

People walk along the border wall separating Arizona and Mexico after crossing into the United States near Lukeville, Ariz.

'Unprecedented'

Illegal crossings surge in remote areas as Congress, White House weigh major asylum restrictions

Associated Press

LUKEVILLE, Ariz. — Hundreds of dates are written on concrete-filled steel columns erected along the U.S. border with Mexico to memorialize when the Border Patrol has repaired illicit openings in the wouldbe barriers. Yet no sooner are fixes made than another column is sawed, torched and chiseled for large groups of migrants to enter, usually with no agents in sight.

The breaches stretch about 30 miles on a Arizona desert town that consists of an official border crossing, restaurant and duty-free shop. The repair dates are mostly since spring, when the flat desert region dotted with saguaro cactus became the busiest corridor for illegal crossings.

A Border Patrol tour in Arizona for news organizations, including The Associated On Friday, agents drove looking for openings Press, showed improvements in custody conditions and processing times, but flows are overwhelming. The huge spike in migrants and resulting chaos at various border locations have increased frustration with the Biden administration's immigration policies and put pressure on Congress to reach a deal on asylum. The numbers have nudged the large groups to walk through. Welders often White House and some congressional Dem- attach metal bars horizontally across several ocrats to consider major limits to asylum as columns to prevent swinging, but there are part of a deal for Ukraine aid.

As Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas left closed-door talks with congressional leaders Friday, dozens of migrants from Senegal, Guinea and Mexico walked along the Arizona border wall built during Donald Trump's presidency, looking to surrender to agents. A Mexican woman walked briskly with her two daughters and five grandchildren, ages 2 to 7, after being dropped off by a bus in Mexico and instructed by guides.

"They told us where to go; to go straight," washboard gravel road west of Lukeville, an said Alicia Santay, of Guatemala, who waited in a Border Patrol tent in Lukeville for initial processing. Santay, 22, and her 16-year-old sister hoped to join their father in New York.

The dates when wall breaches were fixed are often bunched together, written in white letters against rust-colored steel. One cluster showed five dates from April 12 to Oct. 3. and found one on a column that was repaired twice — on Oct. 31 and again Dec. 5.

Smuggling organizations remove a few inches from the bottom of 30-foot steel poles, which agents say can take as little as a halfhour. Columns sway back and forth, like a cantilever swing, creating ample space for plenty of other places to saw.

Agents say it takes up to an hour to drive from Lukeville along the gravel road to discover breaches — a large chunk of time when tending to so many migrants in custody.

"Our officers and agents are responding to large groups of migrants, which means that some of our agents aren't on the line, not really monitoring for some of those cuts," said Troy Miller, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's acting commissioner. "If we don't have anybody to respond, then you're going to see what you're seeing."

The number of daily arrivals is "unprecedented," Miller said, with illegal crossings topping 10,000 some days across the border in December. On Monday, CBP suspended cross-border rail traffic in the Texas cities of Eagle Pass and El Paso in response to migrants riding freight trains through Mexico, hopping off just before entering the U.S. The Lukeville border crossing is closed, as is a pedestrian entry in San Diego, so that more officials can be assigned to the migrant influx.

Arrests for illegal crossings topped 2 million for the first time each of the U.S. government's last two budget years, reflecting technological changes that have increased global mobility and a host of ills prompting people to leave their homes, including wealth inequality, natural disasters, political repression and organized crime.

Israeli airstrikes kill dozens across Gaza

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israel's defense minister says its troops are working on clear-Gaza's north but that fighting in Gaza's south will persist for

Israeli forces raided two of the last functioning hospitals in Gaza's north in recent days, and warplanes bombarded central and southern Gaza on Tuesday with strikes that killed at least 45 Palestinians.

Sandra Day O'Connor called 'iconic jurist'

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden memorialized Justice Sandra Day O'Connor as a pioneer in the legal world who inspired generations of women.

Chief Justice John Roberts joined Biden in speaking at Tuesday's services at Washington National Cathedral, calling her a "strong, influential and iconic jurist."

