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JOURNALISTS GROW IN WORKSHOP
The Center for Editing Excellence welcomed 18 students and working journalists for a 10-day training, where they learned tools of the trade from newspaper professionals and visiting faculty. **FEATURE, 2**



Southwest Journalist

25TH ANNIVERSARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN ■ CENTER FOR EDITING EXCELLENCE ■ SWJOURNALIST.COM ■ FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 2022



With photos of the young victims in Uvalde, Texas, behind her, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Texas Democrat, speaks in support of Democratic gun control measures at the Capitol in Washington on Thursday.

House panel proposes gun safety bill

KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House is swiftly working to put its stamp on gun legislation in response to mass shootings in Texas and New York by 18-year-old assailants who used semi-automatic rifles to kill a total of 31 people, including 19 children.

Debate on the legislation came as the the White House announced President Joe Biden would give a prime-time speech about the shootings and his plans to press Congress “to pass commonsense laws to combat the epidemic of gun violence that is taking lives every day.”

The Judiciary Committee held a hearing Thursday on legislation that would raise the age limit for purchasing semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21. The bill also would make it a federal offense to import, manufacture or possess large-capacity magazines and would create a grant program to buy back such magazines.



PHOTOS BY J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE / ASSOCIATED PRESS

House Judiciary Committee Chair Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., calls to advance a series of gun control measures Thursday.

It also builds on the administration’s executive action banning fast-action “bump-stock” devices and “ghost guns” assembled without serial numbers.

The Democratic legislation, called the Protecting Our Kids Act, was quickly added to the legislative docket after last week’s school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., promised in a letter to Democratic colleagues Thursday that the House will vote on the measure next week. She also promised other votes in the weeks ahead, including on a bill to create an Amber Alert-style notification during a mass shooting. Pelosi also pledged a hearing on a bill banning military-style semi-automatic rifles.

But with Republicans nearly all in opposition, the House action will mostly be symbolic, merely putting lawmakers on record about gun control ahead of this year’s elections. The Senate is taking a different course. A bipartisan group is striving toward a compromise on gun safety legislation that can win enough GOP support to become law. Those talks are

■ GUN, Page 2

Biden appeals for tougher gun laws

ZEKE MILLER
AND WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden delivered an impassioned plea to Congress to take action against gun violence in an address to the nation Thursday night, calling on lawmakers to restore a ban on the sale of assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines after a string of mass shootings. If legislators fail to act, he warned, voters should use their “outrage” to turn gun violence into a central issue in November’s midterm elections.

Speaking at the White House, Biden acknowledged the stiff political headwinds as he sought to drive up pressure on Congress to pass stricter gun limits after such efforts failed following past attacks.

He said if Congress won’t embrace all of his proposals, they must at least find compromise on

other measures, like limiting access to firearms to those with mental health issues or raising the age to buy assault-style weapons from 18 to 21.

“How much more carnage are we willing to accept?” Biden said after two shootings last week. An 18-year-old gunman killed 19 students and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, and on Wednesday in Tulsa, Oklahoma a gunman shot and killed four people and himself at a medical office.

“This time we have to take the time to do something,” Biden said, calling out the Senate, where 10 Republican votes would be needed to pass legislation.

“I know how hard it is, but I’ll never give up and if Congress fails, I believe this time a majority of the American people won’t give up either,” he added. “I believe the majority of you will act to turn your outrage into making this issue central to your vote.”

All major broadcast networks broke away from regular programming to carry Biden’s remarks at 7:30 p.m. EDT, before the start of primetime shows. Biden has given major speeches on the coronavirus pandemic and the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan. But the president has used such addresses sparingly during his nearly 18 months in office, especially during evening hours.

Earlier Thursday, Vice President Kamala Harris spoke about the Oklahoma shooting, saying, “All of us hold the people of Tulsa in our hearts, but we also reaffirm our commitment to passing common sense gun safety laws.”

Before marking Memorial Day on Monday, Biden told reporters at the White House that there may be some bipartisan support to tighten restrictions on the kind of high-powered weapons used by the gunman in Uvalde. But he also noted that, while he had taken some steps via ex-

ecutive actions, he didn’t have the power as president to “outlaw a weapon.”

He also said that “things have gotten so bad that everybody’s getting more rational, at least that’s my hope,” adding, “There’s realization on the part of rational Republicans” who realize “we can’t keep repeating ourselves.”

Visiting Uvalde on Sunday, Biden mourned privately for three-plus hours with anguished families. Faced with chants of “do something” as he departed a church service, the president pledged: “We will.”

His Thursday night address coincided with bipartisan talks that are intensifying among a core group of senators discussing modest gun policy changes. Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said the group is “making rapid progress,” and Biden has spoken to Connecticut Sen. Chris

■ BIDEN, Page 2



(Right) Royalist Anita Atkinson, who has collected more than 12,000 items of memorabilia on her way to a tea party in Durham, England, Thursday, for the Platinum Jubilee.

Platinum Jubilee continues

Queen leads ceremony, misses Jubilee service

DANICA KIRKA
AND JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON — Queen Elizabeth II stepped gingerly onto the Buckingham Palace balcony Thursday, drawing cheers from the tens of thousands who came to join her at the start of a four-day celebration honoring her 70 years on the throne.

Fans sported Union Jack flags, party hats or plastic tiaras. Some had camped overnight in hopes of glimpsing the 96-year-old queen and a chance to watch the Trooping the Color — a military parade marking each sovereign’s official birthday since 1760.

It was one of the first big gatherings in the U.K. since the COVID-19 pan-

demic began.

“Everybody has got the same mission,” said Hillary Mathews, 70, from Hertfordshire. “All the horrors that’s been going on in the world and in England at the moment are put behind us for a day, and we can just enjoy really celebrating the queen.”

Elizabeth, who became queen at 25, is Britain’s longest-reigning monarch and the first to reach seven decades on the throne.

Yet age has begun to catch up with her. Buckingham Palace announced the queen would not attend a thanksgiving church service today after experiencing “some discomfort” at Thursday’s events.

The queen has had trouble moving around in recent months and has

pulled out of many public events, but she took part Thursday night in lighting a chain of ceremonial beacons at Windsor Castle as planned.

“The queen greatly enjoyed” Thursday’s events, according to the palace.

She basked in her moment, chatting with her great-grandson Prince Louis, 4, who occasionally covered her ears as 70 military aircraft swooped over the palace in salute. The display included a formation of fighter jets flying in the shape of the number 70.

The queen was joined on the balcony by more than a dozen royals — though not Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, who gave up front-line royal duties two years ago. The couple trav-

■ POMP, Page 2



(Back) Claire Schnatterbeck, Victor Swezey, Gayla Murphy, Brady Stone, Jess Huff, Griff Singer, Mark Grabowski, Dania Kalaji, Isaiah Washington, Lauren Guzy, Anna Jackson; (Middle) Anastasia Johnson, Beth Butler, Reegan Saunders, Owen Henderson, Payton Williams, CJ Vetter, Bradley Wilson; (Front) Maya Chadda, Shifra Dayak, Keri Heath, Catherine Wilson.

