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BREAKING NEWS: TRUMP APPEARS IN COURT FOR CIVIL FRAUD TRAIL: COHEN ABSENT

**INSIDE
THIS
EDITION:**

Donald Trump to appeal limited gag order in federal election interference case

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

Lawyers for former President Donald Trump filed an appeal against a partial gag order placed on him by U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan in his election interference case.


Trump attorney John Lauro filed the notice of appeal in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Dis-

trict of Columbia Circuit on Tuesday as the legal team claimed the gag order would harm the former president in his 2024 presidential run.

On Monday, Chutkan instituted the limited gag order that prevents Trump from issuing statements that target special counsel Jack Smith and his team, as well as staff working with Chutkan and other personnel in the D.C. district court.

Trump and his attorneys, however, have said some of the people he would be blocked from criticizing are involved in the political campaign against him.

"I'll be the only politician in our history where I won't be allowed to criticize people," Trump said at a



See **TRUMP**, page 4

**INSIDE
THIS
EDITION:**

North Carolina man accused of sending death threats to Jewish organization

By Darryl Coote
UPI

A 64-year-old North Carolinian has been arrested and charged after sending death threats last week to a Jewish organization.

Jeffrey Scott Hobgood, of Troy, N.C., is accused of sending the unnamed Jewish organization at least two threatening emails, the first of which was sent Wednesday. In the email, Hobgood said he will "take out every one of you," according to the criminal complaint.

The second email was sent to the same organization Friday after Hobgood was contacted by law enforcement, whom he told the content of the first email was "none of their business" and that if they didn't get off his property things would become "dangerous."

In the second email to the Jewish organization, Hobgood threatened that Jews, whom he called "traitors," would be publicly executed.



you are delusional."

The criminal complaint states that the email included a quote attributed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and "a graphic of headshots of individuals purportedly associated with multiple news media organizations, with stars of David affixed to the upper left-hand corner of each headshot."

The emails were sent days after a war between Israel and Hamas began Oct. 7, which has resulted in thousands dead.

The conflict has raised concerns in the United States over violence directed at those of Jewish or Palestinian heritage.

On Saturday, a 6-year-old boy was fatally stabbed and his mother, who is Palestinian and originally from the occupied West Bank, was wounded when they were allegedly attacked by their landlord, Joseph Czuba, seemingly because of the mother's country of origin.

On Oct. 11, the Asheville, N.C.,

Police Department arrested and charged Michael Patrick Toone, 44, on accusations of sending a series of threatening and anti-Semitic emails to a local synagogue.

Hobgood has been charged with transmitting in interstate commerce a communication containing a threat to injure the person of another, and if convicted he faces a maximum term of five years' imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000.

"No one in America should be threatened based on their race, nationality, religion, gender, or other protected characteristics," U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina Sandra Hairston said in a statement.

"Individuals who target other community members will be held accountable for their actions."

Prosecutors on Tuesday also said Hobgood had previously left threatening messages in June 2022 to a family member.

Biden to Israel 'You are not alone,' announces \$100M in aid for Palestinians
Page 3

Officials raise body count at Colorado funeral home to 189
Page 6

Sports leaders ask Congress to play referee on college athletes' branding
Page 9

World Food Program says it needs \$19M for Afghan earthquake victims
Page 10

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OPINION

Justice Thomas and the Uneven Scales of Scrutiny

The Dirty Truth about Utility Companies' Clean Energy Efforts

By Ben Jealous

Imagine telling your boss that you'll complete less than half of the work that's needed, getting almost nothing done over 12 months, then asking for a raise.

That's essentially the story of the 77 utility companies still most heavily invested in fossil fuel-fired electric plants, according to a report last week by the Sierra Club and Bloomberg Philanthropies. The utilities plan to replace only 30 percent of that coal and gas with clean energy by 2030, and more than half of them have made no progress since last year.

For example, We Energies announced in 2020 that it would retire the mainly coal-fired Oak Creek power plant in Milwaukee. Two years later, it extended the timeline by 18 months. In August, on a call with investors, corporate officials wouldn't commit to that schedule.

Nonetheless, the company is asking the state public service for a 3 percent rate increase, which would follow an 11 percent rate increase last year.

"We Energies is asking for an additional increase saying they need it to move toward green energy and lower greenhouse gas emissions," said Keveia Guiden of Citizen Action Wisconsin. "They should be doing that more quickly, but they shouldn't be doing that on the backs of their poorest customers."

The homes that those customers live in typically are 100 or more years old; they aren't well insulated or weatherized, Guiden noted. "We're pulling more gas for heating and more electricity for cooling."

At the same time, those same residents face exposure to gas and particulate pollution from Oak Creek every month that the transition is delayed, she said.

Wisconsin's minimum wage still stands at \$7.25 an hour. "If you're a family making \$18-20,000 a year, 10 percent of that income would go to those electric and gas bills," said Guiden, who organized 24 residents to oppose the rate increase at a state hearing last week.

We Energies isn't struggling. It reported increased revenue of more than \$1 billion last year. Wisconsin allows the public utility to earn a profit of almost 10 percent.

The fact is there's never been a more opportune moment for We Energies and other utility companies to make the switch to clean energy. The cost of solar power, which We Energies said would replace more than half of the coal-fired plant's generated electricity, has fallen nearly 100 percent in the last decade. In its plans, the company acknowledged it would save \$50 million in lower fuel and maintenance costs alone at Oak Creek.

Yet the company only has plans to build enough clean energy capacity to replace 8 percent of the energy it makes with dirty fuels and plans to add 66 megawatts of natural gas-fired power - which like coal is more expensive than solar power - by 2030.

More significantly, the historic clean energy and jobs package President Biden and Congress approved last year offers corporate tax credits that can lower the cost of solar, wind, and battery storage projects by more than 30 percent (50 percent if they are built with domestic materials and in the most impacted communities). The oil, gas, and coal industries have benefited for decades from subsidies for everything from exploration to depletion of their reserves in the ground, giving them among the lowest effective corporate tax rates and ballooning their profit margins.

In addition, utilities can apply for \$30 billion in grants and loans to increase their clean energy capacity.

So utilities can spend less than ever to generate electricity without dirty fuels that will lead to lower energy costs for Americans.

