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Michigan attorney general charges 'fake electors' in scheme to overturn 2020 election

By Sheri Walsh
UPI

Michigan's attorney general announced charges Tuesday against 16 "fake electors" for Donald Trump.

The sixteen are facing eight felonies -- including conspiracy and election law forgery -- in an alleged scheme to reverse Joe Biden's victory in Michigan's 2020 election.

The charges carry maximum prison terms of up to 14 years.

"The false electors' actions undermined the public's faith in the integrity of our elections and, we believe, also plainly violated the laws by which we administer our elections in Michigan," Attorney General Dana Nessel said in a statement Tuesday.



According to Nessel, the defendants met covertly on Dec. 14, 2020, in the basement of Michigan's GOP headquarters and signed documents claiming to be legally

qualified electors for the state in the Electoral College.

"That was a lie," Nessel said. "They weren't the duly elected and qualified electors, and each of the

defendants knew it." The meeting came one month after Biden defeated Trump by more than 154,000 votes in the state.

"Some of the false electors attempted to enter the state Capitol and deliver their fabricated electoral votes to the Senate floor but were turned away," Nessel added.

The 16 electors were identified as Kathy Berden, 70; William Choate, 72; Amy Facchinello, 55; Clifford Frost, 75; Stanley Grot, 71; John Haggard, 82; Mary-Ann Henry, 65; Timothy King, 56; Michele Lundgren, 73; Meshawn Maddock, 55; James Renner, 76; Mayra Rodriguez, 64; Rose Rook, 81; Marian Sheridan, 69; Ken Thompson, 68; and Kent Vanderwood, 69.

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INDICTMENTS, LAWSUITS TOP DONALD TRUMP'S GROWING LEGAL WOES

By Adam Schrader & Darryl Coote
UPI

Twice impeached former President Donald Trump is facing whack-a-mole slurry of legal cases. Each time one seems to conclude, another pops up -- the latest his apparent confirmation that he's the target of a Justice Department investigation related to the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

"Deranged Jack Smith, the prosecutor with Joe Biden's DOJ, sent a letter (again it was Sunday night!)

stating that I am a TARGET of the January 6th Grand Jury investigation, and giving me a very short 4 days to report to the Grand Jury, which almost always means an arrest and indictment," Trump said Tuesday in a statement on his Truth Social platform.

He went on to blame U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, calling the investigation a politically motivated "witch hunt."

Here's a look at Trump's indictments, the other legal

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OPINION

Smoke, Mirrors and Justice

Events that never happened could influence 2024 presidential election

By Christopher Schwartz, Rochester Institute of Technology

Imagine an October surprise like no other: Only a week before Nov. 5, 2024, a video recording reveals a secret meeting between Joe Biden and Volodymyr Zelensky. The American and Ukrainian presidents agree to immediately initiate Ukraine into NATO under "the special emergency membership protocol" and prepare for a nuclear weapons strike against Russia. Suddenly, the world is on the cusp of Armageddon.

While journalists could point out that no such protocol exists and social media users might notice odd video game-like qualities of the video, others might feel that their worst fears have been confirmed. When Election Day comes, these concerned citizens may let the video sway their votes, unaware that they have just been manipulated by a situation deepfake -- an event that never actually happened.

Situation deepfakes represent the next stage of technologies that have shaken audiences' perceptions of reality. In our research at the DeFake Project, my colleagues at the Rochester Institute of Technology, the University of Mississippi, Michigan State University and I study how deepfakes are made and what measures voters can take to defend themselves from them.

Events that never happened

A deepfake is created when someone uses an artificial intelligence tool, especially deep learning, to manipulate or generate a face, a voice or -- with the rise of large language models like ChatGPT -- conversational language. These can be combined to form "situation deepfakes."

The basic idea and technology of a situation deepfake are the same as with any other deepfake, but with a bolder ambition: to manipulate a real event or invent one from thin air. Examples include depictions of Donald Trump's perp walk and Trump hugging Dr. Anthony Fauci, neither of which happened. The hug shot was promoted by a Twitter account associated with the presidential campaign of Trump rival Ron DeSantis. An attack ad targeting Joe Biden's 2024 campaign published by the Republican National Committee was made entirely with AI.

At the DeFake Project, our research has found that deepfakes, including situations, are typically created by some mixture of adding one piece of media with another; using a video to animate an image or alter another video, dubbed puppeteering; conjuring a piece of media into existence, typically using generative AI; or some combination of these techniques.

To be clear, many situation deepfakes are made for innocent purposes. For example, Infinite Odyssey Magazine produces fake stills from movies that were never produced or could never have existed. But even innocent deepfakes give reason for pause, as in the case of near-believable fake photographs depicting the Apollo moon landing as a movie production.

Deepfaking an election

Now put yourself in the position of someone trying to influence the upcoming election. What are the possible situations you might want to create?

For starters, it would matter whether you wanted to tilt voting toward or away from a specific outcome. Maybe you would portray a candidate acting heroically by pulling a pedestrian out of the way of a speeding car or, conversely, doing something offensive or criminal. The format of the situation deepfake would also matter. Instead of a video, it could be a photograph, maybe with the blur and angles that simulate a smartphone camera or the forged logo of a news agency.

In the recently concluded term, the Supreme Court found itself in a storm of consequential cases, overturning precedents and taking controversial stances that shifted society and upheld constitutional values. Democrats have, in reaction, decried the Supreme Court, framing it as a rogue entity, a politicized institution that has lost its credibility. They lament what they perceive as a transformation for the worse. Yet, the truth is far more disturbing. The truth is that the Supreme Court has remained practically unchanged. The only thing that has changed is the lengths to which the media is willing to go to lie in order to sway public opinion.

Venture onto social media platforms, peruse through the pages of newspapers, tune into the cacophony of news cycles, and it's challenging to find any incisive, in-depth analysis of these groundbreaking cases. Instead, the terrain is riddled with pundits and journalists spouting punchy one-liners, engrossed in a relentless campaign to persuade their audience that the Supreme Court has faltered in its decision-making and become nothing more than another branch of our legislature.

Today's media landscape is marked by an audacious deception fueled by an agenda to skew public opinion and subtly undermine the foundational principles that undergird our nation.

Regrettably, and perhaps unsurprisingly, this often finds its mark. This taps into a flaw in our brains that favors apparent experts, and short, easily digestible sound bites over complex, lengthy legal dissertations.

After all, even if the populace were inclined to pore over these dense 40-plus-page opinions, can we realistically expect millions to grasp the nuanced labyrinth of legal precedent or even the bare-bone fundamentals of the legal process and the Constitution? It's challenging as it is for lawyers who have spent their careers studying these topics to understand them, so how could anybody else do so -- or even find the time to do so? It is this inherent impossibility that the media capitalizes on to mislead the public.

Take, for instance, the 303 Creative case, which posited that the government cannot compel a business engaging in expressive activity -- in this case, website design -- to produce speech that contradicts its principles. This reaffirms a century-old First Amendment tenet -- the government cannot coerce speech. We're not talking about a person selling doughnuts or toys; we're talking about speech. But you'll be

hard-pressed to find liberal pundits commending the Supreme Court for safeguarding people from the slippery slope of government-compelled speech. Instead, you'll encounter them levying outrageous claims, asserting the Supreme Court has given discrimination its legal seal of approval.

