revamp the country’s legal system, despite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s suspension of the changes earlier in the week.

The protesters gathered in Tel Aviv, Israel’s commercial hub on the Mediterranean, for the 13th weekly demonstration, raising Israeli flags and banners against what they said were plans to weaken the Supreme Court. Several smaller rallies took place in other towns and cities.

The protests have been going on since Netanyahu’s government, the most right-wing in the country’s history, introduced the changes.

But on Monday, Netanyahu delayed the overhaul plan that deeply divided the Israelis, saying he wanted “to avoid civil war” by making time to seek a compromise with political opponents. Protest organizers, however, vowed to keep up the pressure, calling for the plans to be scrapped.

The proposal has plunged Israel into its worst domestic crisis in



Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen, center left, and Guatemala’s President Alejandro Giammattei, with crutches, walk to a staging area during their visit to the Mayan site Tikal in Peten, Guatemala, Saturday. MOISES CASTILLO/AP

decades.

Business leaders, top economists and former security chiefs have all come out against the plan, saying it is pushing the country toward an autocracy. Fighter pilots and military reservists have threatened not to report for duty, and the country’s currency, the shekel, has tumbled in value.

Kaley Cuoco has 1st child, a daughter, with Tom Pelphrey

LOS ANGELES – Kaley Cuoco is flying high after giving birth to her first child.

The star of “The Flight Attendant” and “The Big Bang Theory” said on Instagram Saturday that she and fellow actor Tom Pelphrey now have a daughter named Matilda Carmine Richie Pelphrey.

“The new light of our lives!” Cuoco posted, along with a series of pictures of the baby, who was born Thursday. “We are overjoyed and grateful for this little miracle.”

Cuoco has been married twice before, most recently to equestrian Karl Cook. The two split in 2021. Last year she began dating Pelphrey, and in October they announced they were expecting a child together.

Cuoco, 37, appeared for 12 seasons on the CBS sitcom “The Big Bang Theory.” She has played the title role in “The

Flight Attendant “ on HBO Max for two seasons, and was nominated for an Emmy for each.

It’s also the first child for Pelphrey, 40, who has acted primarily in soaps, including “Guiding Light” and “As The World Turns.”

Arizona man convicted of killing 4 people in Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS – A man has been convicted of killing four people in Minnesota and then leaving their bodies in an abandoned SUV in a Wisconsin cornfield.

Antoine Suggs, 39, of Scottsdale, Arizona, was found guilty Friday of four counts of second-degree murder in the September 2021 deaths of Nitosha Flug-Presley of Stillwater, 30; Jasmine C. Sturm, 30; Matthew Pettus, 26; and Loyace Foreman III, 35, all of St. Paul.

He will be sentenced on May 15. Suggs testified that he shot the four in self-defense because he thought they were going to rob him, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reported.

Prosecutors said his motive remains unclear but that Suggs meant to kill the victims after a night of drinking in St. Paul.

Suggs’ father, Darren McWright, who also goes by the last name Osborne, was sentenced to five years in prison after pleading guilty to helping his son hide the victims’ bodies.

From wire reports

Intensity rises in debt ceiling debate

Current fight feels different, some say

Kevin Freking
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – Fights over increasing the nation’s borrowing authority have been contentious in Congress, yet follow a familiar pattern: Time and again, lawmakers found a way to step back from the brink before markets began to panic and the nation risked a dangerous default on its debt.

But this year’s fight has a different feel, some lawmakers say.

A new Republican majority in the House is itching for a spending showdown, and determined not to yield. They blame what they view as excessive federal spending for higher food and gasoline prices and the growing national debt. Led by Speaker Kevin McCarthy, they have ruled out passing a “clean” debt ceiling increase even as the White House insists such legislation be passed without conditions. It’s an impasse that shows no signs of easing ahead of this summer’s deadline for action.

“Very worried. Very worried,” was how Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., a close McCarthy ally, described his outlook. “And frankly, I don’t see how we get there at this point. There’s no process set up, there’s no dialogue, there’s no discussion.”

The political conditions are comparable to 2011, when a new Republican majority swept into power after a resounding election win and was determined to confront a Democratic White House and extract major spending cuts in return for a debt limit increase.

To resolve that stalemate, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed the Budget Control Act. The bill temporarily allowed borrowing to resume, set new spending limits and created a bipartisan “supercommittee” to recommend at least \$1.2 trillion more in deficit reduction over 10 years. Republicans and Democrats on the panel failed to compromise, however, triggering automatic reductions in spending.

But some damage was done. Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services downgraded U.S. debt for the first time that year because it lacked confidence political leaders would make the choices needed to avert a long-term fiscal crisis.

In 2013, Obama took a different tack. He made clear early on there would be no negotiations on must-pass legislation to prevent a U.S. default, and he never wavered.

A partial government shutdown, which began Oct. 1, swiftly coincided with the prospects of a default. On Oct. 16, Congress passed legislation to end the twin threats and GOP lawmakers who demanded to roll back Obama’s signature health care law got nothing for their efforts. “We fought the good fight. We just didn’t win,” conceded then-House Speaker John Boehner.

Republicans say they are determined that Biden, who was Obama’s vice president during both of those debt ceiling battles, will have to follow the path set in 2011 – not the one set in 2013.

“President Biden is not President Obama, right?” said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the leader of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus. “His poll numbers are in the tank and they’re going to keep go-



Led by Speaker Kevin McCarthy, House Republicans have ruled out passing a “clean” debt ceiling increase even as the White House insists such legislation be passed without conditions. J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP FILE

ing down.”

The result, Perry said, is that Biden doesn’t have the political standing to ignore House Republicans.

“Look, there’s gonna be shrapnel all around, right. Right?” Perry said. “Everybody might take some wounds from it, but he’s not walking out of this thing unscathed.”