It's past time for utilities to stop making excuses and to take seriously our national target of 100 percent clean energy by 2035. It's time for the rest of us to be like Guiden and her neighbors and stop accepting those excuses.

Ben Jealous is executive director of the Sierra Club, professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "Never Forget Our People Were Always Free."

There is no worse example of a biased, tendentious mainstream media with ulterior motives than the castigation of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas during the past half-year.

The latest example stems from flyspecking Thomas' amended financial disclosure reports, repeating what has never been disputed and attempting to cast a dark shadow on otherwise innocent, normal conduct -- that the man has affluent friends, and these friends engage in activities with their friends, which is typical of those with wealth.

Apart from the shameless and intentional misinterpretation of this reality, what is omitted from the reporting truly speaks volumes. There are neither accusations nor even circumstantial evidence that the 700-plus opinions Thomas has written over his career, the 2,800-plus cases he has voted on and the millions of words he has authored have been compromised in any way to benefit his friends. Even the "bombshell" article by ProPublica, which detailed Thomas' relationship with his friend Harlan Crow, conceded that "Crow and his firm have not had a case before the Supreme Court since Thomas joined it."

Throughout his tenure, neither the media nor any litigant appearing before Thomas has alleged that he shortchanged justice in any case for hidden motives. Yet, this ProPublica article

and its subsequent echoes desperately attempt to construct a narrative that mere friendship with an affluent individual, and receiving treatment no different from that given to other friends, somehow signifies that Thomas harbors ulterior motives.

The arguments presented vacillate between being feeble and outright juvenile. The cornerstone ProPublica piece, for example, musters the claim that "the details of (Crow's) discussions with Thomas over the years remain unknown, and it is unclear if Crow has had any influence on the justice's views." In essence, the expose -- heralded as a revelation of Thomas' alleged indiscretions -- ended not with a bang but a whimper.

If the mainstream media endorsed Thomas' opinions, any whining over his financial disclosures would be muted or inaudible. When liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg publicly and injudiciously assailed Donald Trump's candidacy in 2016, describing him as "a faker" and criticizing both his "ego" and his decision not to release his tax returns (comments for which she later apologized), most in the media winced for a few seconds but moved on. Gins-



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

burg remained in its judicial Valhalla, without an adverse footnote, even though she didn't recuse herself from numerous cases involving the Trump administration that subsequently came before the court. And when Justice Sonia Sotomayor failed to recuse herself from a case in which her book publisher was before the court, there was nary a peep from the media.

The obvious problems that could arise from these two instances warranted far more concern from media watchdogs than Thomas' case. After all, why should liberal justices be held to a less exacting standard than he? All the justices take the same oath to support and defend the Constitution; all should be role models for the nation's youth. Indeed, when the liberal bloc of the court held sway, Ginsburg and Sotomayor were far more influential than Thomas, who was regularly relegated to writing pointed, devastating dissents that, unfortunately, had no precedential weight.

Of course, Thomas is not above criticism. His judicial handiwork is fair game, as is that of every other justice; you can question his reasoning or his adherence to precedents. As former president and, later, Chief Justice William Howard Taft instructed, "Nothing tends more to render judges careful in their decisions and anxiously solicitous to do exact justice than the

consciousness that every act of theirs is to be subject to the intelligent scrutiny of their fellow men, and to their candid criticism. ... In the case of judges having a life tenure, indeed, their very independence makes the right freely to comment on their decisions of greater importance, because it is the only practical and available instrument in the hands of a free people to keep such judges alive to the reasonable demands of those they serve."

Journalists, of course, should be evenhanded in their analysis and critiquing of the opinions of all the justices. Thomas should not be singled out for special treatment, nor should any ideological bloc of justices be. Journalists should report and analyze fairly, no matter which justices' opinions or actions they are analyzing. Supreme Court reporters, in particular, should be trained in law to distinguish between the Constitution and partisan politics; they should avoid turning fleas into elephants or shrinking elephants into fleas.

The Supreme Court bears the profound responsibility of interpreting a document penned more than 250 years ago by the most visionary minds of their era. Justice Thomas, having personally endured the deep scars of racism stemming from misinterpretations of this very text, embodies the gravity and significance of this responsibility.

Israel's conflict in Gaza is the war from hell

By Harlan Ullman
UPI

Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman correctly observed "war is hell." What is happening in Gaza and Israel is that and will only get worse. It is "the war from hell."

Suppose Israel orders an offensive into Gaza to eliminate or neutralize Hamas and you are selected as the general to lead it. You understand the costs, risks, difficulties and dangers of fighting in cities and urban areas.

While Israel has had decades to assemble intelligence and information on Gaza, that proved insufficient to prevent Hamas from carrying out its massive attacks.

The size, number and capability of Hamas fighters are at best estimates. Hamas will mingle among the some 2 million residents packed into Gaza's 140 square miles. Many or most Gazans dislike and do not support that organization. But little love is lost over Israel.

Gaza is the world's largest IED -- improvised explosive device. Hundreds of thousands of mines, booby traps and other obstacles await your offensive. Some speculate that this is a purposeful trap set by Hamas for Israel. Media coverage will be round the clock and intensive. Hamas gets a vote in the propaganda war.

Rules of engagement will conform to the laws of

war. But Hamas' strategy will be to provoke Israeli overreactions. The obscene atrocities committed by Hamas have created the understandable human reaction of revenge. That may be difficult to contain if hostages or Israeli Defense Force soldiers who may be captured are tortured or executed in plain view.

The possibility of Hezbollah opening a second front in the Golan Heights in Israel's north means that forces available to you may be limited. When the fighting ends or is reduced, the long-term problem of occupation may prove even more daunting than the war itself. Israel would have to assume responsibility for all of Gaza.

Suppose you are Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Despite forming a coalition government, you are in political trouble. Your future leadership is no longer certain. The controversy over the judiciary has been overtaken by the shock of Hamas' surprise attack and your culpability in not foiling it.

Having ordered the offense, you must consider the prospect of a wider war. Hezbollah could attack. Would you launch a pre-emptive strike to prevent that? Iran could intervene by sending "volunteers" to Gaza. Then what?

The offensive in Gaza will likely grow bloodier and more costly. What is your response? When the fighting ends or subsides,

how will you cope with an occupation of Gaza or other post-war options?

