



94° /74°

Scattered showers

## TOM CRUISE SETS CAREER MILESTONE

Forget breaking the sound barrier: Tom Cruise just flew past a major career milestone. "Top Gun: Maverick" surpasses \$100 million opening weekend.

See [swjournalist.com](https://www.swjournalist.com).



# Southwest Journalist

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



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SWJOURNALIST.COM



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022



## Hurricane Agatha slams Mexico, kills none

**JOSÉ MARÍA ÁLVAREZ**  
Associated Press

**SAN ISIDRO DEL PALMAR, Mexico** — Hurricane Agatha made history Tuesday as the strongest hurricane ever recorded to come ashore in May during the eastern Pacific hurricane season.

Agatha formed on Sunday and quickly gained power; it ripped off roofs and washed out roads before fading in southern Mexico.

The storm hit Oaxaca state Monday afternoon as a strong Category 2 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph, then quickly lost power as it moved inland over the mountainous interior.

Remnants of Agatha were moving northeast Tuesday into Veracruz state, with sustained winds down to 30 mph. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said the storm should dissipate by the

evening, but warned the system's heavy rains still posed a threat of dangerous floods for Mexico's southern states.

Oaxaca Gov. Alejandro Murat told local media the state's emergency services office had received no reports of deaths. Several municipalities near the coast remained without power Tuesday and mudslides blocked a number of the state's highways.

San Isidro del Palmar, only a cou-

ple miles inland from the coast, was swamped by the Tonameca River flowing through town.

Residents waded through neck-deep water to salvage what items they could from their homes and walked gingerly with piles of clothing atop their heads and religious figures in their arms.

Argeo Aquino, who has lived in the town his whole life, could recall only

two other occasions when he saw such flooding.

"The houses are totally flooded, so they are getting everything out," Aquino said Monday as he watched his neighbors. "There are stores, houses. More than anything else, we have to try to save all the good material, because everything else is going to be

■ HURRICANE, Page 2



JAE C. HONG / AP PHOTO

**Socorro Valencia, 78, lays flowers at a memorial at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde on May 31 to honor the victims killed in last week's school shooting.**

## Uvalde funerals begin: White gloves, small casket

**NATHAN ELLGREN, ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON AND JIM SALTER**  
Associated Press

**UVALDE** — A week after a gunman ran into a Texas grade school and started shooting, the first of 21 funerals began on Tuesday. Meanwhile, at least one family still hasn't seen the body of their loved one.

Hundreds of mourners crowded into an afternoon Mass to remember Amerie Jo Garza. Six pallbearers wearing white shirts and gloves carried her small casket into Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Several mourners after the church reached capacity. Maite Rodriguez's funeral was scheduled for later Tuesday at a funeral home in Uvalde.

The two 10-year-old fourth graders were among 19 children and two teachers killed when 18-year-old Salvador Ramos burst into a classroom on May 24 and began firing a semi-automatic rifle.

Visitation for one of the teachers, 48-year-old Irma Garcia, also was Tuesday, along with visitations for children Nevaeh Bravo and Jose Flores Jr.

Amerie loved purple, and Erika Santiago, her husband and their two children wore purple shirts adorned with images of

the victims to Amerie's funeral. Santiago described her as "a nice little girl who smiled a lot," and who was "so humble and charismatic but full of life."

Santiago said her 10-year-old son, Adriel, watched in horror when the first images came out on the news after the shooting, and he recognized his friends Amerie and Maite.

"It affected him so much," Santiago said. "He told me he did not want to go to school fearing that could happen. He told me, 'Mom, I just don't feel safe.'"

Funerals will continue over the next 2 ½ weeks. Vincent Salazar's 11-year-old daughter, Layla, has the last of the scheduled services: Her visitation is June 15 with the funeral the following day. Salazar said the family likely won't see Layla's body until soon before the visitation.

"It's strange because usually when somebody dies, these things happen in three or four days," Salazar said. "It's not something that goes on this long. I understand there were other children as well, but we're just waiting to get her back. That's all we're focused on."

Uvalde County Justice of the Peace Eulalio Diaz Jr. said the

■ FUNERALS, Page 2

## School police chief's response raises concerns

**ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON AND JAMIE STENGLE**  
Associated Press

**UVALDE** — The blame for a delay in killing the gunman at a Texas elementary school has been placed with the school district's police chief.

It's left residents in Uvalde struggling to reconcile what they know of Pete Arredondo, the commander at the scene, after the director of state police said Arredondo made the "wrong decision" not to breach a classroom at Robb Elementary School sooner, believing the gunman was barricaded inside and children weren't at risk.

Steven McCraw, the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said Friday that after following the gunman into the building, officers waited over an hour to breach the classroom, where 19 children and two teachers were eventually killed.

Arredondo, who grew up in Uvalde, was recently elected to the Uvalde City Council. He was sworn in Tuesday without a ceremony, according to reports from CNN.

Arredondo spent much of his career in law enforcement in Uvalde, and is now the school district's head police officer.

"He was a good boy," said Maria Gonzalez, who used to drive him to Robb Elementary school. "He dropped the ball maybe because he did not have enough experience. Who knows? People are very angry."

Juan Torres, a U.S. Army veteran, knew Arredondo from high school.

"You sign up to respond to those kinds of situations," Torres said. "If you are scared, then don't be a police officer. Go flip burgers."

After Arredondo's election to city council, he told the Uvalde Leader-News he was "ready to hit the ground running."

■ CHIEF, Page 2

## Biden moves to battle inflation

**JOSH BOAK, CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AND ZEKE MILLER**  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Focused on relentlessly rising prices, President Joe Biden plotted an inflation-fighting strategy Tuesday with Jermone H. Powell, the chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Tuesday was Biden's latest effort to show his dedication to containing the 8.3% leap in consumer prices over the past year. Rising gas and food costs have angered many Americans heading into the midterm elections, risking Democrats' control of the House and Senate.

Like Biden, the Fed wants to slow inflation without knocking the U.S. economy into recession, a highly sensitive mission that will include increasing benchmark interest rates this summer. The president said he would not attempt to direct that course as some previous presidents have tried.

Biden's endorsement of the Fed's policies — a stance echoed by congressional Republican Party leaders — gives Powell important political cover for a series of sharp interest rate hikes intended to rein in higher prices. Yet the higher rates could cause layoffs and even tip the economy into recession.

Stock prices have dropped in recent months because of this concern, though markets rallied last week.

Biden faces an increasingly global challenge: Energy and food costs jumped after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February and China imposed lockdowns tied to coronavirus outbreaks further straining supply chains. This has left the European Union nursing record inflation and the risks of a recession, while U.S. consumers are increasingly disgruntled by gas prices averaging a nominal record of \$4.62 a gallon.

Inflation has shown signs of slowing but is likely to remain far above the Fed's 2% target through the end of this year.

Republican lawmakers were quick to criticize Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package from last year as pumping too much money into the economy and causing more inflation. That narrative also has held some sway with leading economists who say the financial support was excessive even though it helped the job market roar back.

## Clinton campaign lawyer acquitted

**ERIC TUCKER**  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — A lawyer for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign was acquitted Tuesday of lying to the FBI when he pushed information meant to cast suspicions on Donald Trump and Russia in the run-up to that year's election.

The case against Clinton's lawyer, Michael Sussmann, was the first courtroom test of special counsel, John Durham, since his appointment three years ago to search for government misconduct during the investigation into potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign. The verdict represents a setback for Durham's work, especially since Trump supporters had looked to the probe to expose what they contend was egregious bias by law enforcement officials who investigated the former president's campaign.

The jury deliberated for several hours on Friday afternoon and Tuesday morning before reaching its verdict.

Speaking to reporters outside the courthouse after the verdict was delivered, Sussmann said he "told the truth to the FBI, and the jury clearly recognized that with their



MANUEL BALCE CENETA / AP PHOTO

**Michael Sussmann, a lawyer who represented the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign in 2016, was acquitted Tuesday of lying to the FBI when he pushed information meant to cast suspicions on Donald Trump and Russia in the run-up to the 2016 election.**

unanimous verdict today."