After a tumultuous start to the new Congress in which Republicans struggled to elect a speaker, they are taking great pains to show unity. Moderates and conservatives in the House are adamant: Biden must engage.

“Any damage in Treasury markets and the bond market, to the economy, will fall at the feet of the president of the United States because he’s the one that started this entire saga saying he wanted no negotiations,” said Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla.

Democratic Rep. Gerry Connolly of Virginia said what concerns him most is that some Republicans believe the damage from a federal default is manageable, rather than to be avoided at all costs. “Some of these people are substituting belief for empirical evidence and don’t accept the warnings of economists, Wall Street, Janet Yellen,” Connolly said.

Breaching the debt ceiling is different than a federal government shutdown. The government can continue to operate once the Treasury has exhausted its cash-on-hand. But outgoing payments would be limited to incoming revenue. Not all payments could be made on time and in full. Many fear such an event would shake the foundations of the global financial system.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the government may be unable to pay all its bills as soon as June. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody’s Analytics, told a House panel last week the so-called X Day is likely to occur in mid-August. He said market pressures will likely build after Congress returns from



Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., is encouraging talks. “I think Kevin McCarthy has been most reasonable,” he said. J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP FILE

its Fourth of July recess.

“As we can see from recent events given the banking crisis, the system is very fragile at this point in time,” Zandi said. “Adding the debt limit as an issue for investors would be particularly inopportune.”

He said there would be immediate and long-term consequences from a default. “I think under any scenario, we would go into recession, it would be severe, financial markets would be upended,” Zandi said.

In the Senate, Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia is encouraging negotiations. “I think Kevin McCarthy has been most reasonable,” he said.

GOP leadership in the Senate has also voiced support for McCarthy’s efforts. But some Senate Republicans say spending fights should be relegated to the annual spending bills that Congress passes to fund government agencies. An increase in the debt limit doesn’t authorize new federal spending – it only allows borrowing to pay for what Congress has already approved.

“Look, if we have disagreements on spending, and if we have to close government to resolve things, so be it, but threatening a collapse of the U.S. and world economy without raising the debt ceiling is, in my opinion, a weapon that



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the government may be unable to pay all its bills as soon as June. ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

is too severe,” said Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah.

There have been roughly 80 deals to raise or suspend the borrowing cap since the 1960s. Romney noted that the debt ceiling was extended, with the help of Democrats, multiple times during Donald Trump’s presidency.

“Of course, last time you had President Trump as the individual pushing to raise the debt ceiling, but somehow when we have a Democratic president, we find religion,” Romney said.

The focus on the debt limit, now at about \$31.4 trillion, intensified last week with McCarthy sending a letter to Biden warning that his position of not negotiating “could prevent America from meeting its obligations and hold dire ramifications for the entire nation.”

In a formal response, Biden signaled that he would not be willing to meet directly with the speaker until House Republicans released their own budget plan, which he asked McCarthy to do before lawmakers left Washington on Thursday for the Easter recess.

“As I have repeatedly said, that conversation must be separate from prompt action on the Congress’ basic obligation to pay the Nation’s bills and avoid economic catastrophe,” Biden wrote.

Hearing set over Arizona execution pause

Governor ordered to appear in court

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX – Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs has been ordered to appear in court Thursday in her efforts to halt pending executions because of questions about the rights of death row prisoners.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Frank Moskowitz said late Friday that Hobbs and Ryan Thornell, the state’s prison director, must show up to explain why the court shouldn’t issue an order against them on the grounds they are violating the constitutional rights of victims entitled to prompt justice.

The afternoon court appearance is scheduled the same day convicted murderer Aaron Gunches had been set to die. The Arizona Supreme Court in recent days concluded state law didn’t require Hobbs to proceed with the planned execution, even though it wasn’t officially called off.

An email requesting a response from

the governor’s office was not immediately answered.

At the same time, Maricopa County Attorney Rachel H. Mitchell has asked the court to extend the execution warrant for Gunches by 25 days.

Gunches had been set to die by lethal injection for the 2002 killing of his girlfriend’s ex-husband Ted Price. He had pleaded guilty to a murder charge in the shooting death near Mesa, Arizona.

Price’s sister, Karen Price, has pressed the court to order Hobbs to let the execution go ahead.

Hobbs had previously appointed a retired federal magistrate judge to examine Arizona’s procurement of lethal injection drugs and other death penalty protocols.

The corrections department said Monday its death penalty protocols “have been paused as we conduct our systemic review of the execution process.”

Arizona has 110 prisoners on death row. It carried out three executions last year after a hiatus of almost eight years over criticism that a 2014 execution was botched and because of difficulties obtaining execution drugs.



Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs had appointed a retired federal magistrate judge to examine the state’s procurement of lethal injection drugs and other death penalty protocols. ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP FILE

Wisconsin election has high stakes

Supreme Court control will be decided Tuesday

Scott Bauer
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADISON, Wis. – Control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and likely the future of abortion access, Republican-drawn legislative maps and years of GOP policies in the key swing state rests with the outcome of an election Tuesday that has seen record campaign spending.

The winner of the high-stakes contest between Republican-backed Dan Kelly and Democratic-supported Janet Protasiewicz will determine majority control of the court headed into the 2024 presidential election. The court came within one vote of overturning President Joe Biden’s narrow win in 2020, and both sides expect another close race in 2024.

It’s the latest election where abortion rights has been the central issue since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last June.

It’s also an example of how officially nonpartisan court races have grown into political battles as major legal fights play out at the state level.

All of it has fueled spending that will double, and likely triple or more, the previous high of \$15.4 million spent on a state court race in Illinois in 2004. Democrats have spent heavily for Protasiewicz and Republicans for Kelly.

Democrats are trying to flip control of the court, which has had a majority of conservative justices the past 15 years. That has allowed the court to uphold an array of Republican priorities, including banning absentee ballot drop boxes last year and affirming the 2011 law all-but ending collective bargaining for most public workers.