Last, suppose you are U.S. President Joe Biden. You have made one of the strongest statements of any president supporting Israel. But regarding support, the war in Ukraine will affect what material is available for Israel. And, as in Ukraine, will Israel be unconstrained in this war, in essence given a blank check?

As the bloodshed increases, public opinion outside America will grow hostile to Israel. How will America counter that?

Escalation and expansion of the war is possible if Hezbollah, Syria or Iran intervenes. Further, you have ordered the USS Ford carrier strike group to the eastern Mediterranean as a deterrent. But potential adversaries, including Hamas, are aware of how Ukraine has driven the Russian navy out of its base in Crimea with drones and missiles.

Could a missile, an unmanned air, underwater drone or suicide bomber responsible for disabling the USS Cole in 2000 be targeted against the battle group? Even if the attack failed, what might be your responses? Or what if the attack succeeded in damaging the USS Ford or its escorts?

Further, what happens if the war escalates? If the House of Representatives is incapable of selecting a speaker, Congress cannot pass any legislation to support Israel, including a

resolution to authorize the use of force beyond the 60 days permitted under the War Powers Act if that is needed. Make no mistake: That will not be ignored by America's enemies and Hamas.

What else could go wrong? A great deal. Perhaps Israel will be able to conduct this offensive with minimal casualties and levels of destruction. But perhaps it will not.

Unlike the first Yom Kippur War in 1973, Egypt's President Anwar Sadat had a strategy to win by losing the battle. That ultimately led to a return of the Sinai captured in 1967 by Israel and peace between the two states.

Hamas is a Nihilist organization intending to destroy Israel and the Jewish state. Unlike Sadat, Hamas has no rational exit strategy. Biden and Netanyahu must understand that and prepare for this reality: The conflict in Gaza is indeed the war from hell.

Harlan Ullman is UPI's Arnaud de Borchgrave Distinguished Columnist, a 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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Biden in Tel Aviv tells Israel 'You are not alone,' announces \$100M in aid for Palestinians

By Darryl Coote
UPI

U.S. President Joe Biden pledged his support for Israel in a trip to Tel Aviv on Wednesday and offered humanitarian aid to Palestinians amid the Gaza conflict.

In remarks on the Oct. 7 terrorist attack by Hamas and the ensuing war, Biden said he had a "single message" to deliver to the people of Israel: "You are not alone."

"As long as the United States stands -- and we will stand forever -- we will not let you ever be alone," he said.

Biden was greeted on the tarmac at Ben Gurion International Airport by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Isaac Herzog.

"I wanted to be here today for a simple reason: I wanted the people of Israel, the people of the world to know where the United States stands," Biden said at a joint press conference, before condemning Hamas for its Oct. 7 attack that resulted in the deaths of some 1,300 Israelis and 31 Americans and prompted Netanyahu to wage war against the Palestinian militants.

Biden has repeatedly voiced support for Israel's right to defend itself and vowed that the United States will unequivocally stand by its side as it does so.

He also repeated Wednesday the United States' commitment that Israel would receive everything it needs for its war effort.

Biden said the Pales-

tinian people "are suffering greatly as well" and mourned the loss of life as he sought to draw a clear distinction between Hamas and the Palestinian people saying the group did not represent them.

"The vast majority of Palestinians are not Hamas. Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people," he said. "Hamas uses innocents -- innocent families in Gaza as human shields, putting their command centers, their weapons, their communications tunnels in residential areas."

The White House on Wednesday announced that the United States would provide \$100 million in humanitarian assistance to support more than a million Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank who have been displaced by the war with clean water, food, hygiene support, medical care and other needs.

"Civilians are not to blame and should not suffer for Hamas's horrific terrorism," the White House said. "Civilian lives must be protected and assistance must urgently reach those in need."

Biden touched down as the humanitarian situation in Gaza deteriorated. The Palestinian enclave has been subjected to incessant bombardment by Israel since the war began, and health officials have been warning for days that there is no water or electricity and that food and medicine are scarce and will soon be depleted.

On Tuesday, the situa-



tion worsened as hundreds sheltering at a hospital in Northern Gaza were killed in an explosion, with Hamas and Israel each claiming the other was responsible for the attack.

A meeting between Biden and Jordan's King Abdullah, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was canceled following the strike.

During his brief remarks following his arrival in Tel Aviv, Biden appeared to agree with Israel's claims that an errant Hamas rocket was behind the hospital's destruction.

"I was deeply saddened and outraged by the explosion in Gaza yesterday, and based on what I've seen it appears as though it was done by the other team, not you," he told Netanyahu.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been on the ground in the region for

days and a newly appointed special envoy for Middle Eastern humanitarian issues arrived Sunday to work on securing unimpeded access to badly needed supplies for Gaza.

John Kirby, National Security Council spokesman, told reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Tel Aviv that Biden would make "it clear, as he has before,

that we want to see humanitarian assistance flow" in Gaza in a sustainable effort. "We're optimistic that we'll be able to get some humanitarian assistance in," he said. "A lot of work has been done."

Biden told Netanyahu the United States will work on humanitarian supplies during his trip for Palestinians caught in the middle

of the war.

Netanyahu called Biden "a true friend" and said his visit to Israel was the first by a U.S. president during a time of war.

"It speaks to the depth of your personal commitment to Israel, it speaks to the depth of your personal commitment to the future of the Jewish people and the one and only Jewish state," he said. "I know I speak for the people of Israel when I say, thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for standing with Israel, today, tomorrow and always."

Biden is scheduled to meet with Netanyahu and his war cabinet, of whom "he'll be asking some tough questions" about their plans, objectives and intentions for the war, Kirby said.

"He'll be asking them as a friend -- as a true friend of Israel," Kirby said. "But he will be asking some questions of them."

Israel has come under

See ISRAEL, page 5




With Florida launch, SpaceX sends 22 more Starlink satellites to low-Earth orbit

By UPI Staff

SpaceX sent 22 Starlink satellites toward low-Earth orbit after a successful Falcon 9 launch from Florida on Tuesday.

The liftoff, from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's Launch Complex 40, sent the spacecraft skyward at 8:39 p.m. EDT.