Illegal migrant arrest law draws federal lawsuit

AUSTIN, Texas — Civil rights organization have filed a lawsuit challenging a new Texas law that would allow police to arrest migrants suspectedly of crossing the border illegally and permit judges to order them to leave the U.S.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in federal court in Austin. It came less than 24 hours after Republican Gov. Greg Abbott signed the measure during a ceremony on the U.S. border in Brownsville.

The lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union, its Texas branch, and the Texas

NEWS DIGEST

Civil Rights Project claims that the new law is unconstitutional.

ing out Hamas militants from Panel in NY to consider reparations for slavery

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York state will create a commission tasked with considering reparations to address the persistent, harmful effects of slavery in the state under a bill signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday.

California OKs rules to recycle wastewater

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California regulators have approved new rules to let water agencies recycle wastewater and put it right back into the pipes that carry drinking water to homes, schools and businesses.

Tuesday's approval marks a big step for a drought-prone state that has struggled for decades to secure reliable sources of drinking water for its more than 39 million residents.

Apple to halt sales in US of its newest watches

Apple plans to suspend sales of the Series 9 and Ultra 2 versions of its popular watch for online U.S. customers beginning Thursday and in its stores on Sunday.

The move stems from an October decision from the International Trade Commission restricting Apple's watches with a blood oxygen feature as part of an intellectual property dispute with medical technology company Masimo.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Sunday, December 24th -4 p.m. & 11 p.m.

Festive music before the late service begins at 10:30pm with Brass, Hand Bells, Choir and Organ.

ALL are Welcome!

Immanuel Lutheran Church 501 East Creswell Avenue, Greenwood, SC

TUESDAY'S PUZZLES FOR THOSE WHO MISSED THEM

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Answer to Previous Puzzle

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ACROSS

- 1 Clergyman's vestment
- "No more Mr. - Guy"
- Eschew - & Perrins
- 13 Indigo
- 14 Tatting 15 Catchall abbr.
- 16 Cheerios grain
- Mozart's 'Rondo · Turca"
- 18 Not nearly
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- SNL sketch 21 Paid athlete
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- constrictor Like hand-me-
- downs Lessen

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54 Pipe fittings

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- Nathan
- west
- Sch. in the
- - - 27 **High time** Odense denizen
 - Looney Tunes'
 - Duck
 - Border on 1980s primetime soap
 - 38 Gin mill 40 Rip off 41 Countrified
 - 42 Dish for gravy
 - 43 River in Ireland Lois of
 - **'Superman**" 45 Nat King
 - 46 Malevolence 48 Plant
 - secretion Sweet potato

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

Answer to previous puzzle

2 5 6

3 | 9

7 | 3

4 2 9

9

8 1

5 | 6 | 8 | 4

2 9 6

6 9 2 8

5 6

1 8 4 7

King Features

3 5 6

> 1 2 4

9 4 5 3 8 1

2

6 8

3 | 6 |

King Classic Sudoku

7	2			9			6	
6	8	3		5		7	9	4
		9		6	7	8	2	
1		8						7
		6	8	4				2
3		2				9		6
2	9					6		8
			6					1
	6	5	7		2		3	9

Difficulty: ★★

12/19

CELEBRITY CIPHER

are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another

G VRS IUXS G BFFYFY GBASFXY RZ

IUXS G IXBSFY XBY SUXS'A PCAS

TXB UXHF." — TRWJXT JTTXWSUL

Previous Solution: "I'm on fire when I'm singing ... and every syllable of it is meant. It's a very special thing." — Sinead O'Connor

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME one letter to each square to form four ordinary words **GDITI NEVTE SLENOS GAROFE** Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon. 2023 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved. X) AT Jumbles: WIPER BLUFF SETTLE Answer: She didn't want him to wear his old for because she didn't think it was - SUITABLE

by Luis Campos

XERCS SUF EFAS OGBY RZ KCTO LRC

TODAY'S CLUE: 9 SIPNDO A

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