Sadly, even the vice president of the United States put out a misleading statement, saying, "When you walk into a restaurant, hotel, or any business open to the public, you are entitled to be served free from discrimination." This misunderstands the cases holding entirely and ensures that there is more fodder for media outlets and influences to peddle the misinformation that it is now open season for discrimination. Would a Democrat endorse being obligated to produce art featuring a Confederate flag for a Southern wedding?

Consider, too, the affirmative action case that questioned whether there was a compelling justification for discrimination in college admissions. The Supreme Court's decision to strike down affirmative action was firmly rooted in historical precedents, citing clearly past cases where justices from both ends of the ideological spectrum plainly stated that discrimination in college admissions is "dangerous," but ultimately allowing it temporarily -- and only

temporarily. The media, nonetheless, constructed a narrative framing the decision as an affront to Black people and all those who have been burdened by racism. The reports became all about what the decision will do, but not why the decision was made. The media took pains not to state legitimate alternatives like using a person's actual hardships in determining whether they should get a boost. The Court made one of the most powerful arguments against affirmative action ever made public, yet it was entirely overlooked.

Then there was the Biden executive order case, involving a staggering \$400 billion in loan cancellations. The conservative justices were portrayed as attacking the debt-ridden 40 million borrowers from their ivory towers. Misleadingly, the media linked the policy arguments of Republicans to the Supreme Court's ruling, despite the fact that these arguments were not featured in the case. The media consistently omitted the ruling's rationale, the significance of the tripartite branches of government, and how Congress should operate when an agency lacks statutory authority. They missed the primary reasoning: the phrase "modify or waive" did not equate to "completely rewrite," as the Court stated. It's truly sad that the Court's reasoning was just that simple, and still, that's not what was reported.



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

House holds shameful 'debates' over Christopher Wray, defense funding

By Harlan Ullman, Arnaud de Borchgrave Distinguished Columnist

Earlier I asked if America has hit a political bottom -- and answered with an emphatic NO. Why?

The House of Representatives presented two examples of unimpeachable proof of how low American politics have descended and keep descending. The inquisition of FBI Director Christopher Wray and the floor "debate" on the National Defense Authorization Act were national disgraces. But, first, since Congress has usually been the source of intense criticism and often ridicule, why is today different?

Nearly a century ago, the great humorist Will Rogers concluded, "Every time Congress passed a law, it was a joke. And whenever Congress made a joke, it turned out to become a law."

In the mid 1970s after the Vietnam War, when I was on the faculty of the National War College, the country's senior military teaching institution, each year, every class was asked to choose the greatest threat to the nation. For three years, the Soviet Union never came first. The U.S. Congress did. It took considerable effort to convince the student body that was not the case.

Today, I have no idea if the War College poses

that question. But I am convinced that the students were proven correct. Congress, however, is only part of the greatest danger to the nation. Failed and failing government, of which Congress is critical, tops the list. These two examples are further evidence.

Wray is a conservative Republican, having clerked for a conservative judge and served in a senior appointment in President George W. Bush's Justice Department. A member of the Federalist Society, Wray was appointed by President Donald Trump. That House Republicans could raise such "absurd," "ludicrous" and "insane" conspiracy theories and accusations as Wray called them, profoundly challenged the sanity, if not ignorance, of those members and the party.

How did this happen?

Just as dangerous, the NDAA became the poster child for culture wars. Usually, that bill is bipartisan. It left the House Armed Services Committee by a 58-1 vote. Then it arrived on the House Floor. Armageddon broke out.

A tsunami of distortions, false truths and lack of facts passed for debate. The enemy was not China or Russia. "Woke" politics and the cultural biases inflicted on the military by the Biden administration were the central threats to America. Not convinced, Rep. Eli

Crane, R-Ariz., claimed his anti-diversity amendment had "nothing to do with colored people!" Either Crane is, as Wray called his attackers, insane, or he is monumentally insensitive. Regardless of which he is, what are others like him on the extremes of both parties doing in Congress?

The answer is that they are elected. And that is what the public gets for its vote.

When the NDAA reaches the Senate, cooler heads will prevail. Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Roger Wicker, R-Miss., both veterans, are entirely sensible. But the Senate-House Conference to resolve the final bill could lead to deadlock. That means the NDAA to approve the budget is unlikely to be passed, leading to another Defense Concurrent Resolution.

To those unfamiliar with the effects of the CR, defense spending is frozen at the prior year's levels. In practice, that will force a cut of about 10%-15% in the Department of Defense's purchasing power. Given inflation of 3%-5% and uncontrolled real annual growth of 5%-7%, the department will be "underfunded" by at least 18% and even more.

Thank you Congress and both parties.

What can be done? The practical answer is very little. Unlike 1861 when the nation was divided over the one critical issue that would lead to secession and a civil war -- states' rights -- today

there are virtually no issues that are not politically polarized, from "guns, gays, God and gestations periods to governing."

President Joe Biden believes the titanic struggle today is between "democracy and autocracy." He may be correct. But the larger issue may be the ability of governments to govern.

China is suffering from possible deflation, massive unemployment of about 20% for 20- to 25-year-olds and a national mood that is increasingly disconnected from its government, among other structural, demographic and economic problems. Russia is waging a war it cannot win in Ukraine and appears to be in chaos, firing generals who have proven to be reasonably competent in battle.

A saving grace for the United States may be its economy, which seems to be resilient. But should it prove vulnerable and a recession hits, politics will become even more acrimonious. Buckle Up.

Harlan Ullman is senior adviser at Washington's Atlantic Council, the prime author of "shock and awe" and author of "The Fifth Horseman and the New MAD: How Massive Attacks of Disruption Became the Looming Existential Danger to a Divided Nation and the World at Large." Follow him @harlankullman. The views and opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.



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Miss Amber Clark, former University of North Carolina player, leaves a mark in a new sport

Former University of North Carolina track and field student-athlete Amber Clark is making her mark in a new sport. On Friday July 7, the former Tar Heel long and triple jumper won a gold medal at the IFAF Americas Continental Flag Football Championship in Charlotte. Clark, a Greenville, N.C. native (South Central HS) totaled five interceptions and 18 pas

Amber Clark, from near-by Greenville, N.C., answered the call. The safety pulled in an interception with 1:36 remaining and locked up the gold medal for the U.S. in the International Federation of American Football, the Americas Continental Championship. Hardware aside, what stood out to many players was the number of kids, teenagers and adults converging around the field to experience what flag football has to offer, "a testament to the game, the growth in the U.S. and around the world. I hope it grows the most that it can. I hope that I see it in the NCAA. I hope I see it in the Olympics. I hope I see a professional league. I just want to see this thing grow," Clark said. "I love this game. I die for this game, I cry for this game, I live for this game."

Read more at: <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/sports/nfl/article277093703>. Former University of North Carolina track and field student-athlete Amber Clark is making her mark in a new sport.

On July 7, the former Tar Heel long and triple jumper won a gold medal at the IFAF

Americas Continental Flag Football Championship in Charlotte.

Clark, a Greenville, N.C., native (South Central HS) and defensive back/wide receiver, totaled five interceptions and 18 passes defended across the team's six games, including the interception that sealed the championship game for the U.S. Women's National Team.