It was the 16th flight for the first-stage booster, SpaceX said on its website, adding that it previously had flown in support of missions for the GPS III Space Vehicle 04, GPS III Space Vehicle 05, Inspiration4, Ax-1, Nilesat 301, OneWeb Launch 17, ARABSAT BADR-8 and eight Starlink missions.

After its separation, the first stage landed on the Just Read the Instructions drone ship in the Atlantic



Ocean.

The satellites were confirmed to have been deployed into low-Earth orbit where they will join Starlink's growing constellation of more than 5,000 satellites that provide high-speed, low-latency Internet world-

wide.

Tuesday's launch came less than a week after SpaceX successfully sent another 22 Starlink satellites into orbit from the same launch pad. That launch was one of two SpaceX missions to go up that day.



Trump

continued from page 1

campaign speech in Iowa on Monday. "They put a gag order on me, and I'm not supposed to be talking about things that bad people do."

But Chutkan in her ruling said Trump's past comments on those involved in the case had the potential of prejudicing the case.

"This is not about whether I like the language Mr. Trump uses," Chutkan said on Monday in issuing the gag order. "This is about language that presents a danger to the administration of justice."

Trump, though, said

such gag orders are part of a larger scheme to hurt him politically and prevent his return to the presidency.

"We're being railroaded. And I have other trials where we're being railroaded," Trump said to reporters before attending a separate civil fraud trial in New York on Tuesday. "You saw yesterday where they took away my right to speak. I won't be able to speak like I'm speaking to you."

New York State Supreme Court Justice Arthur Engoron, who is overseeing the multibillion-dollar business fraud trial in New York City, also placed Trump under a gag order in that case earlier this month.



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Wyndham Hotels & Resorts rejects \$8 billion offer from Choice Hotels

By Mark Moran
UPI

Shares of Wyndham Hotels & Resorts jumped more than 6% in afternoon trading on Tuesday and shares of Choice Hotels fell more than 5% after Wyndham rejected an unsolicited \$8 billion buyout offer from Choice Hotels.

Once the assumed debt is considered, the deal would have climbed to \$9.8 billion.

“Choice’s offer is underwhelming, highly conditional and subject to significant business, regulatory and execution risk,” Wyndham Chairman Stephen Holmes said in a prepared statement. “Choice has been unwilling or unable to address our concerns.”

Wyndham, which operates Days Inn, La Quinta,

Ramada and a host of other hotel brands, called the proposal “opportunistic” and undervalues its future growth potential. The offer was rejected unanimously by its board, the company said in the statement.

Choice operates about 7,500 hotels in 46 countries and is trying to absorb a much larger chain in Wyndham.

The deal would represent a megamerger in the budget hotel marketplace and would bring almost 17,000 properties under the Choice roof, including familiar hotel names including Radisson, Quality Inn, Days Inn, Ramada and Travelodge.

Choice offered \$90 per share, which was about a 30% premium to Monday’s closing share price. That translates to \$49.50 per share and 0.324 shares of

Choice common stock.

The two sides had been discussing a deal for months, but Choice said Wyndham ended negotiations, which prompted Choice to make its unsolicited offer.

Holmes said the company came to the conclusion that any deal with Choice could take as long as a year to pass antitrust review, which, among other things, soured him on future negotiations.

Earlier Tuesday, Choice asked Wyndham shareholders to approve the deal after six months of contentious discussions.

“A few weeks ago, Choice and Wyndham were in a negotiable range on price and consideration, and both parties have a shared recognition of the value opportunity this potential transaction represents,” Choice CEO Patrick Pacious said

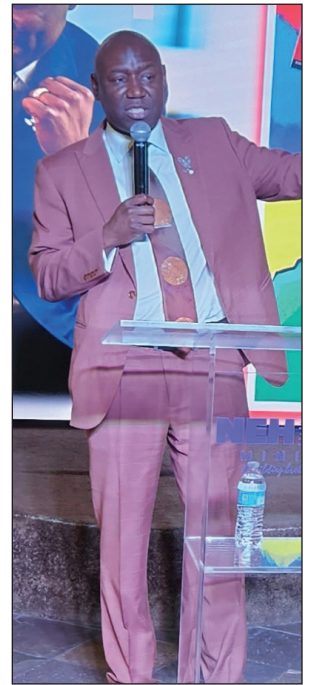
in a statement. “We were therefore surprised and disappointed that Wyndham decided to disengage. While we would have preferred to continue discussions with Wyndham in private, following their unwillingness to proceed, we feel there is too much value for both companies’ franchisees, shareholders, associates, and guests to not continue pursuing this transaction.”

Despite Wyndham’s rejection, Some analysts said Choice’s offer was respectable. C. Patrick Scholes of Truist Securities told clients he believes Choice is making an attractive offer to Wyndham, but Holmes, who is well-versed in mergers and acquisitions, may be “strategically holding out for a somewhat better offer from Choice or from someone else.”

Atty. Ben Crump Lands In Las Vegas

Roger Johnson
Staff Writer

Atty. Ben Crump landed in Las Vegas, Nevada to speak at the National Action Network banquet to commemorate several special guests. In attendance was Robert Bush, President of the Las Vegas, Nevada Chapter of NAN, Judge Belinda T. Harris AKA Notorious BTH who is the first Black Judge to be endorsed by EMERGE. Also in attendance was Attorney Claudeidra Monor, Rev. Kelsey West of Nehemia Ministries, Inola Tucker, Second Chance Treasurer of NAN, Kara Jenkins of Nevada Equal Rights Commission and Jagada Chambers, the Rights Restoration Coordinator of Silver State Voices. Attorney Crump in ne-



gotiations with The Daily Drum to be honored at the Black Excellence Achievement Award Banquet in February during Black History month so stay tuned.

Prosecutors plan to file new charges against Alec Baldwin in ‘Rust’ shooting

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

Prosecutors in New Mexico plan to bring new criminal charges against Alec Baldwin after the on-set shooting that killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during the filming of Rust two years ago.

Special prosecutors Kari Morrissey and Jason Lewis on Tuesday cited that “additional facts” discovered during a new investigation into the incident led them

to present a new case to a grand jury.

“After extensive investigation over the past several months, additional facts have come to light that we believe show Mr. Baldwin has criminal culpability in the death of Halyna Hutchins and the shooting of Joel Souza,” the attorneys said.