“The policy direction of Wisconsin is going to be determined in large part by this Supreme Court race,” said University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor Barry Burden. “Everything from abortion to disputes over the 2024 presidential election are going to land in the lap of this court. And the winner will be the deciding justice on



The winner of the Supreme Court contest between Janet Protasiewicz, left, and Dan Kelly will possibly determine the future of abortion access in the swing state ahead of the 2024 presidential election. MORRY GASH/AP FILE

these issues.”

Protasiewicz, 60, has tried to make the race a referendum on abortion, running on a Democratic-backed agenda that includes her loudly voicing her “personal values” in support of abortion rights.

The court is expected to rule on a lawsuit challenging the state’s 174-year-old law banning nearly all abortions.

That law, enacted a year after statehood, went back into effect after the Supreme Court’s ruling overturning Roe v. Wade, leading to an end to abortions being provided in Wisconsin. Democrats, including Gov. Tony Evers who won re-election in November, have seized on the issue.

“Abortion was a real motivator for Democrats and independents,” Burden said. “It’s been amped up in this election because the court has a real role in determining the policy.”

Protasiewicz won the backing of Planned Parenthood and other similar groups as she focused on abortion without saying how she would rule on the pending case challenging the ban. But she’s promised that Kelly would vote to uphold it.

Kelly hasn’t said whether he thinks

the ban is legal. But he has expressed opposition to abortion in the past, including in a 2012 blog post in which he said the Democratic Party and the National Organization for Women were committed to normalizing the taking of human life.

Kelly also has done legal work for Wisconsin Right to Life, one of three anti-abortion groups that has endorsed him.

Abortion isn’t the only hot political issue Protasiewicz has embraced. She also called the Republican-drawn legislative maps upheld by the current court “rigged” and said she would welcome revisiting them.

The state Supreme Court upheld Republican-drawn maps in 2022. Those maps, widely regarded as among the most gerrymandered in the country, have helped Republicans increase their hold on the state Legislature to near supermajority levels, even as Democrats have won statewide elections, including Evers as governor in both 2018 and 2022 and Biden in 2020.

When asked in an interview on Wisconsin Public Radio whether he thought the GOP-drawn maps were fair, Kelly punted.

“I think that’s a political judgment,” he said, adding that his view was “entirely irrelevant.”

Kelly was appointed to the state Supreme Court by then-Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, in 2016.

He served four years before being defeated in 2020 on the same ballot as the Democratic presidential primary. Kelly was endorsed by then-President Donald Trump that year.

Protasiewicz has tried to paint Kelly as an “extreme partisan” and a “true threat to democracy” given his ties to Republicans, including advising them on the plan to have fake GOP electors cast their ballots for Trump following the 2020 election even though he had lost.

Four of the past six presidential races in Wisconsin have been decided by less than a percentage point, including Trump’s victory in 2016 and Biden’s win in 2020.

Kelly, 58, has tried to distance himself from his previous Republican clients and his political beliefs.

“I don’t talk about my politics because I understand they are not relevant to the work of the court,” he told the Dane County Bar Association in March. “We’re there to decide questions of the law and that’s it.”

Protasiewicz is a former prosecutor who was first elected as a Milwaukee County judge in 2014.

Kelly has accused Protasiewicz of being “bought and paid for” by Democrats and crossing the line by all-but declaring how she would rule on cases expected to come before the court. Kelly also tried to paint Protasiewicz as soft on crime, citing cases she handled as a judge, while also accusing her of “straight up lying” throughout the campaign on various issues.

The winner will serve a 10-year term starting in August replacing retiring conservative Justice Pat Roggensack.

In a sign of how divisive the race is, Roggensack endorsed Kelly, while her daughter, Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Ellen Brostrom, backed Protasiewicz.

Brostrom said Kelly was “unfit” to serve because of his involvement in the fake GOP electors scheme.

Invincibility

Continued from Page 1NN

Of course, some of the celebration by Trump’s detractors may be premature. Trump could seek to have a judge quickly dismiss the case. Even if it moves forward, there’s no guarantee of conviction. Intensifying investigations in Atlanta and Washington are seen as potentially more serious legal threats.

Still, Trump and his team were caught by surprise when word of the New York indictment broke Thursday evening, following news reports that the grand jury hearing the case was set for a weeklong hiatus. As the deliberations dragged on, some in Trump’s orbit had become convinced that the case had stalled and that charges might never be brought. That included Trump lawyer Joe Tacopina, who said Friday morning he had hoped the “rule of law would prevail.”

Trump, he said on the “Today” show, was “initially was shocked” by news of the charges, but quickly pivoted to his usual pushback playbook.

“After he got over that,” he said, Trump “put a notch on his belt and he decided we have to fight now. And he got into a typical Donald Trump posture where he’s ready to be combative on something that he believes is an injustice. ... I think he’s now in the posture that he’s ready to fight this.”

In the meantime, Trump and his team have tried to use the news to his advantage, hoping to energize his loyal base by painting the investigation as part of a larger plot to derail his candidacy.

Already, the charges have been a boon to his struggling fundraising. The campaign announced Friday evening that it had raised over \$4 million in the 24 hours after the indictment became public, far smashing its previous record after the FBI search of Trump’s Mar-a-Lago club.

More than 25% of donations, according to the campaign, came from first-time donors. The average contribution: \$34.

His campaign also continued to blast out supportive statements from dozens of top Republicans who have rallied behind Trump, including several of his declared and likely challengers, underscoring his continued hold on the party.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, in a



A motorcade with former President Donald Trump on board passes supporters in West Palm Beach, Florida, on Saturday. GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

speech Saturday to conservatives meeting in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, accused the Democratic prosecutor in New York, Alvin Bragg, of weaponizing the law “for political purposes” in bringing a case against “a former president.” DeSantis said the district attorney had indicted “a former president on misdemeanor offenses” that he was “straining to try to convert into felonies.”