18 interns, journalists finish training

Eighteen college students and early-career journalists are headed to editing internships or returning to their newsrooms after completing 10 days of intensive preparation at the Center for Editing Excellence at the University of Texas at Austin.

Some of the participants have been placed in internships in multiplatform editing as part of the Dow Jones News Fund internship program. Other participants were sponsored by the Texas Press Association or Southern Newspapers Inc.

The Associated Press allowed students to use the wire services for content and instructional material, and School Newspapers Online hosted the Southwest Journalist website.

Newspaper professionals, visiting faculty and UT journalism faculty moderated training sessions in the first half of the 25th residency program.

In the latter half of the pre-internship training, participants produced three issues of a model daily newspaper, the Southwest Journalist, as well as a companion online and social media product, swjournalist.com.

Grants from the Dow Jones News Fund and contributions from participating news organizations cover the cost of training. After two years of virtual training because of COVID-19, this year's program returned to UT Austin. Participants spent more than eight hours each day on classroom instruction and production of the newspaper and website.

Beth Butler and Bradley Wilson served as co-directors of the workshop with assistance from Kathleen McElroy, Candace Misko and Alice Rentz in the UT School of Journalism.

Faculty also included Mark Grabowski, associate professor at Adelphi University, and Griff Singer, retired senior lecturer at the UT School of Journalism and former director of the workshop.

THE 2022 PARTICIPANTS:

- **Maya Chadda**, Boston University, *WGBH* (Boston)
- **Shifra Dayak**, University of Maryland, *Stars & Stripes*
- **Lauren Guzy**, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Fredericksburg Standard*
- **Keri Heath**, Wittenberg, BA; Dublin, MA; *Galveston Daily News*
- **Owen Henderson**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, *San Francisco Chronicle*
- **Jess Huff**, Northern Arizona University, *Lufkin Daily News*
- **Anna Jackson**, Belmont University, *Houston Chronicle*
- **Anastasia Johnson**, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, *Los Angeles Times*
- **Dania Kalaji**, University of Georgia, *Bay City News Foundation*
- **Gayla Murphy**, University of Houston-Victoria, *The Brazosport Facts*
- **Reegan Saunders**, Kent State University, *San Francisco Chronicle*
- **Claire Schnatterbeck**, Columbia University, patch.com
- **Brady Stone**, Texas A&M University, *Kansas City Star*
- **Victor Swezey**, Columbia University, *Tampa Bay Times*

- **CJ Vetter**, Texas State University, *Hays Free Press*
- **Isaiah Washington**, American University, *WGAL* (Lancaster, PA)
- **Payton Williams**, Cameron University (2022), *The Lawton Constitution*
- **Catherine Wilson**, University of Maryland College Park, *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*

GUEST SPEAKERS:

- **Abigail Allen**, managing editor, *Pilot Point Post-Signal*
- **Ken Cooke**, publisher, *Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post*
- **S. Mitra Kalita**, CEO/co-founder, URL Media Holdings Inc.
- **Corrie MacLaggan**, statewide managing editor for the public radio stations of *The Texas Newsroom*
- **Kathleen McElroy**, director, University of Texas School of Journalism and G.B. Dealey Regents Professor in Journalism
- **Yvonne Mintz**, editor and publisher, *The Facts* (Clute, Texas)
- **Philana Patterson**, deputy editor, newsroom standards and ethics, *The Wall Street Journal*

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- **Shirley Carswell**, executive director, Dow Jones News Fund
- **Mike Hodges**, executive director, Texas Press Association
- **Yvonne Mintz**, editor and publisher, *The Facts* (Clute, Texas) and Southern Newspapers Inc.

Choose small-town news instead of big-city blues

**LAUREN GUZY
AND GAYLA MURPHY**
Southwest Journalist

Working for the “big guys” may be the goal of many young journalists fresh out of college, but the greatest impact might be on a smaller scale.

The Dow Jones News Fund Center for Editing Excellence hosted a Texas Press

Association panel May 27. Award-winning writers and editors spoke to aspiring journalists about the impact they have in their communities, the relationships they have built, and the changes reporters can make at the local level.

All of the panelists are from small Texas towns and spoke on how their journalism careers have been impacted by the people of their communities.

Yvonne Mintz has spent 25 years with The Facts, where she now serves as editor and publisher of the Brazoria County-based paper. She spoke of her active role in the town of Clute, outside of her job.

Mintz is a member of the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce, and takes an active role at her children's school. She is connected to her role in the community, which motivates her to get important information to her readers.

“I fell in love with the community and my ability to make change within the community. ... I have a job that makes a difference,” Mintz said.

While being a part of the community comes with great reward, being a journalist also

comes with great responsibility, the panelists said. As a member of a newspaper staff, Mintz said there's a delicate balance between her work and her personal life. Mintz and Ken Esten Cooke, publisher and editor of the Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post, both emphasized the need to maintain a standard of integrity.

“I realize that I have a bully pulpit where I am,” Cooke said. There are numerous outlets where people can choose to get their news, but as long as he reports responsibly, Cooke knows he can effect change, he said.

Cooke said local journalists should be prepared to run into the subjects of their stories around town and in the grocery store aisles. This demonstrates that being a journalist in a small, tight-knit community enables journalists to see the impact their stories have more easily than they can in a large city.

Abigail Allen, managing editor of The Pilot Point Post-Signal, said she frequents her local coffee shop and is known by her readers for her distinctive laugh wherever she goes.

“Those relationships matter a lot,” Allen said. “There's things like that where you make those connections.”

Allen said the most meaningful compliment she can receive from her readers is when a member of the community asks her if she grew up in Denton County.

Allen is not a native, but she has ingrained herself into the area, which impacts her reporting and the work she has put into connecting with the community.

She also accepts that she has an active role as an agent for news.

“I try to be kind when I'm interacting with people because I try to keep in mind I'm an ambassador for the paper,” Allen said.

In wake of two shootings Biden calls for gun law change

Continued from Page 1

Murphy, among those leading their party's efforts on the issue.

The private discussions in the Senate, which is split 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans, are not expected to produce the kinds of sweeping reforms being considered by the Democratic-led House — which has approved expansive background check legislation and will next turn to an assault weapons ban.

But even a House package debated Thursday that is less sweeping but includes a provision raising the required age for buying semi-automatic firearms to 21, faces slim chances in the Senate.

Bipartisan senators are likely to come up with a more incremental package that would increase federal funding to support state gun safety efforts — with incentives for bolstering school security and mental health resources. The package may also encourage “red-flag laws” to keep firearms away from those who would do harm.

While the Senate approved a modest measure to encourage compliance with background checks after a 2017 church mass shooting in Texas and one in Parkland, Florida, the following year, no major legislation cleared the chamber following the devastating massacre of 20 children at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.