“We believe the appropriate course of action is to permit a panel of New Mexico citizens to determine from here whether

Mr. Baldwin should be held over for criminal trial.”

Luke Nikas, Baldwin’s attorney, said the actor is determined to fight the charges.

“It is unfortunate that a terrible tragedy has been turned into this misguided prosecution,” Nikas said. “We will answer any charges in court.”

Baldwin had been charged with involuntary manslaughter in January but the charges were dropped in

April before a preliminary hearing.

Baldwin was holding a Colt .45 revolver on the Rust set while preparing for a scene at a Western ranch near Santa Fe, N.M. with Hutchins and director Joel Souza, when the weapon went off. Souza was also injured in the shooting.

In June, a New Mexico district court agreed to a settlement in the wrongful death lawsuit in connection with the shooting.



Israel

continued from page 3

growing criticism over the execution of its war against Hamas. Along with its bombing of Gaza, an evacuation order for the northern half of the enclave issued late last week affecting some 1.1 million people ahead of a widely expected ground invasion has thrown the territory into chaos.

Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory, has warned that the Palestinians are in grave danger of mass ethnic cleansing, and the World Health Organization has called on Israel to rescind the order that it said “has been impossible to carry out.”

On Wednesday, U.N. Secretary-Gen-

eral Antonio Guterres accused Israel of pursuing “collective punishment” against the Palestinian people for the Hamas attack.

“I call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to provide sufficient time and space to help realize my two appeals and to ease the epic human suffering we are witnessing,” he said.

Biden’s arrival also comes as fighting on the Lebanese border between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah intensifies, stoking fears of a second front opening in the war.

Kirby explained to reporters that one of Biden’s objectives is to prevent that from happening.

Biden was “going to make it clear that we continue to want to see this conflict not widen, not expand, not deepen. And he’ll make that point very clearly.”



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Hundreds feared dead in Gaza hospital blast as Israel, Hamas blame one another



DEADLY EXPLOSION CANCELS PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S PLANNED MEETING WITH LEADERS OF JORDAN, EGYPT AND PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY ON WEDNESDAY

By Patrick Hilsman & Mark Moran
UPI

Hundreds are feared dead Tuesday after explosions rocked Gaza's Al Ahli Arab Hospital, where thousands of civilians had sought shelter amid Israel's fight with Hamas militants, according to local reports.

Palestinians in the region blamed Israel for the attack; Israeli military leaders blamed the deadly blast on errant weapons fired from within Gaza.

Daniel Magari, a spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces, said during a news conference he will present evidence the IDF were not responsible for the strike in the Gaza Strip.

"We don't have any indication that it hit the hospital, Magari said, "but it does not fit the footage that we have in the hospital."

After the blast, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas canceled his meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden, according to Palestinian officials who said Abbas was traveling back to Ramallah and had called an urgent meeting of the Palestinian leadership for Tuesday night.

Biden has not canceled his planned visit to Israel, where he seeks to demonstrate staunch support for the country while also pressing for ways to ease humanitarian suffering in Gaza, where water and food supplies are dwindling for hundreds of thousands of displaced people.

Later, NBC reported comments from Jordan's foreign minister, who said the planned meeting between Biden and the leaders of Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority will not happen on Wednesday because of the hospital's deadly destruction.

"The Al-Ahli Hospital massacre in the heart of Gaza Strip is a genocide. Enough silence on the aggression and recklessness of the occupation," Hamas said in a statement, according to a report by CNN.

The World Health Organization condemned the incident, calling "for the immediate active protection of civilians and health care."

"Evacuation orders must be reversed," WHO officials said in a statement. "International humanitarian law must be abided by, which means health care must be actively protected and never targeted."

Meanwhile, Palestinian officials now

say at least 3,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that killed over 1,300 Israelis and resulted in hundreds of Israeli citizens being taken hostage.

Also, Palestinian officials say 61 people have been killed in the West Bank, too.

In the apparent attack on the hospital on Tuesday, Sky News reports that a spokesperson for Gaza's Ministry of Health estimated the number of deaths is in the hundreds.

"Initial estimates indicate that between 200 and 300 martyrs were killed in the bombing that targeted Baptist Hospital in Gaza city," a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health said, according to Sky News.

ABC News quoted an unnamed Israeli Defense Forces spokesperson as saying the hospital blast was caused by a failed rocket launch by Hamas, not IDF weapons.

Tal Heinrich, a spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told CNN that the "IDF does not target hospitals."

Unconfirmed images and video shared by local media show dead and injured people at the hospital in the aftermath of the strike.

CNN also reports that the Ministry of Health in Gaza says hundreds are likely to have been killed.

ABC reports that the Ministry of Health also said the death toll in the hospital strike likely exceeds 500 people, and that Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas has declared three days of mourning in the wake of the bombing.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the U.N. body that addresses Palestinian refugees, confirmed Tuesday that a school under its supervision in Gaza has been targeted, killing six people.

"At least 6 people were killed this afternoon when an UNRWA school was hit in the al-Maghazi refugee camp. This is outrageous and it again shows a flagrant disregard for the lives of civilians. No place is safe in Gaza anymore, not even U.N. facilities," the UNRWA posted on X Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military has released footage it says shows a bombing attack that killed senior Hamas leader Ayman Nofal.

Officials raise body count at Colorado funeral home to 189

By A.L. Lee
UPI

Authorities in Colorado said they removed dozens more decomposed bodies that were improperly stored at a funeral home, deepening the gruesome discovery made by deputies more than two weeks ago.

Deputies who first entered the Return to Nature Funeral Home on Oct. 4 initially believed the body count to be around 115, but

by Tuesday investigators raised the number of dead to 189 -- amounting to six dozen more bodies than initial police estimates.

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation added that the toll could change as the investigation advances.

"While the investigation for this incident continues, we also remain focused on the impacted families," Fremont County Sheriff Allen Cooper said in a Tuesday statement. "We want to do all we can to provide the families the support they need as we shift to the next phase in this process."

Investigators say the remains were improperly stored inside the 2,500-square-foot business that offered what it called "environmentally friendly" burials to Colorado residents, which is legal under state law so long as remains are placed in cold storage within 24 hours of death.

However, it was not immediately clear if any crime had been committed, and so far no arrests have been made.