He added: "despite being falsely accused, I am relieved that justice ultimately prevailed in this case."

In a separate statement, Durham said that although he and his team were disappointed

in the outcome, they respected the jury's decision. He thanked the investigators and prosecutors on his team for their "dedicated efforts in seeking truth and justice in this case."

The trial focused on whether Sussmann, a cybersecurity attorney and former federal prosecutor himself, concealed from the FBI that he was representing Clinton's campaign when he presented computer data that he said showed a possible secret communication backchannel, which links computers to have real-time interactions, between Russia-based Alfa-Bank and Trump's business company, The Trump Organization. The FBI investigated but quickly determined that there was no suspicious contact.

The bureau's former general counsel and the government's star witness, James Baker, testified that he was "100% confident" that Sussmann had told him that he was not representing any client during a September 2016 meeting the two men had. Prosecutors alleged that Sussmann was actually acting on behalf of the Clinton campaign and another client — a technology executive — and that

■ CLINTON, Page 2





Coco Gauff of the U.S. returns the ball to Sloane Stephens of the U.S. during their quarterfinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium May 31 in Paris.

# Gauff reaches first Paris Slam semi

HOWARD FENDRICH  
Associated Press

PARIS — Coco Gauff left Roland Garros 12 months ago crestfallen, knowing she let a big lead slip away in her major quarterfinal debut. She vowed to remember that and learn from it.

Consider that done.  
Gauff, still only 18, returned to that stage Tuesday for a second time and was not about to let this tournament end similarly, beating 2017 U.S. Open champion and 2018 French Open runner-up Sloane Stephens 7-5, 6-2 in a matchup between Americans at Court Philippe Chatrier to reach her first Grand Slam semifinal.

“It was just a mental challenge today,” said Gauff, who began this trip to Paris by taking photos near the Eiffel Tower while holding her recently earned high school diploma. Gauff seems to have been preparing for this sort of moment for quite some time, even before she became the youngest qualifier in Wimbledon history at age 15 and beat Venus Williams en route to the fourth round there in 2019; even before she won the French Open junior title a year prior.

“Even last year, I was too focused on try-

ing to fulfill other people’s expectations,” said Gauff, who hasn’t dropped a set through five matches. “That’s a good message for young people... Just know: If you love yourself, who cares what anyone else thinks?”

Her quick rise is quite a contrast from the long road her next opponent, Martina Trevisan of Italy, traveled along the way to her own first Slam semifinal at age 28.

The 59th-ranked Trevisan is highly emotive, and she screamed while thrusting both arms overhead and letting her racket fly after eliminating U.S. Open finalist Leylah Fernandez, who was seeded 17th, by a 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-3 score.

Fernandez received treatment for a problem with her right foot after the match’s fifth game and her movement was hampered throughout. About three hours following the match, reporters were told that Fernandez would not speak to the media “on advice of the tournament medical team” due to the injury.

Trevisan eventually finished things off nearly an hour after holding her first match point while serving for the victory at 5-4 in the second set. She double-faulted twice in the ensuing tiebreaker.

After that lapse, Trevisan took a trip to the locker room.

“It gave me a chance to regroup. I threw some water on my face,” she said. “I was playing to get to a semifinal, and I still had a set in front of me, so I had to start from scratch.”

The reset worked wonders.  
Trevisan grabbed the initial seven points of the third set and took a 4-0 lead in what would become her 10th consecutive victory on the heels of earning her first Women’s Tennis Association title in Rabat, Morocco, the week before the French Open.

In 2020, Trevisan beat Gauff in the second round at Roland Garros on the way to reaching the quarterfinals.

About two months beforehand, Trevisan wrote a blog post that discussed in detail her experience with anorexia as a teenager. At 16, Trevisan was a promising prospect whose mother taught tennis and whose brother played professionally.

Beset by pressure, Trevisan quit her sport and took a 4 1/2-year break, before returning in 2014.

“I’m happy on the court. I’m doing what I love,” she said Tuesday.

# Clinton 2016 campaign lawyer acquitted for lying to FBI

■ Continued from Page 1

he hid that information to make the data seem more credible and to boost the chances of getting the FBI to investigate.

Lawyers for Sussmann denied to jurors that he lied, saying it was impossible to know with certainty what he told Baker since they were the only participants in the meeting and neither of them took notes.

They argued that if Sussmann said he was not acting on the Clinton campaign’s behalf that it was technically accurate since he did not ask the FBI to take any particular action, and campaign officials did not authorize him to meet with the FBI. They also said that even if he did make a false statement, it was ultimately irrelevant since the FBI was already investigating Russia and the Trump campaign and, given the urgency of that probe, would have looked into the Alfa-Bank data no matter the source.

During the two-week trial, jurors heard from a slew of witnesses, including current and former FBI officials who described efforts to assess the legitimacy of the Alfa-Bank data, former Clinton campaign aides, lawyers, colleagues and friends of Sussmann who vouched for

his character.

The original Trump-Russia investigation, overseen for two years by former special counsel Robert Mueller, found multiple efforts by Russia to interfere on the Trump campaign’s behalf but did not establish that the two sides had worked together to sway the outcome of the election.

After Mueller’s work was done, former U.S. Attorney General William Barr named a new Department of Justice prosecutor, former Connecticut U.S. Attorney Durham, to examine whether anyone from the FBI or other agencies violated the law as the government opened its investigation into Russian election interference and the Trump campaign.

Durham has brought three criminal cases so far, though only one has been against a federal government employee and none of them has established any sort of sweeping conspiracy to frame Trump or derail his candidacy. The Alfa-Bank matter, for instance, was peripheral to the Trump-Russia probe, with the since-discredited allegations not even warranting a mention in Mueller’s 448-page report.

A former FBI lawyer, Kevin Clinesmith, was given probation after pleading guilty in 2020 to altering an email related to secret surveillance of a former Trump campaign aide, and a Russian analyst, Igor Danchenko, who contributed to a dossier of Democratic-funded research into ties between Russia and Trump awaits trial this October on charges of lying to the FBI about his sources of information.

“Local law enforcement has not made any public comments about the specifics of the investigation or (misled) anyone,” he said Monday.

Arredondo started his career in law enforcement working for the Uvalde Police Department. After 16 years, he went to Laredo where he worked at the Webb County Sheriff’s Office before working for a local school district, according to the Uvalde Leader-News. .

Ray Garner, Arredondo’s police chief of the district in Laredo, told the San Antonio Express-News that when Arredondo worked in Laredo he was “easy to talk to” and was concerned about the students.

“He was an excellent officer down here,” Garner said. “Down here, we do a lot of training on active shooter scenarios, and he was involved in those.”

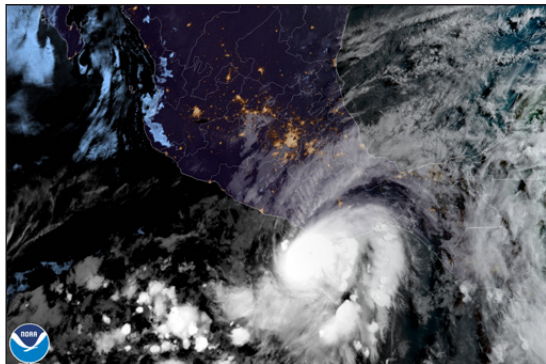
After that news conference, members of the media converged at Arredondo’s home and police cruisers took up posts there. At one point, a man answering the door at Arredondo’s house told a reporter for The Associated Press that “the truth will come out,” then closed the door.

State Sen. Roland Gutierrez said that he’s asking a lot of questions after “so many things went wrong.”

He said one family told him that a first responder told them that their child, who was shot in the back, likely bled out. “Absolutely, these mistakes may have led to the passing away of these children as well,” Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez said while the issue of which law enforcement agency had or should have had operational control is a “significant” concern.

“At the end of the day, everybody failed here,” Gutierrez said.