Pomp, celebration fills queen's jubilee

Continued from Page 1

eled to London from California with their two young children to take a low-key part in the celebrations. The monarch decided only working members of the royal family should appear on the balcony. The decision also excluded Prince Andrew, who stepped away from public duties amid controversy over his links with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Andrew will also miss Friday's church service after testing positive for COVID-19.

The Jubilee is being commemorated with a four-day holiday and events, including a concert at Buckingham Palace on Saturday. Thousands of street parties are planned nationwide, repeating a tradition that began with the queen's coronation in 1953.

Not everyone in the U.K. is celebrating. Many took advantage of the long weekend to go on vacation. Twelve protesters were arrested Thursday after getting past barriers and onto the parade route. The group Animal Rebellion claimed responsibility, saying the protesters were “demanding that royal land is reclaimed.”

Yet the Jubilee gave many people a chance to reflect on the state of the nation and the huge changes that took place during Elizabeth's reign.

John Major, one of the 14 prime ministers during the queen's reign, said the monarch's stoic presence helped steer the country over the decades.

“The queen has represented our better selves for over 70 years,” he told the BBC.

Congratulations arrived from world leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden and Pope Francis. French President Emmanuel Macron called Elizabeth “the golden thread that binds our two countries” and former President Barack Obama recalled the queen's

“grace and generosity” during his first visit to the palace.

Cheers and the clomp of hooves rang out Thursday as horse-drawn carriages carried members of the royal family from Buckingham Palace to a ceremonial parade ground about half a mile away for the Trooping the Color ceremony.

The annual tradition is a ceremonial reenactment of the way battle flags were once displayed for soldiers.

Prince Charles, the 73-year-old heir to the throne, stood in for his mother during the event Thursday.

He rode onto the parade ground on horseback and took the salute of troops in their scarlet tunics and bearskin hats, flanked by his sister, Princess Anne, and oldest son, Prince William.

“I'm very proud of the queen,” said Celia Lourd, 60, one of the spectators. “She's been my queen all my life, and I think we owe her an awful lot for the service she's given to the country.”



EVAN VUCCI / ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Joe Biden speaks about the latest round of mass shootings, from the White House Thursday. Biden is attempting to increase pressure on Congress to pass stricter gun laws after such efforts failed following past shootings.

Gun safety bill spurs debate in congress

Continued from Page 1

making “rapid progress,” according to Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, one of the Republican negotiators.

Rep. Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, defended his chamber's proposals as popular with most Americans, dismissing Republican criticism.

“You say that it is too soon to take action? That we are ‘politicizing’ these tragedies to enact new policies?” Nadler said. “It has been 23 years since Columbine. ‘Too soon?’ My friends, what the hell are you waiting for?”

Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, the top Republican on the committee, said no one wants another tragedy. But he insisted the House bill would do nothing to stop mass shootings.

A chief feature of the House bill requires those buying semi-automatic weapons to be at least 21. Only six states require someone to be at least 21 years old to buy rifles and shotguns. The shooters in Uvalde and Buffalo were both 18 and used AR-15-style weapons.

Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., said it should be a red flag when an 18-year-old wants to buy “an assault weapon.”

Rep. Dan Bishop, R-N.C., pointed to a U.S. appeals court ruling last month, however, that found California's ban on the sale of semi-automatic weapons to adults under 21 unconstitutional.

“I can tell you this, and let me be clear: You are not going to bully your way to stripping Americans of fundamental rights,” Bishop said.

The hearing featured emotional pleas from Democratic lawmakers for Congress to respond to the mass shootings after years of gridlock on gun issues, including from Rep. Lucy McBath of Georgia. She recalled how her son, Jordan, was shot and killed at a gas station by a man who complained about the loud music he was listening to.

Several lawmakers participated in the hearing remotely, including Rep. Greg Steube, R-Fla., who brandished various pistols in arguing that the bill's provision banning large-capacity magazines of more than 10 rounds amounted to stopping law-abiding citizens from purchasing guns of their choice.

When Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, remarked that she hoped one of the guns Steube was holding was not loaded, Steube replied, “I'm in my house. I can do whatever I want with my guns.”



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Center for Editing Excellence
School of Journalism and Media ■ The University of Texas at Austin

BETH BUTLER
Co-Director
Kent State University

BRADLEY WILSON
Co-Director
Midwestern State University

MARK GRABOWSKI
Workshop Faculty
Adelphi University

S. GRIFFIN SINGER
Workshop Director Emeritus
UT Austin School of Journalism and Media

KATHLEEN MCELROY
Director
UT Austin School of Journalism and Media

**CANDACE MISKO,
ALICE RENTZ**
UT Austin School of Journalism and Media

**SHIRLEY CARSWELL,
HEATHER TAYLOR**
Dow Jones News Fund

MIKE HODGES
Texas Press Association

YVONNE MINTZ
Southern Newspapers

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2022 ATTENDEES

MAYA CHADDA
Boston University
WGBH (Boston)

SHIFRA DAYAK
University of Maryland
Stars & Stripes

LAUREN GUZY
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fredericksburg Standard

KERI HEATH
Wittenberg, BA; Dublin, MA
Galveston Daily News

OWEN HENDERSON
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
San Francisco Chronicle

JESS HUFF
Lufkin Daily News

ANNA JACKSON
Belmont University
Houston Chronicle

ANASTASIA JOHNSON
Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism
Los Angeles Times

DANIA KALAJI
University of Georgia
Bay City News Foundation

GAYLA MURPHY
The Brazosport Facts

REEGAN SAUNDERS
Kent State University
San Francisco Chronicle

CLAIRE SCHNATTERBECK
Columbia University
patch.com

BRADY STONE
Texas A&M University
Kansas City Star

VICTOR SWEZEY
Columbia University
Tampa Bay Times

CJ VETTER
Texas State (2022)
Hays Free Press

ISAIAH WASHINGTON
American University
WGAL (Lancaster, PA)

PAYTON WILLIAMS
Cameron University (2022)
The Lawton Constitution

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

BRIEFS

Vallejo declares victory in Democratic primary runoff

AUSTIN, Texas— Michelle Vallejo declared victory Wednesday in the Democratic primary runoff for the national battleground 15th Congressional District in South Texas.

Her declaration came eight days after election night, when she emerged with a 23-vote margin over opponent Ruben Ramirez.

Coming out of election night in the 15th District, both Vallejo and Ramirez had agreed the race was too close to call.

By Wednesday, Vallejo's lead had expanded to 33 votes.

But Ramirez was not ready to concede. His campaign said in a statement that "it is essential that every voter has their say before a final call is made." Counties had until the end of day on Thursday to report final numbers to the state.

Candidates can request recounts if their margin is less than 10% of the number of votes their opponent received. Ramirez is currently well within that range.

The Republican nominee for the open seat in the 15th District is Monica De La Cruz, who won her primary in March.

Uvalde PD unaware of incoming 911 calls

UVALDE — The commander at the scene of the Uvalde school shooting was not informed of 911 calls coming from students trapped inside the building, a Texas state senator said Thursday.