Cooper described the scene as "horrific," as authorities said all the bodies were in an advanced state of decomposition, making DNA testing necessary to

identify them -- a challenging procedure that could take several months.

The building appeared abandoned, surrounded by weeds and an overgrown landscape, broken windows and debris and trash scattered about the perimeter.

The stench of death in the air prompted the emergency calls to law enforcement authorities in Penrose on Oct. 3, but police had to wait for a warrant to enter the building, which delayed the shocking find by one day.

Last Friday, all the bodies were transported to the El Paso County Coroner's Office, where staff was working to determine the identities.

Fremont County Coroner Randy Keller said he sent members of his staff to join the effort to identify victims and notify the families of the deceased.

"We are conducting extensive coordination efforts as we focus on the identification of the decedents and provide notifications to ensure the families are given accurate information to prevent further victimization as they continue to grieve their loved ones," Keller said in a statement.

The funeral home's registration with the state expired in November 2022.

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POSSESSION OF FIREARM BY FELON — FELONY
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Fantasy football QB rankings: Love, Ridder among Week 7 must-starts

By Alex Butler
UPI

Jordan Love and Desmond Ridder are among my four must-start fantasy football quarterbacks for Week 7.

If you need more options for your roster, check out my top add/drops article. My Week 7 rankings for running backs and wide receivers are also available and will be updated throughout the week.

Patrick Mahomes leads my Top 20 quarterback rankings, which are listed below. Derek Carr and Geno Smith join Love and Ridder as must-start plays. Several streaming options also can be found within my rankings.

Quarterbacks from the Cincinnati Bengals, Dallas Cowboys, New York Jets, Tennessee Titans, Houston Texans and Carolina Panthers should be benched or dropped, as those teams have Week 7 byes.

Those with stock in Trevor Lawrence, Justin Fields, Jimmy Garoppolo, Deshaun Watson, Josh Allen, Daniel Jones and Baker Mayfield should monitor their injury status before plugging them into lineups.

Each of my must-start options land inside the Top 14 of my quarterback rankings.

Jordan Love

Love is a Top 10 quarterback this season in terms of fantasy points per game. He started the season hot before running into tough pass defenses from Week 3 through Week 5. Love will return from a Week 6 bye to take on the Denver Broncos on Sunday in Denver.

The Broncos allowed the most passing yards and touchdowns and second-most fantasy points per game to quarterbacks through six weeks. They surrendered at least 299 passing yards in four of their six games. They also allowed two or more passing scores in four games.

Love, my No. 4 option, should throw for close to 300 yards and find the end zone multiple times. He is an easy QB1 in this matchup and a terrific streaming option if your typical starter is on bye.

Derek Carr

Carr is my No. 9 option this week and will serve as another great bye week streamer. The New Orleans Saints veteran threw for a season-high 353 yards in Week 6 and now will face a Jacksonville Jaguars secondary that surrendered the second-most passing yards to quarterbacks so far this season.

The Jaguars allowed at least 280 passing yards in four of their first six games, including 359 to Josh Allen in Week 5 and 329 to Gardner Minshew in Week 6.

They also surrendered at least two total touchdowns to the position in four games.

Carr, who eclipsed 300 passing yards twice already, should provide similar output Thursday in New Orleans. Look for at least 300 yards and two scores from the Saints quarterback.

Geno Smith

Smith is a fringe QB1 this week ahead of the Seattle Seahawks' matchup with the



Arizona Cardinals. The Seahawks veteran totaled at least 296 passing yards in three of his last four games, including 323 in Week 6. Now he will meet a Cardinals defense that surrendered the sixth-most passing yards and fifth-most fantasy points per game to quarterbacks.

The Cardinals allowed at least 200 passing yards in every game this season. They also surrendered at least two total touchdowns in four of six games, including three scores and 321 yards in Week 2 to Daniel Jones.

Look for Smith to throw for at least 250 yards. He could move into the Top 5 if he eclipses that total and finds the end zone more than twice. Smith is my No. 12 option.

Desmond Ridder

Ridder is a low-end quarterback streamer this week. The Atlanta Falcons passer threw for 307 yards and two scores in Week 6. He logged a season-high 329 yards and accounted for two total touchdowns in Week 5.

This week, Ridder and the Falcons will face the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who just surrendered 353 yards and two scores to Jared Goff.

Ridder is a bit of a long shot, but I expect the Falcons to trail in this matchup, leading to more passing attempts. He should eclipse 250 passing yards and be just good enough to fill in for your normal starting quarterback.

'Contagious' hitting drives Phillies to 2-0 NLCS lead over Diamondbacks



By Alex Butler
UPI

Kyle Schwarber swatted two homers in a blowout of the Arizona Diamondbacks in Game 2 of the National League Championship Series, continuing what Philadelphia Phillies players consider contagiously hot playoff hitting.

The Phillies recorded 11 hits and six walks in the 10-0 victory Tuesday in Philadelphia. They now have a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven game series.

Schwarber went 2 for 3 with three runs scored, two RBIs and a walk. Shortstop Trea Turner also homered and reached base twice from walks.

"It's definitely a contagious thing right now," Phillies outfielder Brandon Marsh told reporters, according to MLB.com. "Just passing it down to the next guy in the order."

Each of the Phillies' last 13 homers were of the solo variety, resulting in the longest such streak in MLB history. Phillies hitters slugged 16 homers over their last five games, more than any other MLB team over a five-game stretch in a single postseason.

"The biggest thing is when we get our hitter's pitch, we don't want to miss it," Schwarber told reporters. "We are doing a good job of really locking into that."

Turner hit a 421-foot homer to center field in the bottom of the first to start the Game 2 scoring. Schwarber swatted his first home run in the bottom of the third, doubling the lead. The Phillies designated hitter smacked that 368-foot shot off starter Merrill Kelly to right center field.

Phillies starting pitcher Aaron Nola dominated the Diamondbacks' lineup, not allowing a hit until the fourth inning. The Phillies plated four runs in the sixth and another four in the seventh the break the game open.

Schwarber led off the bottom of the sixth with a 427-foot solo homer. Catcher J.T. Realmuto hit a two-run double later in the inning for a 5-0 edge.

Marsh smacked another RBI double to left field two at-bats later for the final run of the inning.