Trump has been in contact by phone with key congressional allies, including members of House leadership and top committees, according to people familiar with the conversations, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the response.

Trump ally Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., who formally endorsed the former president Friday, said Trump “doesn’t back down” and was going to “fight back,” telling a local radio show it was “yet another chapter where Donald Trump is going to come back on top in the end.”

The media maelstrom has catapulted

Trump back into the spotlight he craves, at least temporarily limiting attention being paid to his rivals, including DeSantis, who is widely expected to challenge Trump for the nomination, and has been holding events across the county to promote his book.

Trump aides have been discussing other ideas to maximize the situation, including the possibility of holding a press event either before or after the arraignment. Trump is expected to travel from Florida to New York on Monday and stay overnight at Trump Tower in midtown Manhattan before heading to the courthouse early Tuesday. He will return to Florida after the arraignment.

Trump has long denied that he had a sexual encounter with the porn actor known as Stormy Daniels and has blasted Bragg for pursuing the years-old case.

Trump is also facing continued investigations in Georgia, over his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, and in Washington, where a spe-

cial counsel is probing the events of Jan. 6, 2021, as well as Trump’s handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and potential obstruction of the investigation.

But Sam Nunberg, a longtime former aide who broke with Trump years ago, said that while he no longer supports Trump, he believes the Manhattan case is “a waste of time,” given the allegations, which remain under seal. And he said he was skeptical it would ultimately matter.

“It doesn’t surprise me,” he said of the indictment. “What would surprise me is if he actually ended up behind bars in prison and I don’t see that happening.”

D’Antonio said that sentiment – and a continued belief that Trump will somehow prevail and dodge the charges – continues among the many people who have reached out to him in the last 24 hours, despite the charges.

“They’re like, he’s going to get away with it,” he said. “Somehow, he’s going to get it thrown out.”

PHOTOS OF THE WEEK

Continued on next page



A protestor in Nantes, France, loses his shoe Tuesday as he kicks a tear gas canister during a demonstration against President Emmanuel Macron's plan to raise the country's legal retirement age from 62 to 64. JEREMIAS GONZALEZ/AP

THE WEEK'S MOST COMPELLING IMAGES

March 25- March 31

From protests in France, to the visit of U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris to Africa, to the China Fashion Week in Beijing, to Ukrainian soldiers meeting their beloved ones at a railway station close to the front line in Kramatorsk, this gallery highlights some of the most compelling images from around the world made or published by The Associated Press in the past week.

The selection was curated by AP photo editors Eloy Martin in Spain and Patrick Sison in New York.



A model presents a creation from Chinese fashion studio D. Martina Queen during a show at China Fashion Week in Beijing on March 26. MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP



Vice President Kamala Harris arrives in Accra, Ghana, on March 26. The U.S. is deepening its outreach to Africa amid global competition, notably with China. MISPER APAWU/AP

PHOTOS OF THE WEEK

Continued from previous page



A Ukrainian soldier, left, kisses her husband as they meet at a railway station close to the front line in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region, on Wednesday. LIBKOS/AP



Afghan schoolgirls attend their class on the first day of the new school year in Kabul on March 25. High schools in Afghanistan remained closed for girls for the second year after the Taliban returned to power in 2021. BINSAR BAKKARA/AP



People depart the reunification center at Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., after a deadly shooting Monday at The Covenant School. JOHN BAZEMORE/AP



A Kashmiri Muslim girl attends Quran recitation classes during the fasting month of Ramadan in Srinagar, India, on March 26. MUKHTAR KHAN/AP

UN food chief calls for billions in aid

Says funding needed to avert unrest, starvation

Edith M. Lederer
ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS – Without billions of dollars more to feed millions of hungry people, the world will see mass migration, destabilized countries, and starving children and adults in the next 12 to 18 months, the head of the Nobel prize-winning U.N. World Food Program warned Friday.

David Beasley praised increased funding from the United States and Germany last year, and urged China, Gulf nations, billionaires and other countries “to step up big time.”

In an interview before he hands the reins of the world’s largest humanitarian organization to U.S. ambassador Cindy McCain next week, the former South Carolina governor said he’s “extremely worried” that WFP won’t raise about \$23 billion it needs this year to help millions of needy people.

“Right at this stage, I’ll be surprised if we get 40% of it, quite frankly,” he said.

Last year, Beasley raised \$14.2 billion for WFP, more than double the \$6 billion in 2017, the year he took over as executive director. That money helped over 128 million people in more than 120 countries and territories.

Beasley said he was able to convince the United States last year to increase its funding from about \$3.5 billion to \$7.4 billion and Germany to raise its contribution from \$350 million a few years ago to \$1.7 billion, but he doesn’t think they’ll do it again this year.

Other countries need to step up now, he said, starting with China, the world’s second-largest economy which gave WFP just \$11 million last year.

Beasley applauded China for its success in substantially reducing hunger and poverty at home, but said it gave less than one cent per person last year compared to the United States, the world’s leading economy, which gave about \$22 per person.

China needs “to engage in the multi-lateral world” and be willing to provide help that is critical, he said. “They have a moral obligation to do so.”

Beasley said they’ve done “an incredible job of feeding their people,” and “now we need their help in other parts of the world” on how they did it, particularly in poorer countries including in Africa.

With high oil prices Gulf countries can also do more, especially Muslim nations that have relations with countries in east Africa, the Sahara and elsewhere in the Middle East, he said, expressing hope they will increase contributions.

Beasley said the wealthiest billionaires made unprecedented profits during the COVID-19 pandemic, and “it’s not too much to ask some of the multi-billionaires to step up and help us in the short-term crisis,” even though charity isn’t a long-term solution to the food crisis.