Sen. Roland Gutierrez said the Commission on State Emergency Communications told him the pleas for help from people inside Robb Elementary School on May 24 did not make their way from city police to school district police Chief Pete Arredondo. The Democratic senator called it a "system failure."

Since the shooting, much of the focus has turned to Arredondo. Steven McCraw, the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said Arredondo made the "wrong decision" to not order officers to attempt to breach the classroom as 911 calls were being made to the outside.

Texas tops No. 5 seed UCLA in softball World Series

OKLAHOMA CITY — Texas freshman Mia Scott went 4 for 4 and helped the Longhorns defeat No. 5 seed UCLA 7-2 in the opening game of the Women's College World Series.

She had a triple, a double and two singles for the Longhorns (44-19-1), who hadn't won a World Series game since a semifinal run in 2013.

Texas' Hailey Dolcini held the Bruins to six hits in a complete game victory.

Texas advanced to play the winner of Thursday's Oklahoma-Northwestern game on Saturday. UCLA (48-9) will play an elimination game against the Oklahoma-Northwestern loser on Friday.

Texas' Bella Dayton hit a two-run homer in the sixth that chased Holly Azevedo. It was just Dayton's fifth homer of the season, and it put the Longhorns up 7-0.

Former Cowboys' back found dead at 38

FRISCO — Former Dallas Cowboys running back Marion Barber III, who is fourth in franchise history with 47 rushing touchdowns, has died at 38, the team said Wednesday.

Barber played a final season with Chicago in 2011 after spending his first six years with the Cowboys. He had issues with mental health after his career.

Police in the Dallas suburb of Frisco said Wednesday they made a welfare check at an apartment "believed to be leased" by Barber and were investigating an unattended death there.

The Cowboys, who have their headquarters in Frisco, said they were "heartbroken by the tragic death."

Barber, a former Minnesota player, was third on Dallas' career list for rushing touchdowns before getting passed in 2021 by two-time NFL rushing champion Ezekiel Elliott. He finished with 53 overall and never had fewer than four in any of his seven seasons.

Efforts to shrink dead zone in Gulf not working

NEW ORLEANS — Decades of work haven't shrunk the oxygen-depleted "dead zone" that forms each year in the Gulf of Mexico.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is forecasting that this year's will be about the 35-year average. The dead zone is forecasted to be about 5,364 square miles, NOAA said in a news release.

A federal-state task force — the Interagency Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force — has set a long-term goal of reducing the dead zone to 1,900 square miles, which is about 35% of the current average.

The Gulf dead zone is largely created by urban and agricultural runoff and discharges of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Mississippi River. In the Gulf of Mexico, the nutrients feed an overgrowth of algae, which die and sink to the bottom, using up oxygen from the ocean floor.

The dead zone that stretches along most of Louisiana's coast and into Texas waters is the second largest human-caused dead zone, University of Louisiana scientists Nancy Rabalais and Eugene Turner wrote.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
AND THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

W-I-N-N-E-R



AP PHOTO/ALEX BRANDON

Harini Logan, a 14-year-old from San Antonio, competes in the Scripps National Spelling Bee finals during the first spell-off in 100 years. She spelled words like "charadriiform" and "taumachian" before correctly rattling through 21 words in a row in the spell-off, six more than Vikram's 15.

Mental health plans failed town

KAREN BROOKS HARPER
The Texas Tribune

By most accounts, the Uvalde school gunman was the type of person a \$290 million Texas youth mental health program was designed to reach — before his apparent instability could escalate to mass violence.

But it hadn't reached Salvador Ramos when the 18-year-old high school dropout — whose adolescent years were reportedly beset by truancy, cruelty to animals and violence — walked into Robb Elementary with an assault rifle and killed 19 kids and two teachers, health officials said.

Created by state lawmakers in 2019 and already present in 300 school districts comprising some 40% of the state's school population, the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium of experts has treated more than 6,000 students identified by school staff and doctors as being at high risk for hurting themselves or others.

Ramos' school district was on the list to be offered entry into the program but has not been formally included yet because the program is still ramping up, said Dr. Steven R. Pliszka, chair of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at UT Health San Antonio.

The teen gunman, many in the



WONG MAYE-E/ ASSOCIATED PRESS

Uvalde resident Eloise Castro, 75, visits a memorial site on May 27 in the town square for the victims killed in last week's elementary school shooting.

mental health community say, might have been identified early and perhaps even diverted from that devastating path had more resources been available to him and those around him as he grew up in an underserved area.

Abbott, a pro-gun Republican who pushed for the creation of the consortium after the deadly 2018 mass shootings in El Paso and Odessa, insisted in the hours after the Uvalde massacre that the problem was rooted in the lack of mental health services in that rural area, not lax Texas gun laws.

That was at least part of the reasoning behind the state's creation of the child mental health consortium, which first appeared in 2018 in a School Safety Action Plan pushed by Abbott to avoid more mass shootings, particularly in schools.

A day after the shootings, Abbott said authorities were unaware of any criminal or mental illness history that could have identified Ramos as a potential threat.

But he also said mental illness was described by the sheriff and other local

officials as "the problem here."

According to media interviews with Ramos' friends, family and others who knew him, the teenager was about to be denied high school graduation in Uvalde because of excessive truancy.

He was characterized as a bully who had at one point been teased about a stutter and a lisp. Social media posts he made were threatening and, by classmates' accounts, he had a hard time making and keeping friends.

His father didn't have much contact with him, and family members have described his mother as a drug user. The house the teen once shared with her was visited by police several times during arguments between the two, with Ramos accusing his mother of trying to kick him out.

But when it comes to services for Uvalde's troubled youth and mentally ill, there is little debate about how much access they have there.

"It's a fairly underserved area," Pliszka said.

Because the shooting both highlighted the more urgent need for services there and likely created the need for them for those left behind, Uvalde schools are now being offered access to those services immediately, Pliszka said.

Gutierrez calls exclusion a 'slap in the face'

JAMES BARRAGÁN
The Texas Tribune

UVALDE—Texas state Sen. Roland Gutierrez, a Democrat who represents Uvalde, said his exclusion from a special legislative committee designed to make recommendations in response to the Uvalde shooting was an insult to Uvalde residents.

"I do consider it a slap in the face to the people of Uvalde," said Gutierrez, who has been vocal on the need for gun safety since the shooting. "They didn't have their representative there."

The committee members are appointed by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, a Republican whom Gutierrez has been critical of in the past.

The three committee leaders Patrick selected are conservative Republicans who are unlikely to entertain legislative recommendations tightening gun control.

Sen. Bob Nichols, a Republican from Jacksonville, will chair the com-

mittee. Sens. Brandon Creighton, a Conroe Republican, and Lois Kolkhorst, a Brenham Republican, will be co-vice chairs.

"These three leaders have the experience and knowledge to lead this important committee," Patrick said in a statement announcing the members.

Eight Republicans and three Democrats are on the committee.

The special committee was formed after Gov. Greg Abbott called for legislators to come up with solutions regarding school safety, mental health and other topics.