From July 5-7, the U.S. National Teams faced the best teams from North and South America and emerged undefeated. The gold medal match reunited rivals as both the men's and women's teams defeated Mexico, 40-36, and 26-21, respectively. Former NC State and NFL wide receiver Torry Holt, former Carolina Panthers stars Steve Smith Sr., Mike Rucker and Mike Tolbert and current Panthers safety Jeremy Chinn attended during the week to take in the exciting action.

Several elite athletes with strong ties to the Carolinas paved the way for the U.S. National Teams' success. Charlotte native (Jay M. Robinson HS) and former Limestone University (Gaffney, S.C.) track and field athlete Madison Fulford authored one of the best performances in the history of international flag football. She recorded 33 receptions for 578 yards and 14 touchdowns, including all four scores in the gold medal game.

On the men's team, former Coastal Carolina (Conway, S.C.) wide receiver Bruce Mapp, who ranks among the school's all-time leaders, contributed 24 re-



ceptions for six touchdowns and nine extra points across the men's 7-0 run. After the medal ceremony, Mapp proudly displayed his new medal alongside his previous golds from the 2021 IFAF World Championship and The World Games 2022.

Quarterbacks Darrell "Housh" Doucette and Vanita Krouch were also indispensable in the success of their teams, earning MVP honors in the gold medal games.

The Americas Continental Flag Football Championship was hosted by USA Football, the sport's governing body, and sanctioned by the International Federation of American Football (IFAF), the international governing body for the sport of American football. The championship is part of the biggest-ever cycle of global flag football competition in the run up to the 2024 IFAF Flag Football World Championships, in

Lahti, Finland.

USA Football and IFAF are hopeful that flag football's exploding international popularity will secure the sport a spot in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Flag football's popularity is booming in the United States and internationally. An annual participation study from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) in 2022, showed 7.1 million people in the U.S. participated in flag football with approximately 2.5 million people routinely engaging with the sport.

Seven states plus Southern California have sanctioned girls' flag football as a varsity sport. Locally, the Carolina Panthers worked with Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools to pilot a girl's high school flag football league in 2021 that recently completed its second year, featuring 24 teams from 19 area high schools.



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Kinston-Shown in Photo-One of the fraternity brothers and Jerry Stackhouse. Contributed photo

STACK COMES HOME TO GIVE BACK

Vanderbilt head coach, UNC graduate and Kinston native Jerry Stack was in his hometown to kick off the start of his SJG foundation in the Lenoir County area. Mr. Stackhouse who has had a heart to give back since he first launched his triple threat foundation in the early 2000's with a 50,000 donation to the Lenoir County hospital for diabetes in honor of his two siblings that passed away due to complications of diabetes. Mr. Stackhouse and his partners were all smiles as family and friends gathered at the Woodman Center to celebrate the return of their native son. Mr. Stackhouse had to jet off to Vegas the very next morning to attend to NBA and collegiate business but his heart is always in Lenoir County.

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Trump

continued from page 1

challenges he has faced and where each of them stand.

Manhattan D.A. Alvin Bragg's probe into 2016 hush-money payments to Stormy Daniels

Trump became the first former president to face criminal charges in March when he was indicted by a Manhattan grand jury on 34 felony charges of falsifying business records in the first degree for alleged hush-money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels during the 2016 presidential election.

Daniels, born Stephanie Clifford, has long claimed she had an affair with Trump before he became president. Trump's former attorney-turned-critic Michael Cohen was convicted in 2020 of coordinating a \$130,000 payment to Daniels. Trump has denied the affair.

The investigation was started by former Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., who passed the investigation that led to the indictment on to his successor, Alvin Bragg.

"The people of the State of New York allege that Donald J. Trump repeatedly and fraudulently falsified New York business records to conceal crimes that hid damaging information from the voting public during the 2016 presidential election," Bragg said in a statement at the time of the indictment.

"Manhattan is home to the country's most significant business market. We cannot allow New York businesses to manipulate their records to cover up criminal conduct."

Trump pleaded not guilty in early April before boarding a jet to his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla., where he claimed that the justice system had been weaponized against him.

The case began moving along in June as lawyers for Trump go back and forth with prosecutors about evidence, redactions and other court matters. An evidentiary hearing was held on June 27 before U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein, though the transcript of what occurred remains sealed, court records reviewed by UPI show.

A letter filed with the court June 29 shows that evidence entered into the record include a check Trump issued to Michael Cohen for \$35,000 and a 28-page transcript of a news conference that Trump held in New York on Jan. 11, 2017, as published by The New York Times.

New York State Supreme Court Judge Juan Merchan set a trial date of March 25. Trump faces up to four years in prison for each count and a judge could impose consecutive sentences, meaning he could face 136 years in prison if found guilty on every count.

Related to this case, the Trump Organization and its longtime chief financial officer, Allen Weisselberg, were indicted on tax fraud charges in July 2021. Weisselberg pleaded guilty to 15 charges and agreed to testify against the company in August of last year. The company was found guilty on all counts in December.

INDICTMENT 2: U.S. VS. DONALD J. TRUMP AND WALTER NAUTA

Special Counsel Jack Smith's probe into classified documents

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland signed an

order in November appointing Jack Smith as a special counsel to probe Trump's attempts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

Garland also authorized Smith to investigate crimes related to the FBI seizure of thousands of documents from Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in August while investigating the potential mishandling of classified documents taken with him to Florida after his presidency ended.

Trump's attorneys argued at the time that the documents were part of his personal records exempt from record-keeping laws and part of an ongoing negotiation with the National Archives.

Smith announced in June that an indictment returned by a grand jury in the Southern District of Florida had been unsealed, charging Trump with "felony violations of our national security laws, as well as participating in a conspiracy to obstruct justice."

The indictment reads that the boxes of documents contained information about defense and weapons capabilities of the United States and foreign countries, U.S. nuclear programs and other military-related intelligence. Trump is also accused of showing a classified map related to a military operation to someone who did not have a security clearance and directing his butler, Walter Nauta, to hide the evidence from the FBI.

Court records filed Monday and reviewed by UPI show that prosecutors have handed over their first and second productions of unclassified evidence through the discovery process, including witness interviews conducted on May 12 and June 23 who may testify at the trial of this case.

Trump's legal team will need clearance to view evidence with classified markings.

Prosecutors have demanded reciprocal discovery from Trump's team of evidence he has listed in court records. The case is being overseen by U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee who has ruled in his favor in the past.

Trump's legal team appeared in court Tuesday for the first hearing ahead of the trial, which both Trump's team and prosecutors have sought to delay. Trump and Nauta have asked the court to delay the case until after the 2024 presidential election. Smith has called for the case to be postponed until December.

Prosecutors have requested that Cannon order Trump and Nauta not to share any classified material before they are able to look it over during the discovery phase.

Bill Barr, the attorney general under Trump, has defended the FBI search of Mar-a-Lago and said the government "acted responsibly" by indicting him while downplaying the hush-money case.

The former top prosecutor said federal officials were "very deferential" to Trump who "jerked them around" and continues to lie about the extent of his authority to declassify documents.

GRAND JURY PROBE: GEORGIA 2020 ELECTION MEDDLING

Fulton County D.A. Fani Willis' investigation after infamous call to 'find' votes

In January, a special grand jury in Georgia com-

pleted its investigation into Trump and his allies for possible interference in the 2020 presidential election in the state stemming from his infamous 2021 call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger instructing him to "find" votes.

"All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have. Because we won the state," Trump said after his election loss.