In the long-term, he said what he’d really like to see is billionaires using their experience and success to engage



Seeing little girls and boys smiling in the midst of war and suffering from hunger “inspires you not to give up,” said World Food Program chief David Beasley, shown meeting with villagers in Wagalla in northern Kenya in 2022.



Beasley praised increased funding from the United States and Germany last year, and urged China, Gulf nations, billionaires and other countries “to step up big time.”
PHOTOS BY BRIAN INGANGA/AP FILE

“in the world’s greatest need – and that is food on the planet to feed 8 billion people.”

“The world has to understand that the next 12 to 18 months is critical, and if we back off the funding, you will have mass migration, and you will have destabilization nations and that will all be on top of starvation among children and people around the world,” he warned.

Beasley said WFP was just forced to cut rations by 50% to 4 million people in Afghanistan, and “these are people who are knocking on famine’s door now.”

“We don’t have enough money just to reach the most vulnerable people now,” he said. “So we are in a crisis over the cliff stage right now, where we literally could have hell on earth if we’re not very careful.”

Beasley said he’s been telling leaders in the West and Europe that while they’re focusing everything on Ukraine

Beasley said he was able to convince the United States last year to increase its funding from about \$3.5 billion to \$7.4 billion and Germany to raise its contribution from \$350 million recently to \$1.7 billion, but he doesn’t think they’ll do it again this year.

and Russia, “you better well not forget about what’s south and southeast of you because I can assure you it is coming your way if you don’t pay attention and get on top of it.”

With \$400 trillion worth of wealth on the planet, he said, there’s no reason for any child to die of starvation.

The WFP executive director said leaders have to prioritize the humanitarian needs that are going to have the greatest impact on stability in societies around the world.

He singled out several priority places – Africa’s Sahel region as well as the east including Somalia, northern Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia; Syria which is having an impact on Jordan and Lebanon; and Central and South America where the number of people migrating to the United States is now five times what it was a year-and-a-half ago.

Beasley said McCain, the widow of

U.S. Senator John McCain from Arizona who was the 2008 Republican presidential nominee and has been the U.S. ambassador to Rome-based WFP and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, “is the right person at the right time” to lead the World Food Program.

They’ve been working together to make sure “she hits the ground running,” he said, But “it’s going to be a very, very challenging time” because of all the money going to the war in Ukraine, and the need to help so many other fragile economies.

Beasley said his biggest surprise was believing in April 2017, when he took over the agency and there were 80 million people in the world “marching to starvation,” that “we could end world hunger and put the World Food Program out of business.”

What he didn’t expect were the conflicts and wars, the climate shocks, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war, he said, which raised the 80 million in desperate need of food to 135 million right before COVID started spreading in early 2020, to 276 million before Russia invaded Ukraine – “the bread basket of the world” – in February 2022, and to 350 million now.

Beasley said “it’s hard not to get depressed” but two things give him hope.

Seeing little girls and boys smiling in the midst of war and suffering from hunger “inspires you not to give up,” he said, as does the bipartisan support in the often divided U.S. Congress for helping the poorest of the poor around the world.

As he returns to his family in South Carolina, Beasley said his dream remains to end world hunger.

VP tours Zambia farm with climate change in mind

Unlike in US, focus is on expanding access to food

Chris Megerian
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LUSAKA, Zambia – Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday traveled down a dirt road to tour a farm outside Zambia’s capital that’s using new techniques and technology to boost its vegetable crop as she highlighted ways to secure food supplies in an age of global warming.

“It’s an example of what can be done around the world,” she said after walking past rows of peppers and inspecting a drip irrigation system.

Unlike in the United States, where conversations about climate change usually revolve around replacing fossil fuels with clean energy, the focus in Africa is on expanding access to food.

Rising prices stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine have been damaging to poor countries, and global warming is expected to bring more challenges in the coming years.

Hunger can also create instability, leading to migration and conflict.

“The connection between these issues is quite clear,” Harris said.

She is pushing for \$7 billion in private-sector investments, mostly to boost conservation and improve food



Vice President Kamala Harris visits Panuka Farms outside Lusaka, Zambia, Saturday. Harris is on the last leg of a seven-day African visit that took her to Ghana and Tanzania. ANGELA NANDEKA/AP

production, to help Africa prepare for the effects of climate change. Her announcement about that goal came as she wrapped up her weeklong visit to Africa, which included earlier stops in Ghana and Tanzania.

The trip was intended to advance U.S. efforts to make inroads in a part of

the world where China’s influence runs deep. It’s the biggest-ticket item that Harris has announced, but more work will be needed to follow through.

For example, African Parks, a non-profit group, has committed to raise \$1.25 billion over the next seven years in order to expand its conservation pro-

gram.

Another organization, One Acre Fund, plans to raise \$100 million to plant 1 billion trees by the end of the decade.

The politics of climate change are complicated in Africa, which has contributed far less to overall greenhouse gas emissions than richer corners of the world such as the United States. According to the International Energy Agency, 43% of Africans didn’t have access to electricity in 2021, and recent outages have caused frustration.

In Ghana, Harris was questioned at a news conference about how the West can demand that Africa go green and forgo using its natural resources. She also was pressed on whether wealthy nations would supply \$100 billion annually to help poor countries cope with climate change, a commitment made under the Paris climate accord.

Harris said it is “critically important that, as global leaders, we all speak truth about the disparities that exist in terms of cause and effect and that we address those disparities.”

She said there were opportunities in the “clean energy economy” that could help generate growth in Africa.

As for the money, President Joe Biden has requested \$11 billion in his proposed budget to meet its international commitments.

“We are waiting for Congress to do its work,” Harris said.