Gutierrez has been critical of Abbott, saying legislators studied these issues after mass shootings in the state in 2018 and 2019.

"We've seen this show before from Greg Abbott," Gutierrez said. "The same roundtables that he did after Sutherland Springs, the same recommendations that he issued after El Paso and the same concerns that were

Man ravages artwork at Dallas museum

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — A man broke into the Dallas Museum of Art and caused more than \$5 million in damage, including smashing three ancient Greek artifacts before he was arrested, police said.

Brian Hernandez, 21, is charged with criminal mischief of more than or equal to \$300,000, which is punishable by five years to life in prison. He was booked Thursday into the Dallas County jail with bond set at \$100,000. Jail records list no attorney for Hernandez.

According to police, Hernandez used a metal chair to break into the museum about 9:45 p.m. Wednesday

and began a destructive rampage.

He broke into a display case and smashed a sixth-century B.C. Greek amphora and a Greek pot dating to 450 B.C. Police say those two items alone were worth about \$5 million.

Hernandez also smashed a bowl from the sixth century B.C., worth about \$100,000, and a ceramic Caddo effigy bottle valued at about \$10,000.

Building security rushed to apprehend Hernandez, who was unarmed, police said. Police did not immediately know what prompted the incident.

The attack came three days after a man, disguised as an elderly woman, threw cake at the glass protecting the Mona Lisa in the Louvre Museum in Paris. The painting not damaged.

Employers: ‘Where is everyone?’

Teens hold power in summer job market as wages rise

PAUL WISEMAN
AND MAE ANDERSON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Employers in America’s vast hospitality sector all have similar laments: They can’t fill many of their summer jobs because open positions far exceed the number of people willing and able to fill them, even at increased wages.

But some help may be coming. School’s out for summer, cutting loose millions of high school and college students.

Teens are in an unusually commanding position. Researchers at Drexel University predicted that an average of 33% of 16- to 19-year-olds will be employed each month this summer, the highest such rate since 2007.

Lara Beckius, a junior at Connecticut College, said she went from being stressed about finding a job to being stressed about choosing among multiple offers. Beckius settled on an internship at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens.

“It was a little crazy,” said the 19-year-old from Avon, Connecticut. “It went from, ‘Am I going to have something this summer?’ to having four opportunities and, ‘Which one am I going to take?’”

Today’s level of teen employment isn’t close to what it used to be. In August 1978, 50% of America’s teenagers were working. Around 2000, teenage employment went into a decadelong slide before slowly rising again as the economy recovered in 2010.

Longer-term economic forces and changing personal choices kept teens away from work, too. The U.S. econ-



ROBERT F. BUKATY / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beth Duckworth fills a display cabinet with sweet treats at The Goldenrod, a popular restaurant and candy shop on Wednesday in York Beach, Maine. The business is looking to hire 30 to 40 more workers in addition to the 70 or so it now employs.

omy now offers fewer low-skill, entry-level jobs than in the 1970s and 1980s. Many jobs that do remain are increasingly likely to be taken by older workers, many of them immigrants.

COVID and its economic damage changed everything, but now, the U.S. unemployment rate has dropped to 3.6%, just above a half-century low. On average, there are now roughly two jobs available for every unemployed American.

Suddenly, teenagers are in greater demand. The pay available to them — \$15 or \$16 an hour for entry-level work — is drawing some back into the job market. Teenage employment has already topped pre-pandemic levels even though the overall employment still hasn’t.

“We have this big gap in the market now,” said Julia Pollak, an economist at ZipRecruiter. “There are no takers for jobs that are typically given to teens for

pocket money.”

Lauren Gonzalez, who operates two hostels with her sister, is looking for a barista, a bartender, an events manager and a sales manager. She recently raised pay for housekeepers and receptionists, jobs she had previously had little trouble filling.

Gonzalez said, “I definitely throw my hands in the air sometimes and say: ‘Where is everyone?’”

Surgeon target of gunman

SEAN MURPHY
AND JILL BLEED
Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — A gunman who killed his surgeon and three other people at a Tulsa medical office Wednesday blamed the doctor for his continuing pain after a recent back operation and bought an AR-style rifle just hours before the rampage, police said Thursday.

The gunman called the clinic repeatedly, complaining of pain, and specifically targeted the doctor who performed the surgery, Tulsa Police Chief Wendell Franklin said.

That physician, Dr. Preston Phillips, died, along with Dr. Stephanie Husen, receptionist Amanda Glenn and medical center visitor William Love, police said.

The attack occurred on the campus of Saint Francis Health System in Tulsa. The chief identified the shooter as Michael Louis, 45, of Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Police have received reports that 73-year-old Love, who was accompanying a patient to the doctor’s office, held a door shut in hopes of allowing others to flee from the gunman through another door, Franklin said.

Louis carried a letter that “made it clear that he came in with the intent to kill Dr. Phillips and anyone who got in his way,” Franklin said.

He said Louis called the doctor’s office “several times over several days” reporting he was still in pain.

Police responded to the call about three minutes after dispatchers received the report at 4:52 p.m. and made contact with the gunman at 5:01 p.m., authorities said Wednesday.



SETH WENIG / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stormy Daniels and her attorney Michael Avenatti leave federal court in New York in 2018. Avenatti was sentenced Thursday to four years in prison for cheating Daniels, his client.



MARKUS SCHREIBER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Adult film actress Stormy Daniels arrives at the adult entertainment fair “Venus” in Berlin 2018. Daniels was Avenatti’s client and a porn actor who catapulted him to fame.

Michael Avenatti gets 4 years for defrauding Stormy Daniels

BOBBY CAINA CALVAN
AND LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Michael Avenatti was sentenced Thursday to four years in prison for stealing book proceeds from Stormy Daniels, the porn actor who catapulted him to fame when he represented her in courtrooms and on cable news programs during her legal battles with then-President Donald Trump.

The incarcerated California lawyer learned his fate in Manhattan federal court, where Judge Jesse M. Furman said Avenatti will spend another 2 1/2 years in prison on top of the 2 1/2 years he is already serving for a previous fraud conviction.

At trial earlier this year, Avenatti represented himself, cross-examining Daniels for hours about their experiences in early 2018, when she signed a book deal that provided an \$800,000 payout. Prosecutors said he illegally pocketed about \$300,000 of her advance on “Full Disclosure,” published in fall 2018.

At the time, Avenatti represented Daniels in lawsuits meant to free her from a \$130,000 hush payment she received shortly before the 2016 presidential election to remain silent about a tryst she said she had with Trump a decade earlier. Trump denied it.

The judge said Avenatti’s crime against Daniels was made “out of desperation” when his law firm was struggling. He called Avenatti’s behavior “craven and egregious” and blamed it on “blind ambition.”

Avenatti was also convicted of aggravated identity theft and wire fraud in the Daniels case. Furman said he believed the four-year sentence “will send a message to lawyers” that,

if they go astray, they will lose their profession and their liberty.