The special grand jury concluded with a secret report submitted to Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, who decided to impanel another grand jury to consider indictments earlier this month.

The grand jury fired off subpoenas to Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani, on again-off again Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and others. Willis said earlier this month that more subpoenas were possible, including a subpoena for Trump.

Trump has repeatedly called for a federal judge to dismiss Willis from the case, who has responded that Trump's argument calling her politically biased lacks merit and is procedurally flawed.

Court records reviewed by UPI show that the Georgia Supreme Court unanimously dismissed a petition from Trump on Monday seeking to have the case thrown out.

"This is not the sort of relief that this court affords, at least absent extraordinary circumstances that petitioner has not shown are present here," the justices wrote in the five-page order.

Trump has denied wrongdoing in the case and has a similar motion pending in the Fulton County

Superior Court.

According to NBC News, the grand jury considering Trump's charges could be one of two panels with terms that end Sept. 1. Willis indicated the charges could be levied in the first half of August.

In his Truth Social post Tuesday, Trump called it a "perfect phone call because nothing that was said was wrong."

"It was clearly a complaint about an election," he said. "These are all Hoxes and Scams made up to stop me from fighting for the American People."

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PROBE: JAN. 6 RIOTS

Special Counsel Jack Smith's investigation into the 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol

Not much is known about this case beyond what Trump said in his post on Truth Social on Tuesday, as Justice Department and grand jury investigations are secret.

However, it comes after the bipartisan U.S. House select committee voted unanimously to refer Trump to the Justice Department for potential criminal charges.

The committee also released an 845-page report that clearly names him as being the central figure that spurred the mob of his supporters to siege the Capitol in an attempt to prevent the certification of Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States.

"In the committee's hearings, we presented evidence of what ultimately became a multi-part plan to overturn the 2020 presidential election," the congressional report reads.

"That evidence has led to an overriding and straightforward conclusion: The central cause of Jan. 6 was one man, former President Donald Trump, whom many others followed. None of the events of Jan. 6 would have happened without him."

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, has testified before a federal grand jury in Washington, The New York Times reported. The testimony before the grand jury was reportedly for Smith's probe. His wife, Ivanka Trump, has also been subpoenaed.

Former Vice President Mike Pence attempted to fight a subpoena for his testimony, but a federal judge ruled March 29 that he must testify.

NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL LETITIA JAMES' LAWSUIT

A look into the dealings of a real estate tycoon

New York Attorney General Letitia James began investigating the Trump Organization in March 2019. As part of the investigation, Trump's son Eric Trump -- the company's executive vice president -- was ordered to sit for a deposition and invoked the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination more than 500 times.

Subpoenas were later issued for the former president, his daughter, Ivanka Trump, and son Donald Trump Jr. Donald Trump unsuccessfully sought to have the case dismissed multiple times, including a lawsuit against James that was dismissed.

He was later found in civil contempt and ordered to pay a daily fine of \$10,000 for failing to comply with subpoenas seeking docu-

ments related to the case.

James' investigation is a civil matter examining whether Donald Trump's business inflated the value of its assets over the years for financial gain and ran alongside the probe led by Vance.

In September, James filed the lawsuit stemming from the investigation against Trump, three of his children and the Trump Organization, alleging an illegal scheme that amassed \$250 million by fraudulently overvaluing assets.

James called the number of assets Trump allegedly grossly inflated "staggering." At the time, James said she was referring the case to the U.S. attorney's office for the Southern District of New York and the Internal Revenue Service for possible criminal violations.

It was not immediately clear if federal prosecutors or the IRS have started probing possible criminal violations related to the allegations made in the civil lawsuit.

Ivanka Trump has since been dismissed from the lawsuit.

James seeks to bar Donald Trump from doing business in the state and \$250 million in fines.

E. JEAN CARROLL'S LAWSUITS

Defamation lawsuits centered on sexual abuse allegations

Writer E. Jean Carroll filed the first of her two civil lawsuits against Donald Trump in November 2019, accusing the then-sitting president of defamation when he denied Carroll's claims that he raped her at New York's Bergdorf Goodman department store in the mid-1990s.

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Washington Post: "House GOP seeks billions in cuts to rail, water infrastructure spending"

By Tony Romm and Ian Duncan
The Washington Post

It took decades for Congress to deliver on its promise to pour new money into the nation's roads, bridges, pipes, ports and internet connections.

Now, House Republicans are trying to slash some of the same funds.

A series of GOP bills to finance the federal government in 2024 would wipe out billions of dollars meant to repair the nation's aging infrastructure, potentially undercutting a 2021 law that was one of Washington's rare recent bipartisan achievements. The proposed cuts could hamstring some of the most urgently needed public-works projects across the country, from improving rail safety to reducing lead contamination at schools.

Some of the cuts would be particularly steep: Amtrak, for example, could lose nearly two-thirds of its annual federal funding next fiscal year if House Republicans prevail. That includes more than \$1 billion in cuts targeting the highly trafficked and rapidly aging Northeast Corridor, which runs between Boston and Washington, prompting Amtrak's chief to sound early alarms about service disruptions.

In recent days, Republicans have defended their approach as a fiscally responsible way to reduce the burgeoning federal debt. They've largely tried to extract the savings by slimming down federal agencies' operating budgets next year, technically leaving intact the extra funding that lawmakers adopted in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

But the effect would be the same: The GOP bills would reduce the federal money available for repairs. The cuts would come at a time when the country is grappling with the real-life consequences of its own infrastructure failures, from train derailments in Ohio and Pennsylvania to the collapse of a key portion of Interstate 95 in Philadelphia last month.

"I guess no one reads newspapers," said Rep. Mike Quigley of Illinois, the top Democrat on the appropriations panel that oversees transportation and other key infrastructure programs. "When big infrastructure issues are blowing up in our face, we're doing the opposite."

The emerging House battle underscores the massive chasm between Democrats and Republicans over the nation's fiscal health, only weeks after the two parties brokered what was thought to be a political truce.

In a deal to stave off a potential first-ever

federal default, Biden worked out an agreement with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) in June to pursue modest voluntary spending caps on federal agencies and programs starting in the 2024 fiscal year. In exchange, Republicans permitted lawmakers to raise the debt ceiling, allowing the United States to resume borrowing money to pay its bills.

Even as Republicans touted that vote as a victory, however, some in the party's far-right flank signaled they planned to continue the fight. They pledged to force Democrats to accept massive spending cuts through the annual appropriations process that funds the government — or risk a shutdown if lawmakers fail to act by the Sept. 30 deadline.

So far, the standoff has largely simmered behind the scenes. In recent weeks, Rep. Kay Granger (R-Tex.), the chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee, has worked methodically to process a dozen funding bills, which McCarthy on Monday said he hopes to start bringing to the chamber floor as soon as next week.

In a sign of the acrimonious debate to come, each of the House appropriations bills features sharp spending cuts that Democrats vehemently oppose — even targeting some federal infrastructure programs that until recently had enjoyed bipartisan support.

Two years after Congress approved \$55 billion to improve the nation's water supply, for example, House Republicans last week proposed to eliminate \$1.7 billion from the two primary federal sources for drinking water and wastewater grants to states.