Marine’s adoption of Afghan orphan voided

Girl’s future remains uncertain after ruling

Claire Galofaro, Juliet Linderman and Martha Mendoza
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – In a highly unusual ruling, a state court judge on Thursday voided a U.S. Marine’s adoption of an Afghan war orphan, more than a year after he took the little girl away from the Afghan couple raising her. But her future remains uncertain.

For now, the child will stay with Marine Maj. Joshua Mast and his wife, Stephanie, under a temporary custody order they obtained before the adoption. The Masts will have to re-prove to the court that they should be granted a permanent adoption.

Despite the uncertainty, the ruling was a welcome move for the Afghan couple, who had been identified by the Afghan government as the child’s relatives in February 2020 and raised her for 18 months. They dropped to their knees in prayer outside the courthouse. As they held each other, the young man wiped the tears from both their eyes with his wife’s headscarf.

The Masts quickly left the courthouse after Thursday’s hearing, flanked by their attorneys.

The dispute raised alarms at the highest levels of government, from the White House to the Taliban, after an Associated Press investigation in October revealed



Marine Maj. Joshua Mast and his wife, Stephanie, leave the Circuit Court in Charlottesville, Va., on Thursday. CLIFF OWEN/AP

how Mast became determined to rescue the baby and bring her home as an act of Christian faith. But until now, the adoption order has remained in place.

“There’s never, ever been a case like this,” said Judge Claude V. Worrell Jr. on Thursday.

The girl, who will turn 4 this summer, was an infant when she was found injured in the rubble after a U.S.-Afghan military raid in a rural part of the country in September 2019. She spent more than five months in a U.S. military hospital before the Afghan government and International Committee of the Red Cross determined she had living relatives, and unit-

ed her with them.

Unbeknownst to them, Mast learned about the baby while she was hospitalized, and decided that he and his wife should be her parents. The Masts told Virginia Circuit Court Judge Richard Moore that she was the daughter of transient terrorists who died in the fight, and thus a stateless orphan. He claimed that the Afghan government was prepared to waive jurisdiction over her, though it never did. Moore granted him the adoption.

The Masts contacted the couple in Afghanistan, offering to help with her medical treatment. After the U.S. military withdrew and Afghanistan fell to the Ta-

liban in 2021, the Masts helped them evacuate to the United States. Once they arrived, Mast used the adoption order to take the child, and the Afghan couple have not seen her since.

The Masts claim in court filings that they legally adopted the child, and that the Afghan couple’s accusations that they kidnapped her are “outrageous” and “unmerited.” They have repeatedly declined to comment to the AP.

Judge Worrell, who took over the case after Judge Moore retired in November, said the Afghan couple “were the de facto parents when they arrived in the U.S.” and their due process was violated. Worrell also said from the bench that the Masts knew things that they never told the court, particularly about what was happening in Afghanistan at the same time the judge in Virginia was granting the adoption. He said he wasn’t sure it was intentional, but “the fact of the matter is that the court did not have all the information known to (the Masts) at the time the order was entered.”

The ruling is one more twist in what is already a standout case.

“Once an adoption is final, it is extremely difficult and rare for it to be overturned,” said Virginia attorney Stanton Phillips.

“This is really, really unusual,” said adoption attorney Barbara Jones. “You just don’t hear about this happening.”

A Defense Department spokesperson said Thursday it was aware of the ruling and referred the AP to the Justice Department, which declined to comment.



Najia Sorosh, left, head of Sadai Banowan, speaks at the broadcasting studio in Badakhshan province, Afghanistan, on Jan. 4. SADAI BANOWAN VIA AP FILE

Taliban close women-run station for playing music

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JALALABAD, Afghanistan – A women-run radio station in Afghanistan’s northeast has been shut down for playing music during the holy month of Ramadan, a Taliban official said Saturday.

Sadai Banowan, which means women’s voice in Dari, is Afghanistan’s only women-run station and started 10 years ago. It has eight staff, six of them female.

Moezuddin Ahmadi, the director for Information and Culture in Badakhshan province, said the station violated the “laws and regulations of the Islamic Emirate” several times by broadcasting songs and music during Ramadan and was shuttered because of the breach.

“If this radio station accepts the policy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and gives a guarantee that it will not repeat such a thing again, we will allow it to operate again,” said Ahmadi.

Station head Najia Sorosh denied there was any violation, saying there was no need for the closure and called it a conspiracy. The Taliban “told us that you have broadcast music. We have not broadcast any kind of music,” she said.

Sorosh said at 11:40 a.m. on Thursday representatives from the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Vice and Virtue Directorate arrived at the station and shut it down. She said station staff have contacted Vice and Virtue but officials there said they do not have any additional information about the closing.

Many journalists lost their jobs after the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Media outlets closed over lack of funds or because staff left the country, according to the Afghan Independent Journalists Association.

The Taliban have barred women from most forms of employment and education beyond the sixth grade, including university. There is no official ban on music. During their previous rule in the late 1990s, the Taliban barred most television, radio and newspapers in the country.

Ukraine

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Then the fighting got bogged down in attritional warfare during the bitter winter and into the muddy, early spring thaw.

Now, Kyiv can take advantage of improved weather to seize the battlefield initiative with new batches of Western weapons, including scores of tanks, and fresh troops trained in the West.

But Russian forces are dug in deep, lying in wait behind minefields and along miles of trenches.

How has Russia fared so far?

The war has exposed embarrassing shortcomings in the Kremlin’s military prowess.

The battlefield setbacks include Russia’s failure to reach Kyiv in the early days of the invasion, its inability to hold some areas and its failure to take the devastated eastern city of Bakhmut despite seven months of fighting. Attempts to break the Ukrainian will to fight, such as relentlessly striking the country’s power grid, have failed too.

Moscow’s intelligence services badly misjudged Ukraine’s resolve and the West’s response. The invasion also depleted Russian military resources, triggering difficulties with ammunition supplies, morale and troop numbers.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, apparently concerned that the war could erode public support for his government, has avoided an all-out push for victory through a mandatory mass mobilization.