This satellite image shows Hurricane Agatha off the Pacific coast of Oaxaca state, Mexico, on May 30 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

# Hurricane Agatha sweeps through Mexico

■ Continued from Page 1

washed away.”

The Tonameca’s brown waters reached the windows of parked cars and the minibuses used for local transportation.

Nearby, heavy rain and high winds lashed the beach town of Zipolite, known for its clothing-optional beach and bohemian vibe.

“The sound of the wind was really loud, high-pitched,” said Silvia Ranfagni, manager of the Casa Kalmar hotel in Zipolite. “It started at 1 p.m. when the telephone coverage went out and it didn’t calm down until 7:30. A lot of trees were down, roads washed out. A lot of metal and thatched roofs were blown off.”

# Funerals begin for Uvalde shooting victims

■ Continued from Page 1

bodies of all 21 victims were sent to the medical examiner’s office in San Antonio for autopsies, which he said is standard for a major crime.

“Our thing is to have all the facts,” Diaz said. “Even though there is a deceased shooter and we probably won’t have a trial, we still need to have the facts.”

Diaz said the autopsies are complete but declined to discuss preliminary results and said final reports will take three to four months.

Meanwhile, he said there simply isn’t enough space at Uvalde’s two funeral homes to keep all of the bodies, so many were sent to out-of-town funeral homes until services near. He said the Uvalde funeral homes are working with the families on when they can see the bodies. A message left at Hillcrest Memorial Funeral Home wasn’t immediately returned. A woman who answered the phone at Rushing-Estes-Knowles Mortuary declined an interview request.

“It’s mainly because of the number of victims,” Diaz said. “Where do you store that many people?”

Salazar said he and his family are going to as many visitations as they can to pay respects to the other victims and their families.

“Not necessarily going to the funerals because we’re still taking care of things hour by hour, day by day, here,” Salazar said. “We’ve got so much stuff going on with our own. You have to set everything up — obituaries, death certificates, funeral arrangements.

“That’s all we’re focused on right now — her, getting her back and being able to put her to rest,” Salazar said of Layla. “That’s it.”

Investigators continue to seek answers about how police responded to the shooting, and the U.S. Department of Justice is reviewing law enforcement actions.

The blame for an excruciating delay in killing the gunman — even as parents outside begged police to rush in and panicked children called 911 from inside — was placed on the school district’s home-grown police chief, Pete Arredondo, after the director of state police said Arredondo made the “wrong decision” not to breach the classroom, believing the gunman was barricaded inside and children weren’t at risk.

Steven McCraw, head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said Friday that after following the gunman into the building, officers waited over an hour to breach the classroom. The revelation raised new questions about whether lives were lost because officers did not act faster to stop the gunman, who was ultimately killed by Border Patrol tactical officers.

Authorities said Ramos legally purchased two guns not long before the school attack: an AR-style rifle on May 17 and a second rifle on May 20. He had just turned 18, permitting him to buy the weapons under federal law.

President Joe Biden’s long-planned meeting Tuesday with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was to center on trade, climate and security in the Indo-Pacific. But after what happened in Uvalde and a week earlier in Buffalo, New York, where 10 Black people were killed by a shooter espousing racist “replacement theory,” the conversation turned to gun control.

Ardern successfully won passage of gun control measures after a white supremacist killed 51 Muslim worshippers at two Christchurch mosques in 2019. Less than a month later all but one of the country’s 120 lawmakers voted in favor of banning military-style semi-automatic weapons.

Biden told reporters that he will meet with the Congress on the issue but the White House has acknowledged that winning new gun legislation will be an uphill climb in an evenly divided Congress.

That’s all we’re focused on right now — her, getting her back and being able to put her to rest. That’s it.

VINCENT SALAZAR



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## 2022 ATTENDEES

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WGBH (Boston)

SHIFRA DAYAK  
University of Maryland  
Stars & Stripes

LAUREN GUZY  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Fredericksburg Standard

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Galveston Daily News

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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
San Francisco Chronicle

JESS HUFF  
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Bay City News Foundation

GAYLA MURPHY  
The Brazosport Facts

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CLAIRE SCHNATTERBECK  
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BRADY STONE  
Texas A&M University  
Kansas City Star

VICTOR SWEZEY  
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CJ VETTER  
Texas State (2022)  
Hays Free Press

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American University  
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PAYTON WILLIAMS  
Cameron University (2022)  
The Lawton Constitution

CATHERINE WILSON  
University of Maryland College Park (2022)  
New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung



BRIEFS

Supreme Court blocks Texas law on censorship

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A divided Supreme Court has blocked a Texas law championed by conservatives that aimed to keep social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter from censoring users based on their viewpoints.

The court voted in an unusual 5-4 alignment Tuesday to put the Texas law on hold, while a lawsuit plays out in lower courts.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett voted to grant the emergency request from two technology industry groups that challenged the law in federal court.

Republican elected officials in several states have backed laws like those enacted in Florida and Texas that seek to portray social media companies as hostile to ideas from the political right.

NFL player Jeff Gladney dies in Dallas car crash

DALLAS — Jeff Gladney, a defensive back for the Arizona Cardinals, died Monday in a car crash in Dallas. He was 25.

"We are devastated to learn of Jeff Gladney's passing. Our hearts go out to his family, friends and all who are mourning this tremendous loss," the team said.

The crash occurred on the service road of Woodall Rodgers Freeway in Dallas, KTVT-TV reported. Another person also died.

No one from the Dallas County Sheriff's Department was available on the Memorial Day holiday to talk about the crash.

Gladney played at TCU before becoming a 2020 first-round draft pick of the Minnesota Vikings, where he played in 16 games. He was released before the 2021 season, when he was charged with assaulting a woman.

Gladney was found not guilty in Dallas County in March and was subsequently signed by the Cardinals where he participated in team drills last week.

Nick Saban dismisses feud with Jimbo Fisher

DESTIN, Fla. — Alabama football coach Nick Saban tried to end his feud with Texas A&M's Jimbo Fisher on Tuesday as Southeastern Conference leaders gathered for spring meetings.

"I have no problem with Jimbo at all," Saban said.

Saban set off Fisher two weeks ago when he called out Texas A&M and other schools regarding the need for name, image and likeness regulation in college sports.

Fisher said Saban's comments were despicable and called his former boss at LSU a "narcissist." He also denied any wrongdoing with his program, which landed the No. 1 recruiting class in the country in 2022.

Reporters asked Saban about Texas A&M, and he quickly pivoted into trying to make a broader point about name, image, and likeness, transparency was needed to ensure athletes are signing legitimate deals that pay them for their services and that boosters needed to be kept out of recruiting.

The NCAA lifted most of its rules barring athletes from earning money from sponsorship and endorsement deals last July, but many worry that name, image and likeness deals are being used as recruiting inducements and de facto pay-for-play.

Browns QB Watson facing lawsuit from 23rd woman

CLEVELAND — Another massage therapist has filed a civil lawsuit against Cleveland Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson, raising the number of women who have accused him of sexual misconduct to 23.

Attorney Tony Buzbee, who is representing all the women, filed the latest lawsuit Tuesday in Texas and said in a text to the AP he will be filing a 24th case soon.

The previous 22 lawsuits were filed in 2021. Both women provided graphic details of their encounters with Watson, who was traded from Houston to Cleveland in March. Watson has denied any wrongdoing.

Watson is also facing a possible suspension from the NFL, which is independently investigating his behavior to see if he violated the league's substance-abuse policy.

Watson, who has been giving depositions in the lawsuits over the past month, is scheduled to be back on the field Wednesday as the Browns continue their offseason team activities.

Jury deliberates verdict in 'We Build The Wall' trial

NEW YORK — A prosecutor told jurors in closing arguments at a criminal trial Tuesday that there is overwhelming evidence that organizers of a "We Build The Wall" campaign to raise millions of dollars for a wall along the U.S. southern border defrauded investors.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Sobelman urged Manhattan federal court jurors to deliver guilty verdicts on fraud and conspiracy charges against the lone defendant, Timothy Shea.