Those programs had received supplemental funding as part of the bipartisan infrastructure act. Rather than undo that law, the GOP bill would dramatically reduce the initiatives' annual budgets, compared with what they received in the 2023 fiscal year, while underfunding a slew of other federal water infrastructure operations. That includes two programs to help schools and low-income communities reduce lead contamination, which together could receive about \$85 million less next year than lawmakers previously had authorized, according to an analysis of data released in January 2022 by the Congressional Research Service.

"I'll be real honest with you: If you're looking for a pretty bill, this is not it," acknowledged Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), the chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that produced the proposal, at a hearing last week.

"Cutting funding is never easy and can

often be an ugly process. ... But with the nation's debt in excess of \$32 trillion and inflation at an unacceptable level, we have to do our jobs to rein in unnecessary federal spending," he said.

After weeks of haggling, House appropriators are expected to finalize that bill this week. Rep. Chellie Pingree of Maine, the top Democrat on the panel, described the spending measure in a recent hearing as "one of the most harmful attacks on America's efforts to tackle climate change."

The proposed cuts to infrastructure spending come at a time when new federal money has started to flow more rapidly. The White House estimates it has announced about \$225 billion in awards under the 2021 law, which has benefited roughly 35,000 projects nationwide, a figure Biden has touted regularly as he tours the country to promote his economic agenda.

For both parties, the \$1.2 trillion package marked a major achievement after years of false promises and jokes about botched "infrastructure weeks." It took months of late-night negotiating sessions among a small group of moderate Democrats and Republicans before they could reconcile their competing visions about the size and scope of new federal spending.

Even then, though, lawmakers acknowledged their compromise addressed only a small fraction of the United States' true needs. In its latest national report card, the American Society of Civil Engineers projected the nation faces a roughly \$2.6 trillion, 10-year backlog in projects to repair the country's roads, bridges, pipes, ports and internet connections — a gap about twice the size of the infrastructure law.

"There's a lot of work to be done," said Emily Feenstra, the chief policy and external affairs officer at ASCE. "We need every cent."

Some of the greatest needs are in transportation, where House Republicans on Tuesday convened a hearing to finalize a 2024 spending bill that includes \$6.6 billion in cuts. The spending reductions predominantly target transit and rail, while curbing Secretary Pete Buttigieg's work to promote environmental and racial equity.

"This bill is another example of the real progress we're making to reduce overall spending while funding our highest priorities," Granger told committee lawmakers.

Amtrak would take one of the heaviest blows, potentially losing \$1.5 billion in funding next year if the GOP plan becomes law. In a statement last week, Stephen Gardner, the passenger railroad's chief executive, said such a cut would force Amtrak

to "radically reduce or suspend service on various routes across the nation."

Republicans would extract another \$2 billion from a federal infrastructure program used to fund the construction of new transit lines. That could jeopardize a slew of projects now underway — including the Gateway tunnel system between New York and New Jersey, one of the largest infrastructure endeavors in the nation, which hopes to receive \$7 billion to make urgently needed repairs.

The GOP bills also provide no new funding in 2024 for a series of grant programs that Republicans historically have supported. That would equate to a roughly \$800 million cut from the initiative known as RAISE, which provides money to cities and states so they can construct bridges over rail lines, create new pedestrian paths and finance street redesigns.

The program is so popular the Transportation Department received \$15 billion in requests last year, though the agency could award only 162 projects totaling \$2.2 billion in funding in June. Some of those requests came from GOP lawmakers on the House Appropriations Committee: 17 panel members wrote the Biden administration in search of funds for dozens of local projects in 2022 and 2023, according to letters backing requests for funds that the department released to The Washington Post last week.

The members include Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-Iowa), who wrote in support of five RAISE applicants in her state. Her office accused the Biden administration of "playing political games" in releasing the letters and said the congresswoman "will remain focused on bringing investments back to Iowa while reining in overall government spending."

Biden, for his part, only sought in 2024 to fund the RAISE program at the level adopted under the infrastructure law. But the president did request — and Republicans ultimately denied — \$1.2 billion in new money for infrastructure megaprojects. That would have included funds for the long-sought overhaul of the Brent Spence Bridge between Ohio and Kentucky and the Calcasieu River Bridge, which carries Interstate 10 in Louisiana.

In an early hearing last week, the top Republican overseeing transportation spending — Rep. Tom Cole (Okla.) — defended the bill as one that "meets the challenge before us to reduce spending and get our debt under control."

On Tuesday, he added of the fierce debate to come: "These things tend to start out in one place. They always tend to end up some place else."

Electors

continued from page 1

The defendants have given one week to surrender.

"My department has prosecuted numerous cases of election law violations throughout my tenure, and it would be malfeasance of the greatest magnitude if my department failed to act here in the face of overwhelming evidence of an organized effort to circumvent the lawfully cast ballots of Michigan voters in a presidential election," Nessel added.

Alternate electors' slates also came from Arizona, Georgia, New Mexico, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, according to Nessel, who said members had hoped former Vice President Mike Pence would accept them as valid when he certified the election on Jan. 6, 2021.

On Tuesday, Trump announced he is a target of a grand jury investigation looking into the Jan. 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

While allies of Trump blamed unsubstantiated widespread ballot fraud for his loss in 2020, Nessel said "every serious challenge to the election had been denied, dismissed or otherwise rejected by the time the false electors convened."

U.S. soldier believed to be detained in North Korea after crossing DMZ

By Simon Druker
UPI

A U.S. soldier is believed to have been detained in North Korea after crossing the military demarcation line from South Korea without authorization Tuesday, the Pentagon said.

The soldier was on a private tour of the Joint Security Area in the Demilitarized Zone when he suddenly ran across the border, according to defense officials.

"We believe that he is in DPRK custody," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at a news conference, referring to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the formal name of North Korea. "We're closely monitoring and investigating the situation, and working to notify the soldier's next of kin and en-



gaging to address this incident."

The Defense Department hasn't released the soldier's name. CBS News and ABC News, citing unnamed U.S. officials, identified the soldier as Pvt. 2nd Class Travis King.

The soldier had served time in military detention in South Korea after an altercation with

locals and was being sent out of the country, officials said. After going through security at Incheon National Airport to leave, he returned and managed to join a border tour group.

The incident happened in Panmunjeom, a village just north of the de facto border between North and South Korea.


The area overlaps South Korea's southern Gyeonggi Province and the Kaesong Industrial Region in North Korea.

"We ... are working with our KPA counterparts to resolve this incident," the United Nations Command, which oversees the DMZ, said in a tweet referring to the North Korean People's Army.


Witnesses report a man from their tour group suddenly breaking stride and running across the military demarcation line.

"To our right, we hear a loud HA-HA-HA and one guy from OUR GROUP that has been with us all day -- runs in between two of the buildings and over to the other side!!," Mikaela Johansson, a Swedish national on a tour of the JSA wrote on Facebook.