“The Russians have no end of problems,” said James Nixey, director of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, a think tank in London.

Realizing he cannot win the war any time soon, Putin aims to hunker down and drag out the fighting in the hope that Western support for Kyiv eventually frays, Nixey said.

Russia’s strategy is designed around “getting the West to crumble,” he said.

What’s next for the Ukrainians?

The Ukrainian military starts the season with an influx of powerful weapons.

Germany said this week that it had delivered the 18 Leopard 2 tanks it promised to Ukraine. Poland, Canada and Norway have also handed over their pledged Leopard tanks. British Challenger tanks have arrived too.

Ukraine’s defense minister, Oleksii Reznikov, has said he’s hopeful Western partners will supply at least two battalions of the German-made Leopard 2s by April.

He also expects six or seven battalions of Leopard 1 tanks, with ammunition, from a coalition of countries.

Also pledged are U.S. Abrams tanks and French light tanks, along with Ukraine soldiers recently trained in their use.

The Western help has been vital in strengthening Ukraine’s dogged resistance and shaping the course of the war.



Ukrainian soldiers fire a self-propelled howitzer toward Russian positions near Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, March 5. LIBKOS/AP FILE



A Ka-52 helicopter gunship of the Russian air force fires rockets at a target at an unknown location in Ukraine. Europe’s biggest armed conflict since World War II is poised to enter a key new phase in the coming weeks. RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESS SERVICE VIA AP FILE

Zelenskyy recognizes that without U.S. help, his country has no chance to prevail.

The new supplies, including howitzers, anti-tank weapons and 1 million rounds of artillery ammunition, will add more muscle to the Ukrainian military and give it a bigger punch.

“Sheer numbers of tanks can drive a deeper wedge into Russian holding positions,” Nixey said.

In their counteroffensive, Ukrainian forces will look to break through the land corridor between Russia and the annexed Crimean peninsula, moving from Zaporizhzhia toward Melitopol and the Azov Sea, according to Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov.

If successful, the Ukrainians “will split the Russian troops into two halves and cut off supply lines to the units that are located further to the west, in the direction of Crimea,” Zhdanov said.

What might the end game be?

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, reckons

that Ukraine will need to launch a series of counteroffensives, not just one, to get the upper hand.

The operations would have “the twin aims of persuading Putin to accept a negotiated compromise or of creating military realities sufficiently favorable to Ukraine that Kyiv and its Western allies can then effectively freeze the conflict on their own regardless of Putin’s decisions,” the institute said in an assessment published this week.

Nixey has no doubt that each side will keep “tearing chunks out of each other” over the coming months in the hope of gaining an advantage at the negotiating table.

A make-or-break period may lie ahead: If Kyiv fails to make progress on the battlefield with its Western-supplied weapons, allies may become reluctant to send it more of the expensive hardware.

The stakes are high: Defeat for Ukraine would “have global ramifications, and there will be no such thing as European security as we (currently) understand it,” Nixey said.

Survivors recount tornadoes’ wrath

Buildings destroyed, cars tossed in Midwest, South

Adrian Sainz and Andrew Selsky
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WYNNE, Ark. – With tornadoes hitting the Midwest and the South this weekend, some survivors said they emerged from their homes to find buildings ripped apart, vehicles tossed around like toys, shattered glass and felled trees.

J.W. Spencer, 88, had never experienced a tornado before, but when he and his wife saw on TV that a tornado was nearing their town of Wynne, Arkansas, he opened a front window and rear door in his house to relieve air pressure.

The couple scurried into the bathroom, where they got into the bathtub and covered themselves with quilts and blankets for protection.

Fifteen minutes later, the storm unleashed its fury on the town nestled among the flat fields and fertile farmland of eastern Arkansas. Debris came whistling through their house.

“We just rode it out,” Spencer said on Saturday. “We heard stuff falling, loud noises. And then it quit. It got quiet.”

After it passed, the couple emerged to see devastation in the neighborhood.

“We come through it real good, as far as the physical part,” Spencer said.

Many large trees were down in the community of 8,000 residents who take pride in their schools, their churches, their mom-and-pop restaurants and other businesses. Numerous single-family homes were damaged, especially near the high school, which had its roof shredded and windows blown out.

Near a theater in Belvidere, Illinois, where a tornado killed one man and injured 40 concertgoers, Ross Potter picked up glass shards Friday in front of his building. The last time the town was devastated to this extent from a tornado was in 1967.

Ambulances whirred by after the theater was hit.

“They took, I can’t even remember how many people,” Potter said. He was



A fallen tree damaged a house after a storm in Little Rock, Ark., on Saturday. Unrelenting tornadoes tore through parts of the South and Midwest and shredded homes and shopping centers. ANDREW DEMILLO/AP

lucky – only a few of his building’s windows were broken, mostly on the second floor. Across the street, most of the brick siding on a storefront was ripped away.

From his front porch in Covington, Tennessee, Billy Meade Jr. said he watched a tornado pass through, before hail struck and the sky darkened.

“You could see the swirl,” Meade said. “The rain was like a sheet. You couldn’t even hardly see past the rain, it was so dark. But you could see the swirl going past.”

Less than a mile away, a tornado struck the elementary school that Meade’s twin sons go to, as well as a middle school next door. On Saturday morning, an exposed gymnasium’s

bleachers were visible through a crushed brick wall. Much of the roof was ripped off.

“The neighborhood I’m in looks fine – it’s like nothing even happened,” Meade said. “But as soon as you go around the corner, it’s like devastation. There’s power lines down everywhere ... all kinds of stuff everywhere.”

And as a tornado hit Little Rock, Arkansas, workers at a Tropical Smoothie Cafe cowered together in the bathroom.