Jurors deliberated for a short time late Tuesday without reaching a verdict.

Former presidential adviser Steve Bannon was once a defendant in the case, but ex-President Donald Trump pardoned him.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

# 'We're gonna take your AR-15'

## O'Rourke bets school shooting will shake up race

WILL WEISSERT  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the wake of a Texas mass shooting in 2019, Democrat Beto O'Rourke told a national audience that it was finally time for action to curb the increase of high-powered guns in the country.

In a debate while running for president, he declared, "Hell, yes, we're gonna take your AR-15," after a gunman killed 23 people in O'Rourke's native El Paso.

Last week, following the massacre of 19 elementary school students and two teachers by an 18-year-old man with an AR-15-style rifle in Uvalde, governor hopeful O'Rourke seized the national political spotlight again. O'Rourke crashed Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's press conference, declaring the carnage was "on you."

This tragedy could impact voter decisions ahead of the Texas governor's race in the state where gun culture looms large. However, Abbott won the last two elections by landslides and began his campaign with \$55 million in the bank.

It's too early to tell what will happen in the governor's race, but the shooting has already affected both parties.

Abbott canceled a planned visit to the annual National Rifle Association meeting to remain in Uvalde, and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who is open to strengthening firearm laws, also skipped the meeting.

O'Rourke spent two nights in Uvalde after the shooting, then attended a rally against gun violence in Houston.

"To those men and women in positions of power who care more about



PHOTO BY BRADLEY WILSON

Texas gubernatorial candidate Beto O'Rourke spoke to a crowd of about 100 people in Wichita Falls on Dec. 12, 2021.

your power than using that power to save the lives of those that you are supposed to serve ... we will defeat you and we will overcome you," O'Rourke told protesters.

Last year Texas loosened firearm restrictions to allow any resident 21 and older to carry guns without a license.

Former Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, a Republican famous for carrying multiple guns nearly everywhere he went, said O'Rourke's supporters will be "even more determined to vote for Beto," after his confrontation with Abbott.

But the clash could backfire, alien-

ating otherwise potentially sympathetic swing voters who might think O'Rourke was putting on a self-serving show, Patterson said.

"Sometimes your method overwhelms your message, and his method gutted whatever benefit he might have accrued," said Patterson. "It's a net loss."

Abbott hasn't mentioned O'Rourke much since the shooting but answered questions about possible new state gun limits by slamming high crime rates in cities primarily run by Democrats.

"There are more people shot every weekend in Chicago than there are in schools in Texas," the governor said.

COMMENTARY

## Attention fades on gun policy

ROSS RAMSEY  
The Texas Tribune

Time is the enemy. A week has passed since 21 people were killed in an elementary school in Uvalde, an atrocity still at the center of public concern.

Gov. Greg Abbott and other politicians bound to gun culture are squirming, but history tells us that public attention will subside.

The elected officials who have done little to protect Texans and other Americans after any of the mass shootings that came before Uvalde have something in common with the dumbfounding inaction of the 19 first responders who idled in a hallway at Robb Elementary for more than an hour last Tuesday while a gunman killed 21 children and teachers.

Officials are frozen by their fear of what might happen if they act. Politicians are hypersensitive to voters, and if the mandate is for anti-violence, that's what the conversations in the capitals will be about. That's not just about gun safety. It happens with foster care, pandemic restrictions, just about everything. We're concerned with the headline issues, for a minute, and then go back to what we were doing. Politics is about words, but also actions. The Texas responses to shooting after shooting amount to an institutional defense of gun culture.

If what lawmakers were doing was out of line, we'd be punishing or correcting them, and that hasn't happened. There aren't a couple of bumper-sticker solutions we can put into law to fix it. Politicians don't have to lose elections to get the message; they just have to get the message.

JAMES BARRAGÁN AND ZACH DESPART  
The Texas Tribune

Texas Democratic candidate for governor Beto O'Rourke spoke Friday on stage at a protest of the National Rifle Association's convention.

After the Uvalde school shooting, Texas Democrats are once again urging state leaders to enact gun control measures.

O'Rourke confronted state leaders last week during a news conference, telling his Republican opponent, Gov. Greg Abbott, he was "doing nothing." The party's candidate for lieutenant governor, Mike Collier, has blamed Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick for loosening gun laws in the state Texas Senate Democrats sent a letter to the governor demanding a special session to pass gun control legislation.

The question moving forward is whether Democrats will be able to put enough pressure on lawmakers to move on a previously intractable issue in gun-friendly Texas and that Republicans will fight.

Mark Owens, a political scientist at the University of Texas at Tyler, said there is an opportunity for Democrats because Texans have been dissatisfied with the state's response to previous mass shootings. Last April, 59% of Texans surveyed in a poll by the university and The Dallas Morning News said they disagreed that elected officials were doing enough to prevent mass shootings. Only 21% of respondents agreed.

The letter from Texas Senate Democrats laid out five specific gun control proposals it urged the Legislature to pass immediately in a special session: raising the minimum age to purchase a gun from 18 to 21; requiring universal background checks for all firearm sales; implementing "red flag" laws to allow the temporary removal of firearms from those who pose imminent danger; require a waiting period for the purchase of a gun; and regulating civilian ownership of high-capacity magazines.

Collier said he would push to eliminate the law passed



DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS/AP PHOTO

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott speaks during a news conference in Uvalde on May 25. The 18-year-old gunman who slaughtered 19 children and two teachers at a Texas elementary school barricaded himself inside a single classroom and "began shooting anyone that was in his way," authorities said Wednesday in detailing the latest mass killing to rock the U.S.

shootings and the state's response to them are becoming more negative, Owens said.

In last April's poll, 51% of Republicans and 37% of independents said state officials were doing enough to prevent such events.

Joshua Blank, research director for the Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas at Austin, expressed skepticism that O'Rourke's decision to confront Abbott would backfire politically.

"Anyone who thinks it was a bad idea probably wasn't going to vote for O'Rourke anyway," Blank said. "What O'Rourke was doing was expressing the frustration and anger that a lot of Democrats feel, and independents feel and Republicans feel. That's not something he could wait two weeks to do; it wouldn't have the same weight."

Thomason said any policy change will be a heavy lift that will require compromise, something that is in short supply in politics these days.

# Family fights to save farm from highway expansion

TIMIA COBB  
The Texas Tribune

With fresh flowers in hand, Rosalind Alexander-Kasparik walked from her family farm on a spring afternoon to the adjacent private cemetery where generations of her relatives are buried.

She stopped at the cemetery's entrance, picking up trash blown in from U.S. Highway 183.

Alexander-Kasparik was 9 in 1968 when the Texas Department of Transportation used eminent domain to forcibly buy 5 acres of the family land and cut off what once was the farm's entrance, leaving a portion of the property isolated on the other side of the freeway.

Decades later, history is threatening to repeat itself. TxDOT plans to add more lanes to the highway. This time around, Alexander-Kasparik is determined to see a different outcome. "They are not taking any more of our historic, hard-fought-for, blood-ridden land," she said.

The widening project is still in the

planning stages — making it unknown how much, if any, of the Alexander Farm will be needed to support the added concrete.

She remembers watching her grandfather fight to keep their land intact in the '60s. Milton Everett Alexander enlisted the help of lawyers, but ultimately, TxDOT won.

"The taking of it was something that my grandfather saw as his defeat," Alexander-Kasparik said.

She hopes the historic nature of the property will divert TxDOT from forcibly buying any more of the land. It was almost unheard of in 1847 when Daniel Alexander founded the farm. His enslavers granted him ownership even though he remained enslaved.

Alexander was born into slavery in 1810. The McKinney family made a verbal agreement with Alexander in 1847 allowing him to own 73 acres of land. Alexander officially bought the land in 1879.

The cemetery on the north end of the property — where Alexander was

buried in 1883 — was seen as a way to provide dignity to generations.

"The best way to make sure that the family stayed together forever was to have a cemetery," Alexander-Kasparik said. "A family cemetery, not a burial ground for enslaved people, but a place where your family is interred and the remains are part of the earth that is part of your land."