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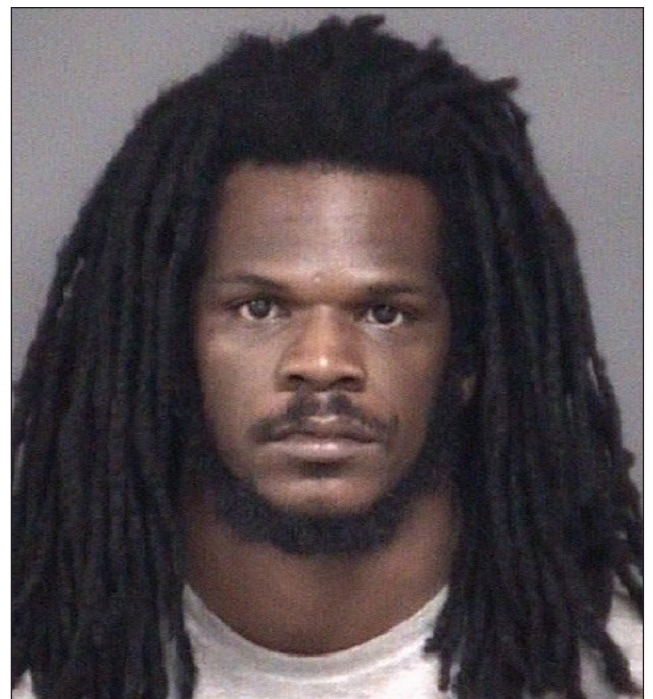
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New Orleans Saints' Foster Moreau in full remission from Hodgkin's lymphoma



By Joe Fisher
UPI

Saints tight end Foster Moreau announced on Monday that he is in remission from Hodgkin's lymphoma after being diagnosed about three months ago.

Moreau shared the update on Twitter Monday afternoon.

"After a few tumultuous months, I've been blessed with the news that I am in full remission from Hodgkin lymphoma!" Moreau wrote. "I'm so grateful to everyone who reached out to offer their love and support."

The 26-year-old inked a three-year, \$12 million deal with the New Orleans Saints in May after four seasons with the Raiders. He is coming off a career-high 420 yard season. He tallied 33 catches and two touchdowns for Las Vegas last season.

Moreau temporarily put football on hold in March when he

announced he would seek cancer treatment. It was the Saints medical team that discovered that he had Hodgkin's lymphoma during a "routine physical" in the offseason.

The tight end expects to play for his hometown Saints when the season kicks off in just a couple months. New Orleans fell on the outside of the playoff picture after going 7-10, matching the Panthers and Falcons in the NFC South.

Training camp begins on July 25 for the Saints veterans. Moreau reportedly participated in organized team activities in June.

Moreau will have the opportunity to vie for his spot on the depth chart when the team kicks off its preseason against the visiting Kansas City Chiefs on Aug. 13. He is currently listed behind Juwan Johnson on the depth chart.

The regular season kicks off at home against the Tennessee Titans on Sunday, Sept. 10.

FIFA says associations still responsible for 2023 Women's World Cup payments

By Alex Butler
UPI

One month after "guaranteeing" 2023 Women's World Cup players would be paid at least \$30,000 apiece, FIFA president Gianni Infantino couldn't promise participating country associations will dispense prize money equally.

Infantino spoke about the issue during a news conference for the tournament Wednesday in Auckland, New Zealand. The 2023 World Cup will be held from Thursday through Aug. 20 in that nation and Australia.

FIFA announced in June that the World Cup prize money pool will be \$110 million, "guaranteeing" each player at least \$30,000. FIFA will give that money to participating countries through their individual federations and associations, which are then responsible for its dispensing it.

"We have issued recommendations, but we are an association of associations," Infantino told reporters Wednesday. "So whatever payments we do will be through the associations. Then the associations will make the relevant payments to their own players."

Infantino said FIFA is in touch with the associations and federations, but there are different situations in different parts of the world. He said taxation and residence stipulations are among the issues that will require special agreements, some of which were made previously.

"I think we have been taking some groundbreaking moves and decisions," Infantino said. "It is by far not the end of the story. We are looking forward to work together with the associations and the players to have a smooth World cup in this respect."

"And then, on Aug. 21, we will start to focus on the future and on this matter, as well."

Players from several women's national teams have fought with their federations and associations in recent years about prize money allocation.

Earlier this month, South Africa players accused their association of withholding World Cup bonus payments.

FIFPRO -- a global union for professional soccer players -- said in its 2023 Qualifying Conditions Report that 29% of players it surveyed said they did not receive payments from their national teams within two weeks of their six confederation championships.

That report also found that 93% of players believed pay and prize money should be increased for confederation championships.

Infantino declined to criticize those responsible for allocating prize money and said he wanted to remain positive on the eve of the World Cup.

"Until the 20th of August, you will only hear positive things about everything and everyone," Infantino said. "If somebody's



still not happy about something, well, I'm so sorry. I am happy with everything and I love everyone.

"As of the 21st of August, we focus on some other issues around the world and all the problems that are coming up."

Infantino also said that FIFA must set an example when asked about its role in ensuring that federations and associations adequately support their women's teams through annual payments.

"First of all, we have to set the example ourselves," Infantino said. "That's what we did, I think. ... More than auditing or monitoring, it's engaging."

"We engage with the associations around the world and with the leagues and clubs. Because at the end ... we can distribute and pay only what we generate and so can the clubs, leagues and associations, so it's impossible to ask them to do more if they generate less. But we all need to work together to promote the game, to make the game grow."

Thirty-two teams will compete at the 2023 Women's World Cup. The \$110 million prize pool is \$80 million more than that what was distributed at the 2019 tournament.

The U.S. Soccer Federation announced in 2022 that players on the 2022 Men's World Cup and 2023 Women's World Cup rosters will be paid a "equal percentage" of collective prize money received by FIFA for participating and performing in their tournaments.

Host country New Zealand, the No. 26 team in the FIFA women's world rankings, will face No. 12 Norway in the first game of the 2023 Women's World Cup at 3 a.m. EDT Thursday on Fox.

The No. 1 U.S. women, who won the last two tournaments and are favored to win again, will face No. 32 Vietnam in their group-stage opener at 9 p.m. Friday on Fox. England, Spain, Germany and Australia are among the other expected title contenders.

Rory McIlroy favored to end major-title drought at 2023 Open Championship

By Alex Butler
UPI

Rory McIlroy is favored to win the 2023 Open Championship, also known as golf's British Open, ending a 9-year major title drought. The tournament will be held from Thursday through Sunday at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake, England.

The winner of the Claret Jug will receive a tournament-record \$3 million first-place prize.

Coverage for the final major of the golf season will air on USA Network and NBC.

The 156-player field includes 15 former champions and 49 of the Top-50 players in the Official World Golf Ranking. McIlroy, ranked No. 2, hasn't won a major since he captured the Open title in 2014, the last time it was held at Royal Liverpool.

No. 1 Scottie Scheffler, No. 3 Jon Rahm, No. 12 Brooks Koepka and No. 7 Cameron Smith, the defending champion, are among other expected contenders.

"No matter who wins, it's going to be a great championship," Rahm, the 2023 Masters winner, told reporters Tuesday. "I'm excited to get it going. It would be absolutely amazing to be back here on Sunday."

No. 22 Rickie Fowler, No. 5 Viktor Hovland, No. 4 Patrick Cantlay, No. 13 Tyrrell Hatton and No. 6 Xander Schauffele are among the other Top-10 favorites.

The golfers with the best 70 scores and ties after the second round will advance and will receive a portion of the \$16.5 million prize purse.

Schauffele (29), Hovland (23) and Scheffler (21) lead the PGA Tour in consecutive cuts made. The Open an official event on the PGA Tour, European Tour and the Japan Golf Tour.

Scheffler is the only player to finish inside the Top 10 for each major so far this season. He tied for second at the PGA Championship and placed third at the U.S. Open and tied for 10th at the Masters.

McIlroy is among five players in the field who finished inside the Top 10 in two of three majors this



season.