“It was really loud because the glass started breaking,” said Irulan Abrams, an employee who stood outside the building near a door with broken windows. A siren howled in the distance. She said one person was injured.

“Now we don’t have anywhere to

work,” Abrams said.

When the tornado hit, there were nine firefighters in Little Rock’s Fire Station No. 9, which became one of the most devastated areas of the city. They sheltered in the chief’s office as the tornado damaged their building.

“If I said it wasn’t scary, I’d be lying,” Capt. Ben Hammond said Saturday.

Once the tornado passed, the firefighters began working to help injured residents and to clear debris blocking their equipment.

“Once you address all the people you can see, then you’ve got to start looking for the people you can’t see,” he said.

The fire station has served as a shelter for neighbors amid fears that another storm was coming.

Tornadoes

Continued from Page 1NN

furniture, a pickup truck with its windows shattered.

Ashley Macmillan said she, her husband and their children huddled with their dogs in a small bathroom as a tornado passed, “praying and saying goodbye to each other, because we thought we were dead.”

A falling tree seriously damaged their home, but they were unhurt.

“We could feel the house shaking, we could hear loud noises, dishes rattling. And then it just got calm,” she said.

Recovery was already underway, with workers using chainsaws and bulldozers to clear the area and utility crews restoring power.

At least seven people died in Tennessee’s McNairy County, east of Memphis, said David Leckner, the mayor of Adamsville. The number could still climb as crews continued to search through the wreckage.

“The majority of the damage has been done to homes and residential areas,” Leckner said.

Gov. Bill Lee drove to the county Saturday to tour the destruction and comfort residents. He said the storm capped the “worst” week of his time as governor, coming days after a school shooting in Nashville that killed six people including a family friend whose funeral he and his wife, Maria, attended earlier in the day.

“It’s terrible what has happened in this community, this county, this state,” Lee said. “But it looks like your community has done what Tennessean communities do, and that is rally and respond.”

Jeffrey Day said he called his daughter after seeing on the news that their community of Adamsville was being hit. Huddled in a closet with her two-year-old son as the storm passed over, she answered the phone screaming.

“She kept asking me, ‘What do I do, daddy?’” Day said, tearing up. “I didn’t know what to say.”

After the storm passed, his daughter crawled out of her destroyed home and over barbed wire and drove to nearby family. On Saturday evening, baby clothes were still strewn about the site.

Tennessee officials warned that the same weather conditions from Friday night are expected to return Tuesday.

In Belvidere, Illinois, part of the roof of the Apollo Theatre collapsed as about 260 people were attending a heavy metal concert. A 50-year-old man was pulled from the rubble.



Traffic is backed up along one of the main thoroughfares in Covington, Tenn., on Saturday. PATRICK LANTRIP/DAILY MEMPHIAN VIA AP



Family and neighbors sift through debris on Ed Whestine’s farm southwest of Wellman, Iowa, on Saturday. NICK ROHLMAN/THE GAZETTE VIA AP

“I sat with him and I held his hand and I was (telling him), ‘It’s going to be OK.’ I didn’t really know much else what to do,” concertgoer Gabrielle Lewellyn told WTVO-TV.

The man was dead by the time emergency workers arrived. Officials said 40 others were hurt, including two with life-threatening injuries.

On Saturday, crews were cleaning up around the Apollo, with forklifts pulling away loose bricks. Business owners picked up glass shards and covered shattered windows.

In Crawford County, Illinois, three people were killed and eight injured

when a tornado hit around New Hebron, Bill Burke, the county board chair, said.

Sheriff Bill Rutan said 60 to 100 families were displaced.

“We’ve had emergency crews digging people out of their basements because the house is collapsed on top of them, but luckily they had that safe space to go to,” Rutan said at a news conference.

That tornado was not far from where three people died in Indiana’s Sullivan County, about 95 miles southwest of Indianapolis.

Sullivan Mayor Clint Lamb said at a news conference that an area south of the county seat of about 4,000 “is essen-

tially unrecognizable right now” and that several people were rescued overnight. There were reports of as many as 12 people injured, he said.

“I’m really, really shocked there isn’t more as far as human issues,” he said, adding that recovery “is going to be a very long process.”

In the Little Rock area, at least one person was killed and more than 50 were hurt, some critically.

The National Weather Service said that tornado was a high-end EF3 twister with wind speeds up to 165 mph and a path as long as 25 miles.

Masoud Shahed-Ghaznavi was lunching at home when it roared through his neighborhood, causing him to hide in the laundry room as sheetrock fell and windows shattered. When he emerged, the house was mostly rubble.

“Everything around me is sky,” Shahed-Ghaznavi recalled Saturday. He barely slept Friday night.

“When I closed my eyes, I couldn’t sleep, imagined I was here,” he said Saturday outside his home.

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard.

Another suspected tornado killed a woman in northern Alabama’s Madison County, officials said, and in northern Mississippi’s Pontotoc County, one death and four injuries were confirmed.

Tornadoes also caused damage in eastern Iowa and broke windows north-east of Peoria, Illinois.

The storms struck just hours after President Joe Biden visited Rolling Fork, Mississippi, where tornadoes last week destroyed parts of town.

It could take days to determine the exact number of tornadoes from the latest event, said Bill Bunting, chief of forecast operations at the Storm Prediction Center. There were also hundreds of reports of large hail and damaging winds, he said.

“That’s a quite active day,” he said. “But that’s not unprecedented.”

More than 530,000 homes and businesses were without power as of midday Saturday, over 200,000 of them in Ohio, according to PowerOutage.us.

The sprawling storm system also brought wildfires to the southern Plains, with authorities in Oklahoma reporting nearly 100 of them Friday. At least 32 people were said to be injured, and more than 40 homes destroyed.

The storms also caused blizzard conditions in the Upper Midwest.

A threat of tornadoes and hail remained for the Northeast including in parts of Pennsylvania and New York.