Avenatti, wearing a drab beige prison uniform and shackled at the feet, choked up several times as he delivered a lengthy statement before the sentence was announced, saying he had “disappointed scores of people and failed in a cataclysmic way.”

Daniels was not in court. Her current attorney, Clark Brewster, spoke on her behalf, saying it was “truly shocking” that Avenatti tried to portray himself as a champion of his clients during his statement.

Avenatti is already serving a 2 1/2-year sentence for trying to extort Nike. He was convicted in 2020 of threatening to ruin the shoemaker’s reputation if it did not pay him up to \$25 million.

He also faces a retrial in California on charges that he cheated clients and others out of millions of dollars there.

In a presentence submission, Avenatti’s lawyers cited an apology letter Avenatti wrote to Daniels in which he said: “I am truly sorry.”

But last week, prosecutors in a sentencing submission urged that he face “substantial” additional time in prison for a wire fraud conviction and criticized his apology letter, saying the 51-year-old failed to apologize for his actual crime.

They recalled that, during “an extremely lengthy” cross-examination with Daniels, he “berated his victim for lewd language and being a difficult client, questioned her invasively about marital and familial difficulties, and sought to cast her as crazy, much as he did during the course of his fraud to prevent her own agent and publisher from responding to her pleas for help.”

Local governments turn away \$73M of federal aid

DAVID A. LIEB
Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — From small towns to big cities, every government across the U.S. was offered a slice of \$350 billion in federal coronavirus relief funds to help shore up their finances, cover pandemic-related costs and invest in community projects.

Officials in 1,468 local governments effectively said “no,” turning away a potential total of \$73 million, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from every state. The declined money ranged from \$177 for the one-person village of Monowi, Nebraska, to \$3.9 million for DeWitt County, Texas, and its population of about 20,000.

West Alton, Missouri, with 500 residents, turned down \$106,341 in federal aid. Though that amount was almost half as much as the city’s budget, there wasn’t much discussion about accepting it during a city council meeting.

“The conversation probably lasted 15 seconds. Without having really any need for it, it wasn’t something we felt like we wanted to get in the middle of,”

Mayor Willie Richter said.

Other small-town mayors and village administrators provided a variety of reasons for rejecting the federal money. Some thought they had no eligible uses for it. Others didn’t want to deal with the federal bureaucracy or were politically opposed to the financial aid approved last year by the Democratic-led Congress.

The AP analysis identified 1,460 small cities, towns, villages or townships that declined a potential allocation of \$61 million. That amounts to about 5% of the nation’s roughly 28,000 small local governments, but just 0.3% of the total dollars allotted for those entities. Eight counties also have forgone a total of \$12 million. No states or territories declined funds.

The U.S. Treasury Department said it was pleased with the overall re-

sponse to the American Rescue Plan, which was the first time it had distributed money to such a broad swath of governments.

“The vast, vast, vast majority of recipients saw a need to use these funds.”

JACOB LEIBENLUFT
TREASURY OFFICIAL

1,756 states, territories and larger cities and counties had budgeted about \$106 billion of the initial \$208 billion they received. That money helped expand high-speed internet, assist residents with housing costs, provide aid to small businesses, shore up depleted unemployment funds and pay for public health initiatives and government services, among other things.

The Treasury hasn’t released data yet on how smaller governments used

the money.

The Village of the Branch, on New York’s Long Island, probably could have used the federal aid to improve the village hall, pave streets or repair water drainage systems, Mayor Mark Delaney said. But that wasn’t clear to him and other board members when they declined the funds before New York’s decision deadline. At that time, the eligible uses seemed limited and the federal reporting burdensome, Delaney said.

Under a final Treasury rule issued in January, the village could have used its entire \$183,149 allotment for almost any government services. But by then, the village’s share had been reallocated among other local governments.

“Because you did the right thing and you responded quickly, you basically lost out on an opportunity,” Delaney said.

The Treasury Department said it worked with states and associations for local governments to simplify the application process, clarify the rules and encourage participation.

BRIEFS

Harvey Weinstein’s rape conviction upheld

NEW YORK — A New York appeals court on Thursday upheld Harvey Weinstein’s rape conviction and 23-year prison sentence, rejecting his claim that the judge at his landmark #MeToo trial unfairly allowed women to testify about allegations that weren’t part of the case.

The ruling by a five-judge panel affirmed one of the highest-profile verdicts to date.

Weinstein, 70, was convicted in New York in February 2020 of forcibly performing oral sex on a TV and film production assistant in 2006 and raping an aspiring actress in 2013. He was acquitted of first-degree rape and two counts of predatory sexual assault stemming from allegations of a mid-1990s rape.

Weinstein is jailed in California, where he was extradited last year and is awaiting trial on charges he assaulted five women in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills from 2004 to 2013.

Man denies kidnapping charge in alleged murder-for-hire plot

Man denies kidnapping in alleged murder-for-hire plot

BURLINGTON, Vt. — A Colorado man pleaded not guilty Thursday in federal court in Vermont to kidnapping a man who was later found shot to death in a snowbank in 2018. Federal prosecutors allege it’s a murder-for-hire case stemming from a financial dispute.

Prosecutors say they believe Jerry Banks, 34, of Fort Garland, Colorado, killed Gregory Davis, 49, of Danville, Vermont, but Banks has not been charged in the killing.

Davis was abducted from his Danville, Vermont, home on Jan. 6, 2018, and found shot to death the next day in a snowbank on a back road.

In a filing Monday, prosecutors wrote that Davis threatened to go to the FBI with information that Serhat Gumrukcu, 39, defrauded Davis in a 2015 multimillion-dollar oil deal.

Gurumkcuc was facing felony fraud charges in California in 2017 and was working on a deal that came together soon after Davis’ death that gave him a significant ownership stake in Enochian Bioscience, which the filing says gave him motive to prevent Davis from reporting another fraud.

Brittney Griner answering WNBA players’ emails

MOSCOW — WNBA player Brittney Griner has been able to receive emails and letters from fellow players to an account Griner’s agent set up to allow them to communicate with her.

The emails are printed out and delivered sporadically in bunches to Griner by her lawyers after being vetted by Russian officials.

Griner doesn’t have access to email, her lawyers said. She either writes a response on paper and her lawyers take a photo of it or she dictates a response.

The two-time Olympic gold medalist has been detained in Russia for 105 days after vape cartridges containing oil derived from cannabis were allegedly found in her luggage at an airport near Moscow.

She now faces drug smuggling charges that carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Last month, the Biden administration said Griner is being wrongfully detained. In May, her detention was extended another month until at least the middle of June.

Sea turtle delivers eggs after shark attack

MIAMI — A loggerhead turtle whose left fin was destroyed in a shark attack is rehabbing at Zoo Miami’s new Sea Turtle Hospital, where veterinarians were able to save more than 100 of her eggs after she was rescued.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission sent the turtle to the hospital on May 22.

An ultrasound determined that the 50-year-old, 388-pound turtle was pregnant. She also had scars on the shell that indicated she had been previously hit by a boat and attacked by another shark earlier in life, officials said.