The property's dairy farm thrived and serviced various establishments in the area under the leadership of Milton Everett Alexander in the middle of the 20th century. Though he tried, Milton was unsuccessful at stopping TxDOT from building Highway 183 through the family's property.

In November 2019, Alexander-Kasparik received a postcard notifying her of a TxDOT meeting Highway 183 expansion plans.

In February 2020, family members met with TxDOT staffers to dissuade the agency from taking any more of the Alexander Farm.

Alexander-Kasparik adopted a new

life mission: convincing state and regional officials that her family's land is important enough to be saved.

She is also working with organizations to guarantee the farm and cemetery Alexander founded and left behind will continue to be around for years to come.

The family now believes that the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 could have helped prevent TxDOT's use of eminent domain decades ago. They're now using the act to try to preserve the land. It requires transportation departments to conduct an investigation and determine if land impacted by projects receiving federal funds have historical significance. But it doesn't prevent the use of eminent domain if the government agency determines no other routes are feasible.

Alexander-Kasparik sees hope on some fronts. TxDOT halted a highway improvement project in Houston as The Federal Highway Administration investigates civil rights complaints about its impacts.





ERIC RISBERG

**A worker in a Chinatown storefront under renovation looks out at a tour group on Grant Avenue in San Francisco. Chinatowns and other Asian American enclaves across the U.S. are using art and culture to show they are safe and vibrant hubs nearly three years after the start of the pandemic.**

# Chinatowns see post-pandemic revivals

**TERRY TANG**  
Associated Press

The last week of April was a whirlwind for San Francisco's Chinatown.

The storied neighborhood debuted the "AAPI Community Heroes Mural," a mostly black-and-white depiction of 12 largely unsung Asian American and Pacific Islander figures on the wall of a bank. Three days later "Neon Was Never Brighter," the first ever Chinatown contemporary arts festival, took over the streets at night. Traditional lion and dragon dances, a couture fashion show and other public "art activations" were featured in the block party-like event.

Cultural and arts organizations in Chinatowns across North America have worked for decades on bringing greater appreciation and visibility to these communities. But they faced an unprecedented one-two punch when the pandemic caused shutdowns and racist anti-Asian attacks increased. As painful as those events are, they also indelibly influenced the reemergence of various Chinatowns as close-knit hubs of vibrancy and culture.

Cynthia Choi, co-founder of the Stop AAPI Hate reporting center, is still "blown away" to be one of the heroes painted in the San Francisco mural. But being at the festival was equally touching for her.

"I got really emotional because it's been so long since I'd seen so many people come out to Chinatown, especially at night. I had heard so many of my friends or family saying, 'I don't want to go to Chinatown,'" she said.

There has been renewed attention from cities, companies and younger Asian Americans from outside these historic Chinatowns. Wells Fargo partnered with the Chinatown Media & Arts Collaborative on the "heroes" mural. Everyone wanted to "really address anti-Asian hate and to uplift Asian American voices," said Jenny Leung, executive director of the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco, which is part of the collaborative. Youths voted on whom to put on the mural.



ERIC RISBERG

**Jenny Leung, executive director of the Chinese Culture Center, poses by the entrance to the center's art gallery in San Francisco.**

"Frequently the way that Chinatown looks is imported as a tourist kind of attraction and fantasy for visitors to see," Leung said. "It's never really about celebrating the community's perspective and voice."

The idea for the "Neon" festival was briefly discussed pre-pandemic. But the events of the last two years lent urgency to it.

"We wanted to kind of push that deadline a little bit earlier in order to be able to address the 20, 30, 40 empty storefronts that are increasingly rising in the community," said Leung, who characterizes Chinatown as a "museum without walls."

Josh Chuck, a local filmmaker behind the documentary "Chinatown Rising," has noticed younger generations dining or participating in events in Chinatowns. A friend who works in tech began picking up orders for friends who wanted to support Chinatown restaurants last year. Soon he was making spreadsheets to track 400 deliveries.

"Honestly, there's no way I could have imagined something that would galvanize these people that I know. Even myself, like, I feel much more connected and committed," Chuck said. "It's a silver lining."

In New York, the first of five summer night

markets start next month in the city's Chinatown. It will be the biggest event to date for nonprofit Think!Chinatown. Last year after a series of verbal and physical assaults against Asians, they partnered with Neighborhoods Now, a local pandemic relief initiative, on Chinatown Nights.

The event started as a small-scale gathering of fewer than 10 artist booths and food trucks in Forsyth Plaza park. Despite a "crazy" two-month prep window, there was a collective feeling of "we just need to be together," said Yin Kong, Think!Chinatown co-founder and director.

"It reprioritized these other organizations that traditionally would have funded other things to focus on how to support communities of color in a different way," Kong said.

The expanded event next month will have 20 booths and sponsorships, and will be scheduled when most Chinatown restaurants are closed so owners can participate.

"The mechanisms that got us there would not have happened without the pandemic," said Kong, who feels Think!Chinatown is now seen as more "legit" with better funding, full-time staff and the possibility of an office space instead of her dining table.

There are fewer than 50 Chinatowns across the U.S. Chinatowns elsewhere have shrunk to a block or disappeared altogether because of gentrification. It is a tricky juxtaposition for a city to tout Chinatowns to tourists while offering few resources to residents.

"So you have these huge festivals to bring in businesses. You have these parades and all this stuff. But definitely, it's important that the needs of the community, especially the working class and the poor, are addressed," Dong said.

Meanwhile, Chinatown Media & Arts Collaborative in San Francisco is designing a \$26.5 million media and arts center set to open in 2025. In New York, Think!Chinatown plans to lease a space with a kitchen for art exhibitions and cooking classes. The hope is to keep engaging with the community.

## BRIEFS

### North Carolina trooper kills man during traffic stop

SILER CITY, N.C. — A North Carolina trooper fatally shot a man who authorities said "presented a pistol" during a traffic stop initiated for a seat belt violation.

The trooper stopped a Ford pickup truck in Siler City late Monday afternoon, the State Highway Patrol said in a news release. During the stop, the release said, Mark Anthony Diaz, 21, "presented" a pistol and Trooper Rodney N. Cook fired his service weapon, striking Diaz. Diaz was taken from the scene and later pronounced dead, officials said. A passenger fled the scene, but returned during the investigation.

Cook was not injured and has been placed on routine administrative duty during an internal investigation, the Highway Patrol said. The State Bureau of Investigation is also examining the case.

### Florida man found dead in gator-filled lake

LARGO, Fla. — In an email on May 24, Florida police say that a man died searching for Frisbees in a lake at a disc golf course where signs warn visitors to beware of alligators.

The unidentified man was looking for Frisbees and other discs in the water and "a gator was involved," the Largo Police Department said. No other details were immediately released.

The website for John S. Taylor Park in Largo, where the incident occurred, advertises that patrons can "discover the sport of disc golf on a course set in the natural beauty of this park." The course is set next to the lake, which has no-swimming signs posted alongside it.

Police are now telling people to avoid the lake while the investigation continues.

### US-Canadian regulators tie hepatitis B to strawberries

TEXAS — U.S. and Canadian regulators are investigating a hepatitis outbreak that may be linked to fresh organic strawberries.

In a joint weekend statement, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Public Health Agency of Canada said illnesses in Minnesota, California and Canada occurred after people consumed FreshKampo and H-E-B brand strawberries.

The agencies said the strawberries were purchased between March 5 and April 25. They were sold at various U.S. retailers, including Aldi, Kroger, Safeway, Walmart and Trader Joe's. The potentially affected strawberries are past their shelf life, but health officials say consumers who purchased them and froze them to eat later should throw them away.

The FDA has reported 17 illnesses and 12 hospitalizations in the U.S.

Hepatitis A is a virus that can cause liver disease and, in rare cases, liver failure and death. Consumers who ate the potentially affected berries in the last two weeks and have not been vaccinated against hepatitis A should immediately consult with a physician, the FDA said.