The four-time major champion tied for seventh at the PGA Championship. He placed second last month at the U.S. Open and won last week's Scottish Open.

Scheffler (68.4), Rahm (68.7) and McIlroy (68.9) lead the PGA Tour in scoring per 18 holes, three strokes better than the Tour average (71.1). McIlroy leads the Tour with an average drive of 327.6 yards. Scheffler hit a Tour-best 73.9% greens in regulation this season.

But the elite golfers said this 7,383-yard course doesn't favor those with the longest drives. Royal Liverpool is a links-style course, meaning it is built on sandy soil and has fewer trees than many other courses.

Links-style courses often are more exposed to wind, with lower tee shots and putting execution likely leading to better scores.

Rain is in the forecast throughout the tournament. Temperatures are expected to be in the 50s and 60s F, with wind speeds expected to rise to 15 mph.

"It will be a good test this week," said Koepka, the 2023 PGA Championship winner. "The course sets up really well. Links golf is all about avoiding the bunkers and positioning yourself in the right spot and playing smart. It just comes down to making putts."

"I think it's a good golf course. I don't think length is a huge advantage out here."

Matthew Jordan, Richie Ramsay and Braden Grace will tee off in the first group at 1:35 a.m. EDT Thursday at Royal Liverpool. McIlroy,

Rahm and Justin Rose share a group and will tee off at 9:59 a.m. in the first round. Schauffele, Smith and 2023 U.S. Open champion Wyndham Clark also share a group. They will tee off at 4:58 a.m.

"With links golf, a lot of it is going to be dictated by the weather, what you can or can't do on the golf course, especially on a course like this," Rahm said. "In the last two Opens, the scores have been relatively low. ... You still have to go make some birdies."

"It's just [about] being able to pick your spots and play your best golf. You need to have certain control over what you're thinking and doing."

Open Championship schedule

All times EDT
Thursday
First round coverage from 4 a.m. to 3 p.m. on USA Network
Friday
Second round coverage from 4 a.m. to 3 p.m. on USA Network
Saturday
Third round coverage from 5 to 7 a.m. on USA Network and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on NBC
Sunday
Final round coverage from 4 to 7 a.m. on USA Network and 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on NBC

Chronic constipation may indicate higher risk for dementia

By Amy Norton
HealthDay News

Chronic constipation may not only be an indicator of gut health, but a potential warning sign of thinking declines, a preliminary study suggests.

Researchers found that among more than 110,000 middle-aged and older U.S. adults, those who were chronically constipated -- fewer than three bowel movements a week -- also showed signs of an "older" brain.

Compared with their counterparts who were regular, they typically performed worse on tests of memory and thinking -- equivalent to three extra years of aging. And they were 73% more likely to say their cognitive skills were waning.

The findings -- presented Wednesday at a meeting of the Alzheimer's Association in Amsterdam and online -- are considered preliminary. And they do not prove that constipation, per se, somehow causes the aging brain to deteriorate faster.

But experts said the findings add to evidence connecting gut health to brain health.

One possibility, researchers theorize, is that constipation and cognition are linked via the gut microbiome. That's the vast array of bacteria that naturally dwell in the intestines and play important roles in many bodily functions.

An explosion of research in recent years has been looking at links between the gut microbiome and various diseases, including degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer's. The question is whether certain gut microbiome profiles -- an abundance of particular "bad" bacteria or short supply of some "good" ones -- might contribute to those health conditions.

One recent study, for example, found that people with early markers of Alzheimer's -- abnormal protein buildup in the brain



-- also had gut microbiomes that looked different from those of other older adults.

In theory, constipation could be a symptom of a gut microbiome that is associated with poorer cognition. But that remains to be proven.

"It's unclear at this point whether constipation itself or the underlying cause of constipation -- whether it be disruptions in the gut microbiome or a change in diet -- is driving this association," said Claire Sexton, senior director of scientific programs and outreach for the Alzheimer's Association.

Sexton, who was not involved in the study, said that if people have chronic constipation, they can talk to their doctor about how to deal with it.

Dr. Dong Wang, the senior researcher on the study, made similar points.

"These results stress the impor-

ance of clinicians discussing gut health, especially constipation, with their older patients," said Wang, of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

He added that people can prevent constipation and improve their gut health by eating plenty of fiber-rich foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans, and exercising regularly.

Other research has tied those same lifestyle habits to a lower risk of age-related cognitive decline and dementia.

Wang's team based its findings on data from three large studies that have been tracking over 100,000 U.S. medical professionals for decades. In 2012-2013, participants reported on their bowel habits, and between 2014 and 2017 they self-rated their cognitive function.

A subset underwent objective tests of memory and thinking skills between 2014 and 2018.

On average, researchers found, those objective scores were lower among people who'd reported chronic constipation -- having a bowel movement no more often than every three days -- compared to people who were like clockwork (one bowel movement per day).

Similarly, people with constipation gave lower ratings to their subjective cognitive abilities.

Next, the researchers dug into the microbe question. They found that people with constipation and worse cognition tended to have relatively few gut bacteria that produce butyrate -- an important fatty acid that helps control inflammation. Gut bacteria churn out butyrate when they break down fiber.

Two other studies presented at the conference back up the gut-brain link.

Researchers at UT Health San Antonio found that middle-aged and older adults with "poor cognition" tended to have low levels of certain

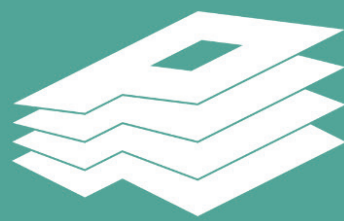
good gut bacteria. Meanwhile, older adults with abnormal protein buildup in the brain (but no dementia symptoms) also showed depleted levels of certain good bacteria.

While the findings are intriguing, much more research is needed, Sexton said.

Researchers are a long way from proving that altering gut bacteria -- through diet, probiotics or other means -- can help keep the aging brain sharp.

The Alzheimer's Association is running a clinical trial testing the effects of a healthy diet (high in plant foods and fiber), exercise and other lifestyle measures in slowing older adults' cognitive decline.

Sexton said that will include a deeper dive into the gut-brain question -- looking at whether the lifestyle changes alter people's gut bacteria, and whether those changes correlate with their cognitive health.



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La Voz Latina

Carlos Alcaraz outlasts Novak Djokovic to win Wimbledon

By Alex Butler
UPI

Carlos Alcaraz emptied an arsenal of blistering serves, sharp slices, deceiving drop shots and more, frustrating Novak Djokovic in a 4-hour, 42-minute thriller to win the Wimbledon 2023 crown Sunday in London.

The 20-year-old Spaniard retained his No. 1 ranking with the 1-6, 7-6(6), 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 triumph at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club. He also snapped his Serbian foe's streak of four-consecutive Wimbledon titles.

"It's amazing for a boy who dreamed his whole life to reach this situation," Alcaraz said on the ESPN broadcast.

"I'm really proud of myself."

Alcaraz totaled nine aces and converted 5 of 19 break point opportunities. He totaled 66 winners and 45 unforced errors. The Spaniard claimed \$3 million for his efforts.

"It's a dream come true," Alcaraz said. "It's great to win, but even if I would have lost, I would be really proud of myself for making history in this beautiful tournament."