Phillies third baseman Alec Bohm drove in Schwarber and first baseman Bryce Harper with a two-run double in the bottom of the seventh. Realmuto drove in Bohm with an RBI single two at-bats later for a 9-0 Phillies

lead. Right fielder Nick Castellanos plated second baseman Bryson Stott with an RBI sacrifice fly in the next exchange for the final run of the night.

Nola allowed just three hits and issued seven strikeouts and no walks over six innings to improve to 3-0 this postseason. Nola's 0.96 ERA this postseason is the best among active pitchers.

Turner leads active players with a .500 average this postseason. Harper (.385), Castellanos (.345) and Realmuto (.300) rank fourth, seventh and 12th, respectively in playoff batting average.

Castellanos' five home runs this postseason trail only Houston Astros designated hitter Yordan Alvarez. Harper (four), Schwarber (three), Turner (three) and Realmuto (two) also are among this postseason's top home run hitters.

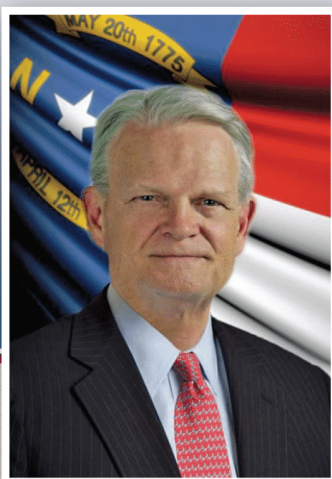
With his two-homer performance Tuesday, Schwarber tied Mickey Mantle, Reggie Jackson, Nelson Cruz and Carlos Correa for the seventh-most career postseason homers (18). Manny Ramirez, who hit 29, owns the record for the most playoff long balls.

"This is kind of the lineup that we envisioned ourselves having all season long," Realmuto said. "We are clicking at the right time right now. From top to bottom, everybody seems like they are having good at-bats."

The Phillies, who tied a single-game record with six homers earlier in the playoffs, are now 6-0 at home this postseason.

They will battle the Diamondbacks in Game 3 at 5:07 p.m. EDT Thursday in Phoenix. Game 4 will be Friday in Phoenix.

The Astros (0-2) will battle the Texas Rangers (2-0) will meet in Game 3 of the American League Championship Series at 8:03 p.m. Wednesday in Arlington, Texas.



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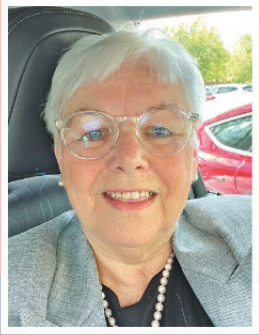
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Sports leaders ask Congress to play referee on college athletes' branding

By **Kristen Axtman and Jessica Ma**
Medill News Service

As Congress continues to weigh how to regulate how

college athletes are being paid, University of Florida gymnast Trinity Thomas was among those who urged lawmakers Tuesday to create national standards that

enable college athletes to profit from their personal branding.

“Competing against the best athletes on the biggest stages has provided me with

more opportunities than I ever imagined possible when I started gymnastics as a little girl,” Thomas told lawmakers at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.

It was the 10th congressional hearing on the issue, and seven witnesses convened on a panel session that ended with no clear consensus on details of a bill still to be written.

“It took me and my fellow athletes time to navigate the waters of the NIL and everyone is still learning as we go.”

Thanks to a recent Supreme Court ruling and changes in state laws, athletes like Thomas are allowed to profit from their fame while continuing to remain as college students. Thomas has signed deals with Honey Stinger, an energy food brand, and Nocap Sports, a sports marketing agency.

It's all part of the new policy on so-called name, image and likeness, or NIL, policies that give the legal ability to athletes, like Thomas, to earn money by promoting products and services.

NIL rules vary from state to state, prompting college sports administrators to push for a uniform federal standard to help the NCAA regulate student-athletes' earnings.

Proposed legislation could change the already evolving way student-athletes profit off their fame in collegiate athletics -- a \$16 billion industry. Even many members of the University of Iowa marching band recently signed a deal with an area store that sells kitchenware.

“There is currently no single standard that applies to all student athletes in all sports, which oftentimes, leaves us confused,” Thomas said.

Supporting college athletes while protecting the nature of college athletics has garnered bipartisan support, but questions remain about whether such policies super-charge big-name colleges while hurting smaller, lesser-known athletic programs.

Such income also has prompted some to ask if these college athletes are employees of the universities they attend. Lawmakers across the aisle described the current situation as the “Wild West” of college sports.

While the Senate Commerce Committee has jurisdiction over much of the proposed legislation, the Senate Judiciary Committee oversees antitrust law and intellectual property rights



-- issues at contention related to NIL.

“If this committee and the Commerce Committee doesn't act in about a year, this thing is going to be an absolute mess,” Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said during the hearing.

The NCAA has been criticized for decades over whether its rules exploit college athletes. But now, with recent developments in NIL, some say athletes have taken back some control by profiting from their name, image and likeness. California was the first state to lift NIL restrictions in 2019.

Several states followed suit, and a landmark 9-0 Supreme Court ruling in *NCAA vs. Alston* in June 2021 led to a rapid expansion of such deals. The Supreme Court ruled NCAA's rules limiting education-related compensation, such as scholarships for graduate schools, violated antitrust laws.

Now, 32 states have passed laws to approve NIL use by student-athletes. The NCAA passed an interim policy, allowing student athletes to profit from personal branding.

Under NCAA policy, athletes must adhere to state NIL laws, making state laws heavily influence recruitment: the looser the restrictions, the more desirable the school. That has led to a call for more uniform rules to also help out smaller colleges that don't have the same clout.

“We need a national standard for name, image and likeness, mainly to protect the athletes against potential disreputable agents or unscrupulous deals,” Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said at the hearing.

One proposed law distinguishes college athletes from university employees. Senators across party lines, as well as witnesses, agreed that college athletes should not be classified as employees.

“The vast majority of student-athletes are not going on to continue their sport after they leave college,” said Jack Swarbrick, the director of athletics at Notre Dame. “It's the education, which is

the primary value of their experience. We have to protect that.”

If student-athletes are considered employees, they would be subject to employment laws. Students would be at risk of termination, and their scholarships could be taxed, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, noted.