The hospital staff stabilized the turtle in a recovery tank and gave her fluids, vitamins and food. By Tuesday morning she had deposited over 100 eggs. Then they treated her shark bite injury during a 7-hour surgery.

Officials said she’ll be closely monitored for several weeks until she’s healthy enough to return to the wild.

Boston explosions send 1 to hospital, force evacuations

BOSTON — Two manholes exploded in downtown Boston on Thursday morning, forcing the evacuation of two buildings and sending one person to the hospital with burns, authorities said.

The explosions were reported around 8:30 a.m. near the High Street and Federal Street area in the Financial District.

The cause remains under investigation, but Deputy Fire Chief Brian Tully said at a news conference at the scene that there “may have been an overpressure situation.”

Electric utility Eversource also responded to assist with the investigation, spokesperson William Hinkle said. No utility crews were working in the area at the time, and no customers lost power, he said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRIEFS

Protester killed in Guinea anti-junta demonstration

CONAKRY, Guinea — One person was killed in Guinea's capital during protests against fuel price hikes, said opposition leaders and witnesses. It was the first demonstration since a junta seized control in September during a coup d'état in the West African nation. The young man was shot dead Wednesday at nightfall in Hamdallaye, a suburb of the capital that is considered to be a stronghold of opposition parties and junta critics.

The National Front for the Defense of the Constitution, a coalition of civil society groups that oppose the junta, accused the defense and security forces of using live ammunition.

"The bloody repression of the demonstrations by the defense and security forces contrasts with Col. Doumbouya's takeover speech, in which he castigated the (previous government's) killings of demonstrators and who had pledged not to commit the same," the groups said.

Russian bishop escapes EU sanctions thanks to Orban

BRUSSELS — The head of the Russian Orthodox Church has been removed from the latest round of European Union sanctions punishing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, four EU diplomats told The Associated Press.

Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church had been initially among individuals the 27-nation EU bloc wanted to sanction, but the proposal needed to be approved unanimously. It was removed at the insistence of Hungary, a nation perceived as Moscow's closest ally in the bloc.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban threatened to derail the whole package of sanctions at the leader's summit unless he got guarantees his country would not immediately be affected by the oil embargo. Hungary is more heavily dependent on Russian energy than most EU nations.

Kirill, the head of one of the largest and most influential churches in Eastern Orthodoxy, has justified Russia's invasion on spiritual grounds, describing it as a "metaphysical" battle against the West and its "gay parades."

Croatia will begin using euro, says EU top official

BRUSSELS — The European Union's chief executive said Wednesday that Croatia is ready to join the group of countries using the euro, the common currency of the EU, at the start of next year.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a tweet that the EU executive branch she heads believes "Croatia is ready to adopt the euro on 1 January 2023."

The move would bring the number of countries using the euro to 20. But the commission's recommendation must first be approved by member countries, likely in the first half of July.

Joining the single currency, "will make Croatia's economy stronger, bringing benefits to its citizens, businesses and society at large. Croatia's adoption of the euro will also make the euro stronger," von der Leyen said.

4 Kenyans shot dead in wildlife protest

NAIROBI, Kenya — A demonstration in Kenya against the threats posed by wildlife turned deadly when four protesters were shot and killed, police said Thursday.

The protesters clashed with security forces, resulting in the fatal shootings, Mashuru town police chief Charles Chepkonga said, adding that police would investigate what happened.

In a statement, Kajiado county Gov. Joseph Ole Lenku called on police to avoid using "excessive force" and urged Kenyan wildlife authorities to "keep their animals away from our people."

Thursday's demonstration blocked the Nairobi-Mombasa highway for hours as protesters placed rocks and burning tires on the road, leading police to intervene.

Residents have repeatedly called on the Kenya Wildlife Service to find a solution to the conflicts between people and animals, with farmers upset that elephants destroy their crops and at times kill people.

Gauff, Nadal advance in French Open

PARIS — American tennis standout Coco Gauff, 18, has reached her first Grand Slam final after beating Martina Trevisan of Italy 6-3, 6-1 at the French Open.

The 18th-seeded Gauff will face No. 1 Iga Swiatek for the championship Saturday.

Polish player Swiatek, meanwhile, advanced to the final after beating Daria Kasatkina of Russia 6-2, 6-1 in a dominant victory that ties her with Serena Williams for the second-longest winning streak of this century at 34 victories in a row.

On the men's side, No. 5-seeded Rafael Nadal will play No. 3 Alexander Zverev in a semifinal game Friday. The winner will advance to Sunday's final against either 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic of Croatia or No. 8 Casper Ruud of Norway, who meet in Friday's other semifinal.

Facing chronic pain in his left foot with "no idea" how long is left in his Paris career, Nadal, 36, beat No. 1 seed and defending champion Novak Djokovic on Tuesday to make the semifinal.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

China's policy aims toward Taiwan

JOE MCDONALD
Associated Press

BEIJING — China's government accused Washington of jeopardizing peace Thursday, after U.S. envoys began trade talks with Taiwan aimed at deepening relations with the self-ruled island democracy claimed by Beijing.

Talks that started Wednesday cover trade, regulation and other areas based on the countries' "shared values" as market-oriented economies, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

The office did not mention China but the talks add to gestures that show U.S. support for Taiwan amid threats of invasion by Beijing.

Trade dialogues "disrupt peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," Zhao Lijian, a foreign ministry spokesperson said.

Lijian called on Washington to "stop negotiating agreements with Taiwan that have sovereign connotations and official nature."

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war that ended with the ruling Communist Party's victory on the mainland. They have multibillion-dollar trade and investment ties but no of-



LIU ZHENG / ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian briefs the media at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office on April 6 in Beijing.

ficial relations. Beijing says Taiwan has no right to conduct foreign relations.

The United States has diplomatic relations only with Beijing but extensive informal ties with Taiwan. The U.S. government is committed by federal

law to see that the island has the means to defend itself.

Zhao accused Washington of encouraging calls for independence, a step Beijing has said previously would be grounds for an invasion.



SALVADOR MELENDEZ / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maria Dolores Garcia, the mother of Esmeralda Dominguez, looks out at the plants dying in her daughter's unattended garden, in the Sisiguayo community in Jiquilisco, El Salvador, on May 12. Her daughter is among thousands arrested since the congress granted President Nayib Bukele a state of emergency declaration suspending civil liberties after street gangs killed dozens of people in late March.

El Salvador gang arrests called arbitrary by amnesty groups

MARCOS ALEMÁN
AND CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
Associated Press

LA LIMONERA, El Salvador — Esmeralda Dominguez was about 100 yards from home April 19 when soldiers and police blocked her. Her aunt, who lived nearby, protested. Domínguez was no criminal, she insisted. A soldier loaded the young woman into a truck.

Over the past 10 weeks, El Salvador's security forces have arrested more than 36,000 people since the congress granted President Nayib Bukele the power to suspend some civil liberties to pursue powerful street gangs. Lawmakers extended those powers another 30 days last week as public opinion polls showed broad popular support.