### Arrest made in 1984 killing linked to famed mobster

BOSTON — The suspect in a nearly four-decade-old killing in South Boston that authorities have linked to notorious mobster James "Whitey" Bulger and his iron-fisted control of the neighborhood's drug trade was held without bail on Tuesday.

Michael Lewis, 61, pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder at his arraignment in Suffolk Superior Court in connection with the July 1984 shooting death of Brian Watson.

Lewis "adamantly denies the allegations and looks forward to his day in court," defense attorney James Sultan said.

The slaying took place when Bulger, who was killed in a federal prison in West Virginia in 2018, terrorized the neighborhood. Although neither the suspect nor the victim had a direct link to Bulger, his influence played a role, Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden said after the arraignment.

"We had a glimpse in the courtroom today of a very different Boston, a Boston that we can never allow to happen again," Hayden said.

Watson, 23, was last seen alive on July 16 or 17, 1984, and was reported missing by his mother on July 28 that year, authorities said. His body was found hidden among the trees and bushes by a motorist who had pulled over on Interstate 93 in Manchester, New Hampshire, on Sept. 16, 1984.

### Pelosi's spouse arrested after California crash

NAPA, Calif. — The weekend arrest of Paul Pelosi, the husband of U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, on suspicion of driving under the influence came after the 2021 Porsche he was driving was hit by another vehicle in Northern California's wine country, authorities said.

Paul Pelosi, 82, was taken into custody shortly before midnight Saturday in Napa County, according to a sheriff's office online booking report.

He was driving into an intersection near the town of Yountville and was hit by a 2014 Jeep, the California Highway Patrol said in a statement late Sunday.

No injuries were reported and the 48-year-old driver of the Jeep was not arrested.

Pelosi could face misdemeanor charges including driving under the influence and driving with a blood alcohol content level of 0.08 or higher. He was released early Sunday on \$5,000 bail, records showed.



CHRIS MACHIAN

**A man sprays down the roof of a neighboring building while also filming the scene of a three-alarm fire, May 30.**

# Fire destroys chemical plant

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OMAHA, Neb. — A large fire that raged through a Nebraska chemical plant was extinguished by firefighters Tuesday morning, and nearby residents who were initially evacuated were allowed to return to their homes, authorities said.

Thick smoke billowed from the Nox-Crete facility just southwest of downtown Omaha that could be seen as far away as the Elkhorn River Monday evening, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) to the west.

Battalion Chief Scott Fitzpatrick said the first call for help came shortly before 7 p.m. Monday, and firefighters who initially entered the building found a much bigger fire than anticipated, forcing them to retreat.

Fire crews then fought the fire from outside the building, noting the presence of chemicals and propane bottles inside. Explosions could be seen and heard as propane tanks ruptured.

No injuries were reported from the fire or explosions. Officials said the smoke posed no major toxicity risks to the public.

The cause of the fire wasn't immediately known.

Omaha Public Power District said more than 2,500 customers were without electricity in the neighborhoods near the fire Monday night, but power had been restored to all but a handful of customers by Tuesday morning.

Representatives from the Nox-Crete chemical company could not be immediately reached for comment.

# Pa. fights 'corridor of death'

CLAUDIA LAUER  
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Black communities in the United States have been hit hardest in a surge of traffic fatalities that federal officials are describing as a crisis.

An example is Philadelphia's Roosevelt Boulevard, an area some of its residents call the "corridor of death."

Roosevelt is a nearly 14-mile maze of chaotic traffic patterns passing through some of the city's most diverse neighborhoods with the highest poverty rates. Driving can be dangerous as cars traverse between inner and outer lanes. Biking or walking on the boulevard can be even worse as some pedestrian crossings are longer than a football field and take four light cycles to cross.

Many of the city's ideas for fixing Roosevelt were championed under new federal strategies. In the wake of increasing fatalities, Transporta-

tion Secretary Pete Buttigieg has pushed a "safe system" approach, encouraging cities and states to take into account more than just driver behavior when designing roads.

The Biden administration also created funding for safety improvements, including the bipartisan infrastructure law and a \$5 billion federal aid package to cities over the next five years. Federal officials pledged to prioritize equity when deciding on funding in the wake of a disproportionate 23% jump in Black traffic fatalities in 2020.

Kelley Yemen, director of Philadelphia's Complete Streets program, said the city hopes for federal money to begin a long-term redesign of Roosevelt outlined in a study released in 2019.

Around Philadelphia, aggressive driving during the pandemic drove fatalities to 156 in 2020, a sharp increase from 90 deaths in 2019. Preliminary data from the Philadelphia Police Department showed a decrease in 2021 to 133 fatalities.

# Canceled flights stall vacations

DENVER — The unofficial start of summer over the Memorial Day weekend offers a troubling glimpse of what lies ahead for travelers during the peak vacation season.

U.S. airlines canceled more than 2,800 flights from Thursday through Monday, according to tracking service FlightAware.

Delta Air Lines, had the worst record among major carriers with more than 800 canceled flights over the five-day span.

"This was a chance for airlines to show that last summer's delays would not be repeated this summer, and yet, it was not to be," said Helene Becker, an analyst for banking firm Cowen.

"We expect a busy summer and are concerned about the industry's ability to handle the demand," Becker said.

The good news was that cancellations were down sharply on Tuesday. FlightAware reported only about 60 cancellations on the East Coast.

Various forecasts of high numbers of travelers over the weekend proved to be accurate. The Transportation Security Administration reported screening more than 11 million people from Thursday through Monday.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI

**Travelers queue up at the main terminal of Denver International Airport on Thursday.**

That was down 9% from the same days in 2019, but an increase of almost 25% over last year. Crowds of some 2.4 million on both Thursday and Friday nearly matched the pandemic high set on the Sunday after Thanksgiving last year.

Delta, when asked to comment Tuesday about its weekend troubles, pointed to a statement it issued last week. The Atlanta airline said it was being challenged by several factors including rising COVID-19 cases among workers, and it trimmed its July and August schedules in an effort to improve reliability.



BRIEFS

Illinois senator visits Taiwan as China ups military threat

TAIPEI, Taiwan — U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Illinois, reiterated America’s support for Taiwan on Tuesday during her second visit in a year to the self-governing island claimed by China.

Duckworth, meeting with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, emphasized the close economic, political and security relations between Taipei and Washington.

China sent 30 military aircraft toward the island on Monday in an ongoing campaign of regular flights. Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said it responded by scrambling jets, putting air defense missile systems on alert and issuing radio warnings.

Duckworth said she wanted to “emphasize our support for Taiwan security.” The former Army helicopter pilot and lieutenant colonel in the National Guard cited strong bipartisan backing for a bill she has put forward promoting cooperation between Taiwan’s armed forces and the U.S. National Guard.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said the visit was counterproductive and urged the U.S. to end all official contacts with Taiwan.

“What the U.S. government should do is to put into practice President Biden’s remarks that the U.S. does not seek a new Cold War with China, does not aim to change China’s system ... and does not support Taiwan independence,” Zhao said.

Sievierodonetsk mayor says Russians have seized city

SLOVIANSK, Ukraine — Russian forces have seized half of Sievierodonetsk, the eastern Ukrainian city key to Moscow’s efforts to complete the capture of the industrial Donbas region, the city’s mayor Oleksandr Striuk said Tuesday.

“The city is essentially being destroyed ruthlessly block by block,” Striuk said. He described continued heavy street fighting and artillery barrages that threatened the lives of the estimated 13,000 civilians still sheltering in the ruined city that once was home to more than 100,000.

Serhiy Haidai, governor of the eastern Luhansk region, said Tuesday that “most of Sievierodonetsk” was under Russian control, though he added that fierce fighting continued and the city wasn’t surrounded.

Sievierodonetsk is important to Russian efforts to capture the Donbas before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine’s defense. Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian troops in the region for eight years and held swaths of territory even before the invasion.