Cruz, who is also a ranking member on the Senate Commerce Committee, has introduced his version of draft legislation, citing concerns about federal overstep in intercollegiate athletics. Instead, Cruz's legislation proposes a “self-governance model,” where the NCAA works with conferences and universities to set rules.

“Nobody wants to see Congress and politicians deciding what ‘roughing the passer’ is,” Cruz said.

An unintended consequence of athlete employment would be shutting out smaller athletic programs that cannot afford paying their athletes. That would have the detrimental effect of pushing Division II and Division III schools out of the college athletics business, NCAA president Charlie Baker said.

Cruz said he is worried that a few schools “buy all the top athletes,” destroying the competition. For example, University of Utah football players received leases to new pickup trucks, thanks to the new NIL regulations.

“One of the great things about March Madness is the [68] teams, and any one of them can win,” Cruz said. “That makes it incredible fun to watch.”

Blumenthal urged colleges to provide ongoing medical care to athletes who sustain long-term injuries, guaranteeing that injured athletes' keep their scholarships and setting base health and safety standards should be included in athlete compensation discussions.

Ultimately, Thomas said, better laws will protect the future of sports. She said she hopes other student athletes can benefit from NIL like she did.

“College sports took a step forward with NIL during my time as a student athlete,” Thomas said.

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La Voz Latina

Argentina coach deems Lionel Messi 'healthy' after two-goal performance

By Alex Butler
UPI

Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni declared Lionel Messi healthy again after the soccer sensation scored twice and played every minute in a win over Peru in a World Cup qualifier.

Messi scored in the 32nd and 42nd minutes of the 2-0 victory Tuesday in Lima.

"The most important thing is that he is healthy," Scaloni told reporters. "That is the best thing. He is managing his minutes alone."

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner hadn't started for Argentina or MLS club Inter Miami since Sept. 20. Messi aggravated a leg injury in that Inter Miami victory and left the field before halftime.

He returned to the field Oct. 7 as a substitute for the Herons. He also appeared as a substitute Thursday in Argentina's 1-0 win over Paraguay. He missed four

MLS games since his Sept. 20 exit.

The Argentine appeared back in form throughout Tuesday's match. He sent his first close attempt just to the right of the right post in the fourth minute. Peru goalie Pedro Gallese saved a Messi free kick in the 11th minute. Messi finally broke through about 20 minutes later.

The striker sent a pass from the right flank to midfield, finding winger Enzo Fernandez to start the sequence. Fernandez covered major ground with a rapid dribble forward. He then slid a feed to his left, ahead for Nicolas Gonzalez. The Argentine forward used a first-touch pass to split defenders, finding Messi just as he ran into the box.

Messi finished the play with a one-touch dart into the upper-right corner of the net, beating a diving Gallese.

He doubled Argentina's lead about 10 minutes later. Fernandez



chased down a pass inside the Peru box to set up that score. He then left a pass back for striker Julian Alvarez, who led the ball roll toward Messi.

Messi used his left boot to fire a shot inside the near post to finish that play. He looked to complete a hat trick in the second half, but could not find the net for a third time.

Messi's two goals Tuesday pushed his CONMEBOL World Cup qualifier career total to 31, passing Uruguay's Luis Suarez (29) for the most in history.

Argentina will face Uruguay on Nov. 16 in another World Cup qualifier.

Inter Miami will host FC Charlotte in an MLS match at 8 p.m.

EDT Wednesday in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The Herons, who are eliminated from playoff contention, will wrap up their regular season against OKthe same team Saturday in Charlotte, N.C.

"It's a shame, we were close," Messi told reporters Tuesday. "I missed the last few games. We had several injuries. The month of July was very hard for us because we played every three days. We traveled, but we got an important [trophy] for the club."

Heron's coach Tata Martino told reporters Tuesday that he will evaluate Messi to decide if he will play in the final matches of the season. Messi said he plans to train and hinted that he will play again this season for the Herons.

"I will train, I will play [in an upcoming match] and I will try to get here [back to the national team] in the best possible way for November," Messi said. "After that, I will enjoy the holidays in Argentina."



'Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour' tops North American box office with \$96M

By Karen Butler
UPI

Concert film Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour is the No. 1 movie in North America, earning \$96 million in receipts this weekend, BoxOfficeMojo.com announced Sunday.

Coming in at No. 2 is The Exorcist: Believer with \$11 million, followed by Paw

Patrol: The Mighty Movie at No. 3 with \$7 million, Saw X at No. 4 with \$5.7 and The Creator at No. 5 with \$4.3 million.

Rounding out the top tier are A Haunting in Venice with \$2.052 million, The Blind at No. 7 with \$2.023 million, The Nun II at No. 8 with \$1.6 million, The Equalizer 3 at No. 9 with \$960,000 and Dumb Money at No. 10 with \$920,000.

World Food Program says it needs \$19M for Afghan earthquake victims

By Clyde Hughes
UPI

The World Food Program on Wednesday appealed for \$19 million to help Afghans who lost their homes and ability to feed themselves after a series of devastating earthquakes in the western region of the country this month.

The United Nations agency said that emergency food assistance is needed for 100,000 people in light of the earthquakes.

Twin earthquakes rocked the Herat province on Sunday, hospitalizing more than 100 people. Afghanistan was again rocked by earthquakes on Sunday, killing at least one person

and injuring more than 100 others.

United Nations pledged \$5 million in emergency reserves in response to Afghanistan's recovery from Saturday's devastating 6.3-magnitude earthquake. On Oct. 7, the first devastating earthquake left thousands without homes and 1,400 killed.

An estimated 25,000 buildings have been destroyed, leaving many to sleep in tents next to the rubble of their homes as they fear more earthquakes and aftershocks.

"WFP is assisting the survivors, but we are having to take this food from an already severely underfunded program in Afghanistan

and we urgently need additional funding," said Ana Maria Salhuana, deputy country director of WFP Afghanistan.

"Disasters like these earthquakes pound communities who are already barely able to feed themselves back into utter destitution."

The WFP said with the winter months coming, the organization is planning on assisting families with cash transfers and food for three to seven months. The organization was forced to reduce the amount of its assistance because of a funding shortage. The WFP said it can only help one in five people who qualify for assistance.





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