However, a growing number of

the arrests appear unjustified, human rights groups allege.

Cristosal, a nongovernmental organization, has documented more than 500 cases of arbitrary arrests since the state of exception was imposed March 27, according to its director, Noah Bullock. Amnesty International said Thursday its investigators found thousands of people had been arrested without legal requirements met.

Bukele sought the expanded powers after El Salvador's street gangs killed dozens of people in late March. Two weeks into the mass detentions, the president acknowledged there could be an "error," and 1% of those arrested may not have any ties to the gangs.

Now, under the new powers, authorities do not have to give a reason to arrest. Detainees can be held 15

days without seeing a judge and without access to lawyers.

When those arrested finally get a lawyer, the public defender's office is overwhelmed. Domínguez's family and some 50 others made filings with the courts which order that someone in custody be brought before a court and place the burden of proof on the government. Cristosal has been helping with many of those cases, including Domínguez's.

The most common crime attributed to those arrested, including Domínguez, is illegal association for allegedly belonging to a gang. Judges have ordered nearly 26,000 people held in jail, prosecutors say.

In a court hearing May 2, the judge ordered Domínguez to six more months of pretrial detention.



NAYIB BUKELE

Party:
Nuevas Ideas

Age: 40

Bukele's presidency has been marked by bold gestures and a disregard for the rule of law.

High prices could blunt impact of Russian oil ban

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 landlocked 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



MICHAŁ DYJUK / ASSOCIATED PRESS

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Polish President Andrzej Duda and Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki brief the media during a joint news conference at the headquarters of Poland's Power Grid in Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland on Thursday.

in Asia, though it will have to offer discounts, said Chris Weaver, 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 dis-

count 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 Institute 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.

Like previous rounds of sanctions, the oil ban is unlikely to persuade the Kremlin to end the war.

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."



EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rev. Dante Quick, preaches during a church service at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens on May 22, in Somerset, New Jersey. Quick says he copes by taking time for “joy seeking” activities – like a nice restaurant meal, an Anita Baker concert or joining his mother in watching her favorite TV show. He also now has a personal phone and a church phone “so I can put one down from time to time.”

CLERGY OF COLOR

face unprecedented mental health challenges

DEEPA BHARATH of the Associated Press
and ADELLE BANKS of Religion News Service Associated Press

About two years ago, when COVID-19 cases began to peak in her impoverished San Antonio neighborhood, the Rev. Norma Fuentes-Quintero found herself taking on an additional duty – helping congregants deal with anxiety.

The pastor, who leads the largely-Latino El Templo Cristiano Assembly of God, spent hours with one congregant in particular — a woman with seven children who was consumed by the fear that the virus would kill her and leave her children motherless.

“Each phone call with her would last 30 minutes to an hour,” Fuentes-Quintero said. “Some days, she would knock on my door. I would give her water, massage her head and rub her arm until she fell asleep. It got that personal.”

Fuentes-Quintero’s situation is common in communities of color where a lack of resources, poor access to health care and stifling stigma over mental health issues turned pastors into counselors and caregivers. These were also communities that were disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

In addition to the pandemic, difficult conversations about anti-Asian hate and systemic racism after the Atlanta spa killings and the murder of George Floyd, have significantly raised stress levels in these communities. Faith leaders say they are overwhelmed, exhausted, burntoutand left with serious questions about how to care for their own physical and mental well-being while helping congregants in a meaningful way.

Such self-care is not simple, especially in some cultures where pastors are expected to always be present physically and spiritually, said the Rev. Pausa Kaio Thompson, head pastor of the Dominguez Samoan Congregational Christian Church in Compton, California.

In his state, Pacific Islanders died at a higher rate from COVID-19 than any other racial group and pastors like Thompsonofficiated two or three funerals, sometimes for members of the same family.

In Pacific Islander communities, pastors tend to a variety of needs:from food, healthcare and employment to housing and immigration, he said. The pandemic was a unique situation because the source of everyone’s grief – whether you were in the pulpit or the pews – was the same.

“How do I talk about my own mental instability and doubt at a time when I cannot relay that to someone I’m there to uplift and comfort?” Thompson said.

He sought psychiatric counseling and took the time whenever possible to unwind.

It is important to remember that “clergy are human beings,” said Bishop Vashti McKenzie, interim president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches and a retired African Methodist Episcopal leader.

“When you add racial unrest on top of burying more congregants than you’ve ever had in your whole entire ministry,” on top of losing loved ones in one’s own family, it can all add up, McKenzie said.

The challenges facing clergy of color were on display during a virtual event hosted by the Christian organization Live Free, two days after a mass shoot-



MARK BLACK / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pastor Juliet Liu of Life on the Vine church closes Sunday services with the sign of the cross on May 22 in Long Grove, Illinois.

ing at a supermarket where 10 Black people were killed in Buffalo, New York.

The Rev. Julian Cook, pastor of Buffalo’s Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, described a clergy colleague who was unable to meet a request and provide grief counseling to local bank employees.

“She had to tell them flat out, ‘I’m just not in a place where I can even talk about grief right now,’” he said during the online event.

The strain of having discussions about race and racism led to burnout for Pastor Juliet Liu, who co-leads Life on the Vine, a Christian congregation in Long Grove, Illinois. She is getting ready to start a six-month sabbatical in July. Liu said she is not sure if she will return to ministry.

Liu, who is of Taiwanese and Vietnamese descent, said she started seeing a therapist three years ago. That helped her understand she cannot hold herself responsible for “how white people understand and respond to racial justice,” she said.

Yet she feels disillusioned when some white congregants — who make up about 80% of her congregation — question the existence of systemic racism.

“I’m asking myself if I’m in the right place,” Liu said. “I’m questioning my calling.”

Many pastors found comfort during this time knowing they are not alone, said Washington D.C.-based psychologist Jessica Smedley, who saw an increase in requests for assistance from Black clergy and African American congregations. She held virtual webinars as a form of support.

“It gave them the opportunity to hear from other clergy that they were experiencing some of the same grief or stressors of not being in person or not knowing how to show up for their congregants in the same way and not being able to visit the hospital because of safety issues,” she said.

A recent Rice University study found that Black and Latino churchgoers often rely on their pastors for mental health care, but their clergy feels limited in being able to help them. Smedley said there is need for more research about clergy of color and rates of depression.

The Rev. Danté Quick made Black mental health an area of focus at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens in Somerset, New Jersey. The senior pastor has also attended to his own mental health needs and advises his congregants and seminarians to do the same.

Quick said Black clergy face various stressors. But social justice advocacy “brings its own stress,” he said.

“Preaching about George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and the (psychological) trauma that we have to try to shepherd people of color through requires an intense amount of empathy that wears on one’s spirit.”

Quick says he copes by taking time for “joy seeking” activities – like a nice restaurant meal, an Anita Baker concert or joining his mother in watching her favorite TV show.

“I want to live to see my children’s weddings,” he said. ☞