Israel signs first trade deal with an Arab country

JERUSALEM — Israel and the United Arab Emirates signed a free trade agreement on Tuesday, the first of its kind that Israel has concluded with an Arab country.

The UAE agreed to normalize relations with Israel in a U.S.-brokered deal in 2020, the first of the so-called Abraham Accords that Israel eventually concluded with four Arab nations — the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. Since then, the two countries have boosted cooperation in a number of economic sectors.

“Israel & the UAE just signed a historic Free Trade Agreement - the first of this scope to be signed between Israel & an Arab state,” Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett tweeted. “This was the fastest FTA to be signed in Israel’s history.”

Mohamed Al Khaja, the UAE ambassador to Israel, called the deal “an unprecedented achievement.”

“Businesses in both countries will benefit from faster access to markets and lower tariffs as our nations work together to increase trade, create jobs, promote new skills and deepen cooperation,” Al Khaja tweeted.

Dorian Barak, president of the UAE-Israel Business Council, predicted that bilateral trade would exceed \$2 billion this year, rising to \$5 billion in the next five years.

1 billion pills seized; East, SE Asia hits drug peak

BANGKOK — The number of methamphetamine tablets seized in East and Southeast Asia exceeded a billion last year for the first time, highlighting the scale of illegal drug production and trafficking in the region and the challenges of fighting it, the U.N. said Monday.

The 1,008 billion tablets — which would weigh about 91 tons altogether — were part of a regionwide haul of almost 172 tons of methamphetamine in all forms, and was seven times higher than the amount seized 10 years earlier, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime said in a report.

“The region is literally swimming in methamphetamine,” said Jeremy Douglas, Southeast Asia regional representative for the U.N. agency, at a news conference in the Thai capital. “There’s going to have to be a radical policy shift by East Asia to address this problem or it’s just going to continue to grow.”

The drugs are largely consumed in Southeast Asia but are also exported to New Zealand and Australia, Hong Kong, Korea and Japan in East Asia, and increasingly to South Asia.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BY ROB GILLIES  
Associated Press

TORONTO — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government introduced legislation Monday that would put a freeze on importing, buying or selling handguns.

“We are capping the number of handguns in this country,” Trudeau said.

The regulations to halt the growth of personally owned handguns is expected to be enacted this fall.

“It will be illegal to buy, sell, transfer or import handguns anywhere in Canada,” the prime minister said. Families of shooting victims joined him at a press conference in Ottawa.

Canada has plans to ban 1,500 types of military-style firearms and offer a mandatory buyback program that will begin at the end of the year.

Trudeau said if someone really wants to keep their assault weapon, it will be made completely inoperable.

Canada already expanded background checks.

Trudeau has long had plans to enact tougher gun laws but the introduction of the new measure comes after mass shootings in Uvalde, Texas, and Buffalo, N.Y., this month.

Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino called the legislation the most significant step that Canada has taken

in a generation.

“Countries that do a good job of controlling guns do a good job of controlling gun violence,” Mendicino said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Bill Blair, minister of emergency preparedness, said Canada is very different from the United States.

“In Canada, gun ownership is a privilege not a right,” Blair said. “This is a principle that differentiates ourselves from many other countries in the world, notably our colleagues and friends to the south.”

Canada has had far fewer mass shootings than the U.S. in part because of a lack of easy access to guns, though the U.S. population also is far larger than Canada’s.

Blair noted guns are often smuggled in illegally from the U.S., which he noted has one of the largest small arms arsenals in the world.

The government plans to fight gun smuggling and trafficking by increasing criminal penalties, providing more

tools to investigate firearms crimes and strengthening border measures. Trudeau said increased funding already helped border officials double the amount of smuggled guns confiscated at the U.S. border.

The government said the bill would allow for the removal of gun licenses



Justin Trudeau

PATRICK DOVLE

from people involved in acts of domestic violence or criminal harassment, such as stalking.

The bill would create a new “red flag” law, allowing courts to require that people considered a danger to themselves or others surrender their firearms to police. The government said the measure would guard the safety of those applying through the process, often women in danger of domestic abuse, by protecting their identities.

The government also said it will require rifle magazines to be permanently altered so they can never hold more than five rounds and will ban the sale and transfer of large-capacity magazines under the Criminal Code.

“Canada can teach us a lot,” tweeted Bruce Heyman, a former U.S. ambassador to Canada under the Obama administration.

Trudeau said his government recognizes the vast majority of Canadians who own guns are responsible but the level of gun violence is unacceptable. Mendicino said they are aware the announcement could lead to a rush to buy guns before the law is enacted and urged Parliament to pass it as soon as possible.

The new measures are assured of passing in Canada’s Parliament as the ruling Liberals and leftist opposition New Democrats have enough votes.

Pierre Poilievre, who is running to be leader of the Conservative party, said law-abiding gun owners should be respected and dangerous criminals should be jailed.

“Other than using firearms for sport shooting and hunting, there is no reason anyone in Canada should need guns in their everyday lives,” Trudeau said. “We need less gun violence.”

“We cannot let the gun debate become so polarized that nothing gets done. We cannot let that happen in our country. This is about freedom. People should be free to go to the supermarket, their school or their place of worship without fear.”



MICHAEL O'BRIEN

Young girl gives Queen Elizabeth II a picture she walks through the crowd at the Great Aussie Barbecue in Perth, Australia, Saturday, 2011. After seven decades on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II is widely viewed in the U.K. as a rock in turbulent times.

# Queen’s jubilee brings protests, apathy in Commonwealth

JILL LAWLESS  
Associated Press

LONDON — After seven decades on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II is widely viewed in the U.K. as a rock in turbulent times. But while the U.K. is celebrating the queen’s Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — with pageantry, some in the Commonwealth are using the occasion to push for a formal break with the monarchy and the colonial history it represents.

“It’s not about her,” said Jamaican academic Rosalea Hamilton, who campaigns for her country to break away from the Commonwealth and become a republic. “It’s about her family’s wealth, built on the backs of our ancestors.”

The empire that Elizabeth was born into is gone, but she is still head of state in 14 other nations, including Canada, Australia and the Bahamas. Barbados cut ties with the monarchy in November. Several other Caribbean countries say they plan to follow suit.

Britain’s jubilee celebrations, which

climax over a four-day holiday weekend starting Thursday, aim to recognize the diversity of the U.K. and the Commonwealth. Britain’s image of itself as welcoming was battered by the revelation that hundreds of people from the Caribbean who had lived legally in the U.K. for decades were denied housing, jobs or medical treatment — and in some cases deported — because they didn’t have paperwork to prove their status.

The British government apologized and agreed to pay compensation.

A jubilee-year trip to Belize, Jamaica and the Bahamas in March was intended to strengthen ties, but it appears to have had the opposite effect. Cynthia Barrow-Giles, University of the West Indies professor of political science, said the British “seem to be very blind to the visceral sort of reactions” that royal visits elicit in the Caribbean.

Protesters in Jamaica demanded Britain pay reparations for slavery, and Prime Minister Andrew Holness

politely told William that the country was “moving on,” a signal that it planned to become a republic. U.K. officials hope countries that become republics will remain in the Commonwealth, the 54-nation organization made up largely of former British colonies. Out of those nations, 14 still recognize the queen as their ceremonial head.

As Commonwealth heads of government prepare to meet in Kigali, Rwanda, some question whether the organization can continue once the queen’s eldest son, Prince Charles, succeeds her. Sue Onslow, director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, said the queen has been the “invisible glue” holding the Commonwealth together.

But she says the organization has proven remarkably resilient and shouldn’t be written off. The Commonwealth played a major role in galvanizing opposition to apartheid in the 1980s, and could do the same over climate change.

WHO’S COMING:

Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth in 2002 under late authoritarian President Robert Mugabe. The nation began the process to rejoin in 2018

WHO HAS LEFT:

Barbados cut ties with the monarchy in November, and several other Caribbean countries say they plan to follow.