Djokovic, the No. 2 player in the world, totaled just two aces. He logged 32 winners, 40 unforced errors and converted 5 of 15 break point chances.

"It's a tough one to swal-



low when you are so close," said Djokovic, who hadn't lost at Wimbledon since the 2017 quarterfinals. "These are the moments we work for every single day."

"I've been blessed with so many incredible matches throughout my career. This is just another one for the history books."

Djokovic, 36, was attempting to tie Margaret Court for the most Grand Slam singles titles (24) in tennis history. He started the 2023 campaign with Australian

Open and French Open titles and appeared en route to another crown before Alcaraz rallied on the Centre Court grass.

The seven-time Wimbledon champion broke Alcaraz twice and held his serve through the first five games of the match, taking a 5-0 edge in the first set.

Alcaraz then held in the sixth, but Djokovic ended the set with a powerful overhead return to claim the seventh game.

Alcaraz held serve to start the 1-hour, 25-minute second set.

He then broke Djokovic to earn a 2-0 lead.

Djokovic responded by breaking Alcaraz for a third time. He then pumped up the crowd as he snatched back momentum, holding to win the fourth game and tying the second set 2-2.

Alcaraz and Djokovic held their serves through the next eight games to force a tie break. Djokovic broke Alcaraz to start that session. He then held twice for a 3-0 lead.

Alcaraz answered by holding

serve twice and broke Djokovic to tie it at 3-3. They went on to tie the tie break 6-6.

Alcaraz then held serve again and broke Djokovic to end the Serbian's streak of 15-consecutive tiebreak victories in Grand Slams.

Alcaraz took command in the third set, breaking Djokovic twice within the first five games and triggering visible frustration from the Serbian star.

That run included a 27-minute game victory as he raced out to a 5-1 edge. He then rifled a forehand winner down the baseline to end the set.

Alcaraz and Djokovic held their serves through the first four games of the fourth set. Djokovic then broke Alcaraz twice over the final five games to win the set and tie the match.

Djokovic and Alcaraz exchanged game victories to start the final set. Alcaraz then broke Djokovic and held for a 3-1 edge.

Djokovic took out his frustration during that rally, smashing his racket against the net post and appearing to injure his wrist.

The Serbian held in his next three games, but could not break his top-ranked foe down the stretch.

Djokovic hit his final return into net, ending the thriller and giving Alcaraz his second career Grand Slam singles title.



Elias Diaz leads NL past AL, ends All-Star Game skid

By Alex Butler
UPI

Colorado Rockies catcher Elias Diaz swatted an eighth-inning splitter to left field for a go-ahead two-run homer, leading the National League past the American League in the 2023 MLB All-Star Game on Tuesday in Seattle.

The 3-2 National League win snapped a nine-game winning streak for the American League in the Midsummer Classic.

"It's just a lot of emotions," Diaz said on the Fox broadcast. "I was caught up in the moment and overwhelmed with the emotions."

"I never thought I'd be in this position in my career. To be able to contribute to the win and be the MVP is really special."

Tampa Bay Rays first baseman Yandy Diaz homered to left in the bottom of the second to give the American League a 1-0 edge. The 383-foot homer came off an 0-1 sweeper from Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Mitch Keller.

Miami Marlins second baseman Luis Arraez tied the score with an RBI single in the top of the fourth.

Toronto Blue Jays shortstop Bo Bichette gave the lead back to the American League with an RBI sacrifice fly to right in the bottom of the sixth.

Neither team scored in the seventh. Baltimore Orioles pitcher Felix Bautista walked Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Nick Castellanos to lead off the eighth.

Bautista then watched Diaz step to the plate. The right-handed pitcher issued a 98.3-mph fastball for a strike to start the exchange. He then missed the zone for a ball. Bautista fouled off the next pitch and then took a foul to even the count.

Diaz then turned on a low and inside 86.9-mph splitter, smashing the pitch over the left field wall en route to All-Star Game MVP honors.

Phillies relief pitcher Craig Kimbrell retired Rays shortstop Wander Franco and Toronto Blue Jays first baseman Vladimir Guerrero Jr. in order to start the bottom of the ninth.

He then got into trouble by issuing walks to Houston Astros outfielder Kyle Tucker and Seattle Mariners outfielder Julio Rodriguez, putting the potential tying and winning runs on base for the American League.

Kimbrell went on to strike out Cleveland Guardians third baseman Jose Ramirez with a 93.2-mph, four-seam fastball, securing the first National League triumph since 2012.

"We had to figure out how we wanted to attack," Kimbrell told Fox. "That was a lot of fun."

San Francisco Giants pitcher Camilo Doval earned the victory on the mound. He allowed one hit and issued a strikeout in one inning.

Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Zac Gallen also allowed one hit, no runs and issued a strikeout in one inning of work as the National League starter.

American League starter Gerrit Cole of the New York Yankees did not allow a hit or run in one inning of work.

Arraez went 2 for 2 with an RBI for the National League. Los Angeles Dodgers star J.D. Martinez went 2 for 2 with a run scored in the win.

No American League hitters reached base more than once.

The MLB regular season will resume Friday. The Phillies will host the Padres in the first game of the second half at 6:05 p.m. EDT in Philadelphia

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. edges Randy Arozarena for Home Run Derby title

By Alex Butler
UPI

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. smashed a final-round record 25 home runs to beat Randy Arozarena and claim his first Home Run Derby title Monday in Seattle.

"I feel very happy," Guerrero said on the ESPN broadcast from T-Mobile Park. "I'm just happy to be in this moment right now."

With his victory, Guerrero and his father, Vladimir Guerrero Sr., became the first father-son duo to win Home Run Derby titles. The elder Guerrero claimed his slugfest crown in 2007.

His son totaled 72 homers through the three-round competition Monday in Seattle. Those blasts had an average distance of 408 feet and exit velocity of 106.1 mph, according to Statcast.

Guerrero took home a first-place prize of \$1 million for his efforts.

Arozarena of the Tampa Bay Rays totaled 82 homers, with an average distance of 403 feet and exit velocity of 104.2 mph, but fell just short of the title, with 23 blasts in the final round.

Guerrero edged Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Mookie Betts 26-11 in the first round. The Toronto Blue Jays first baseman then beat Seattle Mariners outfielder Julio Rodriguez 21-20 in the semifinals, punching his ticket to the finals.

Arozarena beat Texas Rangers outfielder Adolis Garcia 24-17 in the first round. He then beat Chicago White Sox outfielder Luis Robert Jr. 35-22 to clinch his spot in the finals.

Guerrero settled in at the plate to start the final round. He proceeded to clobber more than two dozen long balls, with an average exit velocity of 106.6 mph down the stretch.

Arozarena started slow

with his response to Guerrero, but heated up late in the round. He finished three blasts shy of edging the Blue Jays star's final round total.

"I thought the pressure was on him," Guerrero said. "I thought, 'If he did it, he did it.' But I was able to come through."

Rodriguez hit 41 home runs in the first round, the most ever for a single round of a Home Run Derby. The 2022 runner-up knocked out New York Mets first baseman Pete Alonso, a two-time champion, in the first round.

Defending champion Juan Soto of the San Diego Padres did not participate in the competition.

Robert smacked the longest blast of the event, with a 484-foot blast in the semifinals. He edged Baltimore Orioles catcher Adley Rutschman in the first round.

The 2023 MLB All-Star Game will air at 8 p.m. EDT Tuesday on Fox.