# Higher prices could blunt boycott of Russian oil

LORNE COOK  
AND SAMUEL PETREQUIN  
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union’s decision to ban nearly all oil from Russia to punish the country for its invasion of Ukraine is a blow to Moscow’s economy, but its effects may be blunted by rising energy prices and other countries willing to buy some of the petroleum, industry experts say.

EU leaders agreed late Monday to cut Russian oil imports by about 90% over the next six months,

The 27-country bloc relies on Russia for 25% of its oil and 40% of its natural gas, and European countries that are even more heavily dependent on Russia had been reluctant to act.

European heads of state hailed the decision as a watershed, but analysts were more circumspect.

The EU ban applies to all Russian oil delivered by sea. At Hungary’s insistence, it contains a temporary exemption for oil delivered by the Russian Druzhba pipeline to certain countries

in Central Europe.

In addition to retaining some European markets, Russia could sell some of the oil previously sold in Europe to China, India and other customers in Asia, though it will have to offer discounts, said Chris Weafer, CEO at consulting firm Macro-Advisory.

“Now, for the moment, that’s not financially too painful for Russia because global prices are elevated. They’re much higher than last year,” he said. “So even Russia offering a discount means that it’s probably selling its oil for roughly what it sold for last year.”

Moscow has traditionally viewed Europe as its main energy market, making Monday’s decision the most significant effort yet to punish Russia for its war in Ukraine.

“The oil embargo will speed up the countdown to the collapse of the Russian economy and war machine,” Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said.

Matteo Villa, an analyst at the Insti-

tute for Political Studies a Milan think tank, said Russia will take a pretty significant hit now but cautioned that the move could eventually backfire.

“The risk is that the price of oil in general goes up because of the European sanctions. And if the price goes up a lot, the risk is that Russia starts to earn more, and Europe loses the bet,” he said.

Moscow seized on the new sanctions to try to rally public support against the West, describing the West as bent on destroying Russia.

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia’s Security Council and former Russian president, said the oil ban aims to reduce the country’s export earnings and force the government to scale down social benefits.

“They hate us all!” Medvedev said on his messaging app channel. “Those decisions stem from hatred against Russia and against all of its people.”

Russia has not shied away from withholding energy to get its way. Russian state energy giant Gazprom said

it is cutting off natural gas to Dutch trader GasTerra and Denmark’s Oersted company and is also stopping shipments to Shell Energy Europe that were bound for Germany. Germany has other suppliers, and GasTerra and Oersted said they were prepared for a shutoff.

Russian oil delivered by sea accounts for two-thirds of the EU’s oil imports from Moscow. In addition to cutting off seaborne imports, Germany and Poland have agreed to stop using oil from the northern branch of the Druzhba pipeline.

Agreeing on sanctions against Russian natural gas is likely to prove much tougher because it represents a larger percentage of Europe’s energy supply.

“The very loud and clear message that Moscow will hear is that it will be near impossible for the European Union to get any agreement on blocking because gas will not be as easily replicated from other sources in Europe as oil will be,” Weafer said.





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**Ronan Kotiya, 11, holds his father Rupesh Kotiya's tracheostomy tube as his mother prepares to clean and change the tube's dressing at their home in Plano, Texas, April 10. Ronan helps care for his father who suffers from Lou Gehrig's disease. Millions of Americans with serious health problems depend on children ages 18 and younger to provide some or all of their care at home. An exact number is hard to pin down, but researchers think millions of children are involved in caregiving in the U.S.**

# IN THE SHADOWS

## YOUNG CAREGIVERS OFFER CRUCIAL HELP

**TOM MURPHY**  
Associated Press

**PLANO, Texas** — Ronan Kotiya leans over his father, fingers wrapped around a plastic tube he's about to slide from a tracheostomy hole in dad's neck.  
"3, 2, 1, go," the 11-year-old says as he removes the tube. His mom, Siobhan Pandya, slips a padded neck brace on her husband and lifts him into a sitting position on their bed.

### Lou Gehrig's disease

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as **Lou Gehrig's disease**, is a neurodegenerative disease that results in the progressive loss of motor neurons that control voluntary muscles.

ALS is the **most common** type of motor neuron disease.

**Early symptoms** of ALS include stiff muscles, muscle twitches, and gradual increasing weakness and muscle wasting.

Ronan's 9-year-old brother, Keaton, waits nearby, ready to connect their dad, Rupesh Kotiya, to a portable ventilator.

"Thanks, buddy. Good job," says Kotiya from a tablet he uses to speak.

So begins another weekend for the brothers — two Harry Potter fans with mouths full of braces and some heavy caregiving responsibilities.

Their father has Lou Gehrig's disease, a fatal illness that has taken his ability to speak and walk.

As many as 10 million children in the U.S. may provide care at home, according to researcher Melinda Kavanaugh. Some kids are the only caregivers patients have, while others fill in when visiting nurses or other help is not available. They're often too young to drive, and their work frequently goes unnoticed outside the home.

"They exist in the shadows," said Kavanaugh, an associate professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Kavanaugh and other researchers say the number of young caregivers is growing, and they need support. Pandya hopes caretaking will shape her sons into empathetic, strong young men.

But getting there involves a daily struggle between being a kid and living in a very grown-up world.

The two boys joined a group of kids in the Texas Neurology clinic in Dallas to learn more about caring for people with Lou Gehrig's disease, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. These children help care for a parent or grandparent with ALS, an illness that destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement.

Kavanaugh lined up several specialists to teach as part of a program called YCare that she has taken to several cities. A dietitian showed the kids how to make food

**"To be honest, they're doing tasks some adults don't want to do."**

**SIQBHAN PANDYA**

the right consistency so patients don't choke. A respiratory therapist explained the important parts of a device that helps people cough to clear mucus.

Aside from providing training, one of Kavanaugh's main goals was to simply let the young caregivers meet. "A 10-year-old at school is not going to talk about toileting or bathing their parent, but they are going to talk about it here," Kavanaugh said.

Doctors diagnosed Rupesh Kotiya with ALS in October 2014, a month before his boys turned 4 and 2. Ronan and Keaton have no memories of him without the illness.

They started pitching in with care a few years ago, first by wiping away their dad's tears or propping up his head during car rides.

Then they started helping Pandya move their father in and out of bed or onto the toilet. They pull down his shorts and underwear while she lifts him to the seat.

They also put on his socks and shoes, help change his shorts, crush medicines or mix mouthwash with water.

Pandya has daytime and evening caregivers for her husband during the week but no paid assistance overnight or on the weekends, so the boys have had to step up.

"To be honest, they're doing tasks some adults don't want to do," Pandya said.

Pandya tries to balance the boys' caregiving with activities that offer some normalcy. Keaton takes tennis lessons and coding classes. Ronan plays on a youth soccer team.

Keaton shows his frustration sometimes, especially with the amount of care his dad needs.

"He's been having a few accidents these last few days," Keaton said. "One time he went three times that day, and I was really looking forward to doing something that day, but I couldn't do it because ... yeah."

Pandya sees the boys' caregiving as a positive. She hopes Ronan and Keaton eventually look back and recognize how much they gained.

"If you're caring for somebody that ... has a clock ticking, then you don't want to take that time away," she said. "Being able to wipe their tears or wipe their mouth or hold their hand, those are some of the memories that they're going to cherish."

### Lou Gehrig's disease

There is **no known cure** for ALS.

The **goal of treatment** is to improve symptoms.

A **medication** called riluzole may extend life by about two to three months.

**Non-invasive ventilation** may result in both improved quality and length of life. Mechanical ventilation can prolong survival but does not stop disease progression.

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**Therapist Sarah Sutton, right, listens to an animated Keaton Kotiya, 9, as is brother Ronan Kotiya, 11, sits and listens during a counseling session in Plano, Texas, April 8.**



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**Charlie Warlick, right, gets an explanation from Tom Simon on using modified eating utensils during a workshop for young caregivers of ALS-diagnosed family members in Dallas, April 9.**



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**Melinda Kavanaugh, right, a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee social work professor, listens to Ronan Kotiya, 11, as they take a lunch break during a clinic for young caregivers of ALS family members.**